Business and the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games

Expectations, outcomes and the future

June 2019

Joan Carlini and Andrew O’Neil
The size of the event does not matter. What matters most is the integrity of the outcome. [1]
FOREWORD

Our aim as ‘Friends of Griffith Business School’ is to increase the collaboration between the School and the business community to help build a sustainable, diverse and prosperous Gold Coast.

We seek to combine the School’s strengths in cutting edge, rigorous, and independent research, with the passion and ‘can do’ attitude of our local entrepreneurs to drive better outcomes for business on the Gold Coast. With a particular focus on private enterprises, our vision is to provide research that will be a vital resource for Gold Coast businesses in driving improvement and sustainability in a manner that is practical, and easy to understand, implement and access.

In our collaboration, we once again focused on the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018) and now look back after the event to consider the impact, legacy and opportunity Gold Coast businesses experienced.

This report, which draws on the views of Gold Coast private enterprises and businesses, is our way of understanding what really happened and use these findings to assist Gold Coast businesses when dealing with other large ‘all of city’ events. It is our way of continuing our journey of collaboration between Griffith Business School and the business community to drive long term success for our Gold Coast.

Janelle Manders
Chair, Friends of Griffith Business School


SNAPSHOT

During GC2018 business faced many challenges, including having reliable and accurate information on which to base their preparations. Disrupted market forces and increased costs contributed to a negative business impact.

Businesses agree that GC2018 has contributed to developing the Gold Coast as an appealing world-class city with capacity to attract future sporting events.

**Business**

- Did the information you have regarding GC2018 meet your business needs?  
  - **58%** DISAGREE
- The cost of business planning for GC2018 was a lot.  
  - **20%** DISAGREE
- If the Gold Coast hosted a similar event to GC2018 in the future, I would prepare my business in the same way.  
  - **64%** DISAGREE
- I understood how I could leverage opportunities from GC2018 to benefit my business.  
  - **44%** DISAGREE
- Holding GC2018 during the Easter trading period was a good choice.  
  - **69%** DISAGREE
- Financially, GC2018 provided our business with a boost.  
  - **72%** DISAGREE
- Overall, the return on investment from GC2018 on our business was good.  
  - **77%** DISAGREE
- Which best describes how your business was impacted by GC2018?  
  - **74%** NEGATIVE

**City**

- GC2018 has contributed to the Gold Coast growing into a world-class city with distinct strengths.  
  - **42%** AGREE
- GC2018 will aid in attracting more sporting events to the Gold Coast.  
  - **62%** AGREE
- Overall, GC2018 has contributed to urban infrastructure that will build the city’s image.  
  - **23%** AGREE
- GC2018 enhanced the ability of the Gold Coast to offer attractive cultural, artistic and recreational resources. e.g. events, arts and culture, sporting facilities, open space  
  - **57%** AGREE
- GC2018 increased awareness of the Gold Coast city internationally.  
  - **61%** AGREE
- How would you rate your overall experience of attending GC2018 event/s?  
  - **65%** GOOD TO EXCELLENT
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC2018—Amplifying expectations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why host a Commonwealth Games?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC2018—The view from business</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business impacts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer numbers, behaviour and sales volume</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle and pedestrian access</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal wellbeing and work hours</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work atmosphere and staffing</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply chain interruption</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GC2018 media, information and inflated estimates?</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information accuracy and predictions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business planning</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did businesses plan for GC2018?</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy of planning</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of planning</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event timing</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Games event planners</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centralisation and authority</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-level impacts</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast city image</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business operating environment</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government and leadership during GC2018</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Australia’s Commonwealth Games history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Location</th>
<th>Athletes and Officials</th>
<th>Countries Represented</th>
<th>Days of Sport</th>
<th>Tickets to Sport Events</th>
<th>Global Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>6,600</td>
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GC2018 event locations

- Cairns
- Townsville
- Brisbane
- GOLD COAST

Our research

- 39 face-to-face interviews
- 150 survey responses
- Majority survey respondents
- 1–19 employees
- $200,000+ annual turnover

QUEENSLAND
The highly anticipated Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018) was held from 4 to 15 April 2018. This was the fifth time Australia had hosted a Commonwealth Games and more than 6,600 athletes, including 300 para-athletes, from 71 Commonwealth countries took part. Sporting and related events occurred at venues on the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville[2]. GC2018 was the Gold Coast’s first experience hosting a mega-sporting event, and the Games provided key insights into the costs and benefits associated with doing so.

In this report we focus on the impact of GC2018 on the Gold Coast business community and the broader regional business environment. There is no doubt that the Games raised the Gold Coast’s profile nationally and internationally, while public benefits flowing from major infrastructure initiatives—most notably the light rail—were significant. Furthermore, net economic gains were noteworthy.

In the year prior to the Games, the State government published several reports underscoring the once-in-a-generation economic opportunities that would flow from GC2018. This included analyses contained in the ‘Economic Impacts of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games’, which forecast a $2 billion boost to Queensland’s Gross State Product, including a $1.7 billion injection for the Gold Coast. In the wake of the Games, the Deputy Mayor of the Gold Coast announced that the event had delivered $2 billion to the local economy alone[3].

Yet one of the enduring puzzles of GC2018 is the disconnect between the overall success of the Games in attracting revenue to the Gold Coast and a persistent sentiment on the part of Gold Coast business operators that they received little, if any, direct benefit from GC2018. Indeed, during the Games, reports emerged that a number of Gold Coast businesses had incurred significant loss of revenue due to the disruption caused by the event and also because event organisers had miscalculated planning estimates which businesses had used to guide their activities during the period of the Games.

The research contained in this report seeks to understand the impact of GC2018 from the perspective of Gold Coast business. It is not the report’s objective to evaluate the overall success and legacy-impact of the Games. We do not aim to verify or ‘fact check’ government claims regarding economic benefits, but instead to report how businesses perceived the impact of the Games.

Our objective is to provide insights into the key challenges confronting small and medium enterprises with a view to promoting better future outcomes for Gold Coast businesses. The report makes a number of constructive recommendations for the planning, implementation and evaluation of future mega-events, which should mitigate risks and failure for the Gold Coast and future host cities.

Against this background, the research underpinning this report was framed around two stages, the first consisting of 39 face-to-face interviews with businesses, academic experts and industry associations. This stage explored the impact of GC2018 on business and the general operating environment on the Gold Coast, which subsequently informed the development of the stage two survey. Stage two comprised a detailed survey targeted at business owners and managers with questions concerning business impacts, GC2018 information sources, business planning, event planning, and more general city impacts.

Invitations to participate in the online survey were disseminated through email dispersal via chambers of commerce, industry associations, and promotion via social media and traditional media channels. In addition, 550 hard copy surveys were distributed across the Gold Coast (from Mount Tamborine to Coolangatta). This yielded 98 online and 52 hard copy surveys (150 in total). The majority of survey respondents were business owners, had operated their business for more than ten years, had between 1–19 employees, had an annual turnover greater than $200,000, were located on the central Gold Coast, and were in the retail and accommodation and hospitality sectors (see Appendix A).
GC2018—AMPLIFYING EXPECTATIONS

Unlike other events held on the Gold Coast, GC2018 was a one-off event that involved unprecedented investment in the region’s infrastructure and enormous planning, coordination, and execution specifications. The Queensland State government spent $1.5 billion on the event, which was nearly double the amount that was spent on the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Scotland[4].

The project was overseen by the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation (GOLDOC), a not-for-profit organisation, which partnered with the Australian Government Major Sporting events Committee, the State Government Office of Commonwealth Games (OCG), Queensland Police Services (QPS), Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES), the Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR), and the City of Gold Coast (CoGC)[5].

With event tourism increasingly competitive globally, there is an obvious need to examine not just the planning, coordination, and execution of events but also the impact of these events on stakeholder communities. Interestingly, the impact of mega-sporting events on businesses local to where they are held is often overlooked, which is paradoxical given that a key justification for holding these events is the benefits they yield for business—from small and medium enterprises to the top end of town.

Lessons for jurisdictions hosting future mega-events are often lost in the afterglow when the event concludes. In our 2017 study, we found that the various impacts of mega-sporting events on business are seriously under-analysed, and that rarely, if at all, are the lessons transferred to future host cities[6]. For stakeholder communities in Birmingham, learning the lessons of GC2018 will be important in their preparation for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Why host a Commonwealth Games?

The cost of hosting a large-scale sporting event is significant. This is typically justified by reference to the anticipated economic outcomes and associated benefits for local communities, especially local business. However, in sections of the academic literature, concern has emerged over the exaggerated foreshadowed benefits to private enterprise and the disparity between promised and actual outcomes. Some analysis has juxtaposed what they identify as the limited benefits for local communities with prioritising interests of non-local stakeholders such as corporate sponsors[7].

In the lead-up to GC2018, messaging from the State government underscored the expected economic benefits for the region. The report, ‘Ahead of the Games’, focused on the positive estimated outcomes that would lead to businesses converting this into profit:

‘Overall, GC2018 will help to deliver billions of dollars worth of positive economic impact for Queensland and support more than 30,000 full-time, part-time and temporary jobs. Tourism will be taken to a new level with an estimated 1.1 million visitors predicted in the lead-up to, during and after the Games—spending more than $870 million in Queensland.’[8]

Media messages used prior to GC2018 amplified the expectation that businesses would see a strong influx of tourists, both overseas and interstate, which would lead inevitably to enhanced bottom lines and an unprecedented ‘win’ for business[9,10].
GC2018—THE VIEW FROM BUSINESS

Business impacts

The central aim of the research underpinning our analysis was to understand how Gold Coast businesses were impacted by GC2018. In our survey therefore we asked a variety of specific questions in relation to the effect of GC2018 on demand, supply, and business activity more generally. At the broadest level, half of respondents (51%) reported that their business was impacted very negatively; 23% somewhat negatively; 16% felt no impact; and 9% of respondents were somewhat positive with only 1% very positive.

Which best describes how your business was impacted by GC2018?

- Very negative: 51%
- Somewhat negative: 23%
- No impact: 16%
- Somewhat positive: 9%
- Very positive: 1%


Description of business impact

The preeminent factor identified for the negative impact on businesses was a change in customer numbers (57%), with reduced sales volume coming a close second (52%). Other significant factors that negatively affected business were vehicle (42%) and pedestrian (41%) access, and changes to customer behaviour (40%). Two out of five (40%) reported their personal wellbeing had been very negatively affected.

Business impacts we asked about:

- Customer numbers
- Customer behaviour
- Sales volume
- Pedestrian access
- Vehicle access
- Opening hours
- Staffing
- Resource expenses
- Supply chain interruption
- Discretionary spending
- Working hours
- Work atmosphere
- Personal wellbeing
- Business reputation

Business considers customer numbers, sales volume, access and customer behaviour as the most significant negative impacts of GC2018.
Customer numbers, behaviour and sales volume

Most businesses reported that the change in customer numbers provided the most significant negative impact, which explains the reduced sales volume. Business were expecting an increase in customer numbers with a flow-on effect to sales. However, several factors contributed to the reduced customer numbers. Firstly, the Gold Coast’s leisure tourist was displaced by a budget conscious and sports focused tourist who generally did not frequent retail or food service outlets (outside of sporting venues). This study’s sample included retail trade (38%) and accommodation and food services (24%) industries which may explain the importance of customer numbers as an impact.

‘I think there was an expectation that we would see a strong influx of tourists, both overseas and interstate and that didn’t eventuate.’ Food service

‘...those people [GC2018 visitors] aren’t on holidays, and so they then don’t go down into the precinct and buy an ice-cream, do some retail shopping.’ Accommodation and food service

Three out of five (58%) businesses reported that there was a severe decrease in the number of local residents on the Gold Coast in the lead-up to and during GC2018. An accommodation and food service operator stated, ‘Local customers left the city afraid of the high volume of tourism affecting all areas of the city (traffic, shopping, hospitals, etc).’ A respondent from the first stage of the research explained to us that she had stocked up on groceries for her family prior to the Games to avoid the inconvenience of congestion and disruption, but as a result resisted going out for the Games period.

‘I’m not dealing with that. I’m not going into Woolworths to buy milk and dealing with 10,000 tourists. So, I went in and spent $200 the day before the Games.’ Arts and culture

Rate the impact of GC2018 on your business

When asked about the impact of GC2018 on business, change in customer numbers (57%), sales volume (52%), and customer behaviour (40%) were rated as having a very negative impact.
Almost half of businesses (46%) commented that residents leaving the Gold Coast affected them very negatively. Noting reports that many locals holidayed away from the Gold Coast resulting in a reduction of local patronage, a food service operator commented, ‘We lost all our regulars for two to three weeks and gained no extra revenue.’ One survey respondent observed:

‘I operate car parks on the Gold Coast and the visitor numbers were down 90%, I didn’t expect many visitors to drive, but I didn’t expect all Gold Coast residents to leave town for two weeks.’ Transport, postal and warehousing

The GC2018 disruption has had what might best be termed a hangover effect for many businesses in the region and it is taking the city a long time to get back to normal trading levels. Within the survey, businesses have stated that they are experiencing an extensive recovery time, longer than they anticipated. In the survey, some businesses commented that the patronage has not returned to pre-Games volume with consumers going elsewhere.

‘Because our business relies a lot on annual return visits we are now feeling the impact again with low numbers as clients that we normally see at this time of year, [because last year they have] chosen to go elsewhere and have not returned this year.’ Retail
Vehicle and pedestrian access

Restricted vehicle access was a major impediment to business. Affected firms made arrangements to have deliveries during the night, which also carried the added burden of increased costs as expressed by a survey respondent:

‘All deliveries were at night between 1 and 6 am because of road closures. We had to stay at our shop all night to receive goods to enable us to trade. Tourists did not visit so we had very few customers for weeks before the Games started. We lost over $80,000 through lack of trade.’

Accommodation and food service

Rate the impact of GC2018 on your business

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedestrian access</th>
<th>Very negative</th>
<th>Relatively negative</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Relatively positive</th>
<th>Very positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle access</td>
<td>Very negative</td>
<td>Relatively negative</td>
<td>No impact</td>
<td>Relatively positive</td>
<td>Very positive</td>
</tr>
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Restricted vehicle (42%) and pedestrian access (41%) very negatively impacted business.

Personal wellbeing and work hours

The negative effect on personal wellbeing and work hours featured in the list of impacts. Two out of five (40%) respondents stated that their personal wellbeing had suffered. A combination of negative business impacts and long work hours (e.g. due to overnight deliveries) has most likely resulted in this adverse effect.

Rate the impact of GC2018 on your business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My personal wellbeing</th>
<th>Very negative</th>
<th>Relatively negative</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Relatively positive</th>
<th>Very positive</th>
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<tr>
<td>My working hours</td>
<td>Very negative</td>
<td>Relatively negative</td>
<td>No impact</td>
<td>Relatively positive</td>
<td>Very positive</td>
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Personal wellbeing (40%) and my working hours (37%) were very negatively impacted by GC2018.

In short, we went from over 200 customers a week to ZERO for the duration of the Games.

Accommodation and food service

A very negative impact and our worst trading period in the 9 years we have been in business.

Accommodation and food service
Work atmosphere and staffing

Most businesses reported that GC2018 had no impact on the work atmosphere (40%). During an interview, one retail business commented on an improved work environment due to athletes using the facilities and associating with normal customers. Interestingly, most survey comments on this impact discussed it negatively, using examples of ‘imposing leave on staff, mandating staff work from home, and making them work extra shifts, with the disruption to normal work schedule negatively impacted staff morale’.

‘Customer numbers and staff access impacted numbers of staff rostered on, but all staff are permanent so had to provide alternative hours for them and some forced annual leave which impacted staff morale.’ Retail

Supply chain interruption

The real estate and property market were affected by inflated expectations of sellers, with owners holding off listing property prior to GC2018. This shortfall resulted in a peak prior to the Games from lack of stock. A real estate proprietor commented that ‘People who were trying to get a higher price thought they’d do it after the Games. Then the market hasn’t come off after the Games, because there wasn’t the exposure. I guess it was bit of a dampener, a lot of negative press over the Games.’

‘In the building industry, most infrastructure development work was completed prior to the Games. As a result of this accelerated work program, a survey respondent suggested that no new contracts were tendered for many months, thus creating a boom in the market leading to difficulty to find suitable subcontractors.’

‘...in the building industry, we were busy until the end of March..., everyone went away. The State Government spent all their money on the Games... New projects did not start to [be] sent out to price until November 2018. There is so much [work] to price now, that we will have trouble getting subcontractors to do the work, if everything starts around the same time.’ Construction

Rate the impact of GC2018 on your business

Most business were not impacted by work atmosphere (40%) or staffing (39%).

Rate the impact of GC2018 on your business

Most business were not impacted by supply chain interruptions (35%). However, examples in real estate and the building industry showed unanticipated influences.
Reputation

The reputational effect of GC2018 was varied. Some businesses experienced major reputational benefits in their association with the Games. In particular, some businesses felt an enhanced status associated with servicing the Games. For others it provided a lift to their business reputation and image.

‘Servicing the Games, there was a certain ‘prestige’ being a locally based business.’ Construction

Major structural improvements for businesses that ‘doubled’ as venues also helped to improve the business’s international reputation. For example, the film industry’s Village Roadshow’s Oxenford studios scored a partly Government funded super stage to host some of the competition events. Soundstage 9 has already had films such as Marvel’s Thor, and Warner Brothers Aquaman. For another business, their venue hosted a sporting event which provided a great opportunity to distinguish them from their competitors internationally.

‘It stood us out from the rest of other [sporting venues like ours] worldwide.’ Sport

That said, the benefits were not uniformly experienced. In terms of reputation and financial impact, one arts and culture business stated that the disruption to their business and lack of customers caused damage. Looking to save loyal customers, the business gave vouchers to disgruntled clients.

‘Our core customer base did not attend our premises during the Games. Our venue was forced to cut hours due to lack of numbers, which caused reputation damage and additional cost as we gave out vouchers to people who tried to attend but could not.’ Arts and culture

Rate the impact of GC2018 on your business

Businesses reported that their reputation was not impacted (56%) by GC2018.
GC2018 INFORMATION, MEDIA AND INFLATED ESTIMATES?

The most frequent information sources used were: the State government’s ‘Get Set for the Games’ documentation (12%), traditional media (7%) and social media (9%).

The choice of information used, in hindsight was problematic, as businesses reported that the most inaccurate information sources were ‘Get Set for the Games’, government agencies, mainstream media and industry associations. While the most accurate were their professional and personal contacts, and social media.

How often did you use these information sources? How accurate would you say the information was?

The information sources most used by businesses were ‘Get Set for the Games’, mainstream media and social media. However, ‘Get Set for the Games’ was reported as not accurate by 41% of business.
Information accuracy and predictions

In the survey, many respondents commented that the information they received from the ‘Get Set for the Games’ documentation was inaccurate, with businesses told they could anticipate high volumes of foot traffic and mass arrival of tourists. But instead, businesses experienced the opposite.

‘We were led to believe business would be strong, many people would attend [the Games]. Change operations to suit traffic conditions, etc. There were few travellers, roads were deserted, and no-one was spending money.’

Accommodation and food service

The notable gap between predictions and actual outcome has caused discontent within the local business community. In trying to understand the significant miscalculation of numbers, an art and culture interviewee stated: ‘Someone is responsible for getting the numbers so wrong. And is it an administrative error? Did someone accidentally put another zero on the end? That happens.’

The optimistic estimates provided to business, coupled with the publicised disruption and media campaign aimed at locals, meant that most business considered the information supplied as inaccurate and unhelpful in planning for GC2018.

‘What should have been a wonderful opportunity for Gold coast business was ruined by negativity and misinformation.’

Retail and manufacturing

The Government’s information aimed at locals to reduce traffic and congestion was blamed for reduced customer volume and for locals departing the Gold Coast. In the campaign, businesses were urged to have their employees work from home or take leave. Similarly, residents were instructed to stock up on groceries to avoid unnecessary car trips. With this in mind, many locals departed the Gold Coast, as suggested by this survey respondent:

‘It was a very strong campaign to convince the locals to stay home (or to close the business) and others to avoid Gold Coast during the Commonwealth Games. My observation [is that] this caused a large Gold Coast population [to] travel interstate or overseas. We experienced the worst Easter holiday period ever in our last 25 years of trade.’

Tourism

Q Did the information you have regarding GC2018 meet your business needs?
BUSINESS PLANNING

How did businesses plan for GC2018?

The Gold Coast has never hosted an event at the size and scale of GC2018. Many businesses took on board the possibility that their firm could face challenges that would require altering normal activities. Most managers realised that such a large-scale event could have unforeseen results and took the planning seriously as noted during an interview:

‘Businesses had it [their Games strategy] 85% planned, they took it very seriously. They were expecting big crowds, they were expecting significant outcomes...’ Hospitality

‘We used documentation on traffic flow, public transport flow, advice from Comm Games organisers and Festival 2018 organisers, all ‘Get Set for the Games’ advice on Games preparation including meetings which all advised to purchase a lot of stock in advance and make delivery and transport plans that were more expensive to the business than usual processes. Our trading hours were determined directly in response to advice from organisers in upper management positions in the Comm Games organising committee.’

Arts and culture

For what purpose did you use the information in your business planning?

Finance

Investment

Marketing

Risk assessment

Operational

In planning for GC2018, most businesses used information for operational decision-making (27%) (e.g. change operating hours, predicting customer demand), and risk assessment (25%) (e.g. whether changes such as road closures would affect business). To a lesser extent, businesses referred to information for finance (16%), marketing 16%), and least of all, investment decisions 11%).
Efficacy of planning

In determining successful future business strategy, accurate information is indispensable. When reflecting on their GC2018 strategic planning, most businesses (36%) said that their business planning was not at all effective. In contrast, 12% reported that their business planning was very effective. One retail business remarked on mismanagement in planning resulting in an immense economic cost associated for their five retail stores:

‘GC2018 was a huge disappointment and cost our business enormously, we would have been better off to close our 5 retail stores for the entire GC2018. The tourists didn’t spend any money except for accommodation and GC2018 events. Locals were so scared they deserted the whole city or stayed at home.’ Retail

‘We were only affected two days so to be totally honest we could’ve just run business as per usual but because it was so hammered into us, it would be so busy on the roads and all that stuff, we ended up cutting back our business hours.’ Tourism

Three in five business (64%) disagreed with the statement: ‘If the Gold Coast held a similar event in the future that they would prepare their business in the same way’. Numerous businesses criticised GC2018 information inaccuracy that led them to implement changes that were inappropriate and adversely affected firm performance.
Cost of planning

The sum total of 49% (agree and strongly agree) of businesses agreed that planning for GC2018 ‘cost a lot’. Business mentioned that they undertook detailed scenario plans to get ready for the Games.

Q The cost of business planning for GC2018 was a lot?

- Strongly disagree: 9%
- Disagree: 25%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 32%
- Agree: 23%
- Strongly agree: 11%

‘We spent a lot of time creating logistics around how staff are going to get here, then working from home and costs. Then there was no traffic on the roads, so it all went out the window. Day one we went with our plan, and then we didn’t need it from day two onwards.’ Real estate

Many businesses also attributed their failed planning attempts and increased costs to incorrect information received from Government agencies. For example, a hospitality business said that they ‘were told 6,000 people in the queue at any one time’. With this in mind, the business extended operating hours and increased staff, but the expected customer demand did not materialise.

For another business, the expected disruption (such as road closures) led them to shut down for the two weeks. When in reality, the professional service provider discovered that their planning was based on incorrect information and pronounced, ‘We closed the business as we were told we would be unable to access. This was entirely incorrect.’

Event timing

In the survey, many businesses strongly urged against holding GC2018 during the Easter break. Easter is normally a very busy time when school is on holidays and tourist and locals alike take full opportunity of the Gold Coast amenities. Holding the event during the holidays resulted in the displacement of local, domestic, and international leisure visitors.

When asked what time of the year would be best for holding a major sporting event in the future, comments included ‘non-peak periods for tourism (i.e. not during the school holidays, such as February, September or October)’. Another popular option was the ‘December Christmas holidays when business is generally quiet’.

Many respondents preferred that that the Gold Coast not host a mega-event in the future, stating that the ‘cost to business, and the disruption made it untenable’.

‘Preferable not to happen [future mega-events on the Gold Coast]. If really need to, May after the Labour Day could be a better option as we will not losing too much of the business as this is normally a quiet month.’ Tourism

Q Holding GC2018 during the Easter trading period was a good choice.

- Strongly disagree: 2%
- Disagree: 7%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 20%
- Agree: 58%
- Strongly agree: 13%
Planning a Commonwealth Games is an enormous task with detailed coordination and execution required for a multitude of activities. When asked about the consideration of local business by GC2018 event planners, most businesses did not sense that local experts were listened to seriously or well represented during the planning process.

For example, when asked if those who planned GC2018 helped to stimulate flow-on benefits for your business (e.g. increased customer demand, increased exposure to new markets), three out of five (57%) strongly disagreed, one in five (20%) somewhat disagreed, 15% remained neutral and 8% agreed.

Event planners were deemed responsible for a number of miscalculations that included inaccurate traffic information —’The traffic ‘management’ was rubbish’ (accommodation and food service)— inaccurate forecasting of visitor numbers—’Better forecasting of number of visitors’ (accommodation and food service)—and using ‘scare tactics frightened people away’ (Professional services).

When planning GC2018, did the organisers consider the needs of business; listened to local experts. There was transparency in the planning of GC2018.
Feedback

Receiving and acting upon feedback is pivotal for improvement in any organisation. In realising the Commonwealth Games’ potential for future host city businesses, including Birmingham 2022, we asked if businesses provided feedback about their experience. Of the 37% businesses that provided feedback on how their business was affected, venues used to provide feedback include: GC2018 team, local council, State government, industry associations, various surveys, media and shopping centre management.

For those who did not provide feedback, we asked why not. Their responses varied:

‘No avenue/opportunity to provide feedback, event organisers and government don’t care, it won’t make any difference, they weren’t affected, and, they did not want to waste any more time.’

One business suggested a formalised feedback loop:

‘I would have thought the [organisers] would have held debriefing sessions, but those groups dissolved.’” Retail

Centralisation and authority

A common theme from the survey comments concerned the centralisation of power in, and authority exercised by, the event organisers and government. This approach triggered frustration among Gold Coast business, evident in one respondent’s observation:

‘It could have delivered better outcomes if organisers had been less involved in trying to control visitors to the area and just focused on the job of organising events. The strategic planning and impacts on hospitality venues was myopic. Event organisers were more concerned with the execution of the Games with insufficient consideration of local residents and businesses who suffered loss and damage as a result of the Games. The traffic ‘management’ was rubbish. Com Games attract nationally and all the negative publicity about traffic just stopped people from coming to the GC.’ Retail

Businesses reflected concern regarding the accuracy of information and the way in which it was promulgated by government and organisers. Many businesses frequently scrutinised the limited and linear process of information dissemination and what some regarded as the somewhat high-handed nature of issuing advice:

‘...they should of been up front with all of the planning. We were told we would be real busy; this was not the case. They shouldn’t have exaggerated the benefits.’ Retail

Have you provided feedback about GC2018 impact on your business?

37% Yes

63% No
**CITY-LEVEL IMPACTS**

**Gold Coast City image**

With destination image playing a major role in the competitiveness for travel destinations such as the Gold Coast, businesses agreed that GC2018 did improve the city’s appeal. Results show that the influence of GC2018 contributed to the Gold Coast’s city image in the following ways:

- GC2018 increased awareness of the Gold Coast nationally (63%*)
- GC2018 will aid in attracting more sporting events to the Gold Coast (62%*)
- GC2018 increased awareness of the city internationally (61%*)
- GC2018 enhanced the ability of the Gold Coast to offer attractive cultural, artistic and recreational resources (57%*)
- GC2018 contributed to urban infrastructure that will build city image (53%*)
- GC2018 has contributed to the Gold Coast growing into a world-class city with distinct strengths (43%*)
- GC2018 improved Gold Coast’s ability to meet the needs for public services (42%*)

(*sum—agree and strongly agree)

One of the key features of GC2018 was the opportunity it provided to strengthen and further showcase the Gold Coast’s image by promoting it nationally and internationally as an attractive and livable city with the capacity to host mega-sporting events.

‘[GC2018] portrayed the Gold Coast as a safe, enthusiastic wonderful city to be in.’
Retail

‘With better planning and less scaremongering from the media, I believe the GC is the perfect place to hold future similar events and I think this could be very beneficial to the Coast.’
Retail

---

**Increased awareness—city nationally**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Aid in attracting more sporting events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Increased awareness—city internationally**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Enhanced cultural, artistic and recreational**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Contributed to urban infrastructure to build city image**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Contributed to world-class city with distinct strengths**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Improved ability to meet public service needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Businesses agreed that GC2018 worked on multiple factors to improve the attractiveness of the Gold Coast city image nationally and internationally.
Business operating environment

In terms of the impact that GC2018 had on the Gold Coast city business environment, the results show that many businesses saw no benefit in the factors and forces that allow a business to build and maintain a successful operation. Survey results show that business did not agree that GC2018 had a positive impact on the following:

- GC2018 positively impacted the Gold Coast from an economic perspective (55%*)
- GC2018 improved the chances of businesses to seek funding, finance and investment (50%*)
- GC2018 has enhanced job prospects for workers on Gold Coast (48%*)
- GC2018 has contributed to Gold Coast image as a good place to do business (44%*)
- GC2018 has improved the city’s ability to attract workers from outside the Gold Coast (36%*)
- GC2018 has assisted the Gold Coast in becoming more attractive to international trade and investment (33%*)

(*sum—disagree and strongly disagree)

The impacts discussed earlier in Section 3 illustrate that businesses were generally hit hard by GC2018. With this in mind, business did not agree that GC2018 had a positive impact on the City’s business environment with commentary in the survey including:

‘What a huge expense that costs local jobs and business thousands of dollars in lost trade and workers losing lost hours!’ Retail

‘The GC2018 was for the greater good of all. We LOVED the Games. Sadly business was turned on its head.’ Accommodation and food service

‘A lot of the locals went overseas which took money out of our economy. The cost of funding the Games was horrendous.’ Professional services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positively impacted Gold Coast—economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved the chances of businesses to seek funding, finance and investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced job prospects for workers on Gold Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to Gold Coast image as a good place to do business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved the city’s ability to attract workers from outside the Gold Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted Gold Coast to become more attractive to international trade and investment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Businesses did not agree that GC2018 had a positive effect on the City’s business environment.
Government and leadership during GC2018

The government takes many roles during the bidding, planning and execution of a sporting mega-event. Considerable negotiation is required between levels as well as with the hosting communities. The results reveal that business did not feel supported by government or informal leadership networks in civil society.

- The state/federal government assisted businesses during GC2018 (66%*)
- Local council assisted businesses during GC2018 (62%*)
- ‘Informal leadership’ (e.g. community groups, industry associations) assisted businesses during GC2018 (40%*)

(*sum—disagree and strongly disagree)

Incorrect and inaccurate information combined accompanied by a perceived high-handed and distant approach gave rise to a sense of ‘us versus them’ among some respondents. This left a negative impression as to the genuineness of the consultation process:

‘From what seemed like a great opportunity it turned into an awful nightmare, made worse by the lack of support, lies and insults made by our [local government] and [the organising committee]. The Gold Coast is still suffering economically as a consequence thereof.’

Accommodation and food service

Did the state/federal government; local council; and ‘informal leadership’ (e.g. community groups, industry associations) assist businesses during GC2018?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/federal government assisted businesses</th>
<th>Local council assisted businesses</th>
<th>Informal leadership assisted businesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accommodation and food service

Work Atmosphere

- Resource
- Expenses
- Opening Hours
- Staffing
- Discretionary Spending
- Supply Chain
- Interruption

Business

- Reputation
- Customer Numbers
- Sales Volume
- Vehicle Access
- Pedestrian Access
- Customer Behaviour
- Personal Wellbeing
- Working Hours

60% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% 0% 100% 50% 0%
RECOMMENDATIONS

The key takeout from this report is that the overwhelming number of survey respondents and interviewees felt that GC2018 delivered little in the way of tangible business benefits. Indeed, a major theme was that the Games was actually counterproductive in advancing the interests of Gold Coast businesses. This is starkly at odds with the broader narrative from government and event organisers that GC2018 provided a significant boost to the Gold Coast economy.

In large part, the negative themes underlying respondent feedback appear to stem from a perception that business was provided with information from government and GC2018 organisers that was inaccurate. A closely related theme is that outcomes during GC2018 did not align with anticipated outcomes envisioned by organisers and government agencies. Put bluntly, a significant proportion of businesses participating in the survey believe the Games over-promised and under-delivered.

Looking ahead to future events on the Gold Coast and how business can benefit, at least three issues need to be addressed. Future research recommendations are discussed.

Authentic engagement with business is required

The sense that business was spoken at, rather than consulted with, in the planning phase surfaced in the survey and interviews as a recurring theme. For the majority of respondents, government engagement was too little in the lead-up to the Games. And many felt that GC2018 organisers, particularly GOLDOC, were unwilling to hear about business concerns, high-handed in their approach, and disconnected from the day-to-day impact of the Games on business operations.

In future planning, event organisers and government need to be much more attuned to the micro-level concerns of business in the run-up to their being held. This requires working meaningfully with small and medium enterprises—as well as the top end of town—at a grass roots level to identify threats and opportunities arising from events and ensuring that businesses feel they are part of the planning cycle.

Put another way, event organisers and government should focus their efforts on collaborating with businesses as strategic partners. This must not be faux collaboration that merely aids to ‘tick a box’ for the multitude of stakeholders involved, but rather a process that incorporates a well-defined feedback loop whereby businesses can play a direct role in event planning, not just a service provision role for delivering the event. State government and local council must provide the partnership frameworks that ‘democratise’ opportunities for small and medium enterprises to not only have their say but also to influence key decisions in the planning phase.

Businesses themselves need to be critical

There is a sense that business respondents tended to be passive recipients rather than critical consumers of information from GC2018 organisers and government. Exhibiting scepticism towards authority is a long-standing trait of Australian democracy, so it is somewhat surprising that respondents seem to accept uncritically most (if not all) of the pre-event advice with little hard-edged analysis. There is no doubt that small and medium enterprises are seriously strapped for time, but it is important they actively source information and data that is independent from governments and even peak industry bodies including chambers of commerce. Relying on information from providers whose interests do not necessarily align with those of individual businesses is risky. The impacts of GC2018 were not uniform in terms of traffic flows, loss of customer flow, and supply chain disruption. This was foreseen prior to the Games, and individual businesses could certainly have been more curious in exploring alternative information sources to those provided by government and event organisers, which in turn were often filtered through mainstream and social media.

At the end of the day, accessing rigorous and independent research—including from universities and independent think tanks—is crucial for businesses to enable strategic planning ahead of major events, and businesses themselves must be proactive.
Businesses need to be active in distributing information

Comparing and exchanging notes with like-minded businesses can help to circumvent information bottlenecks. Yet, competition among businesses in the same sector is often relentless and the notion of collaborating with rivals is not instinctive. Small and medium enterprises are frequently too busy focusing on detailed operational challenges to think about how they might play a role in information exchange. But if these same businesses are to capitalise on opportunities arising from major events and avoid inevitable costs, comparing notes with peer competitors is a must. This, combined with accessing a wide variety of reliable information channels, has the potential to yield valuable intelligence that can then be integrated into firm strategic and operational planning. After the experience of GC2018, there must be questions about whether the various formalised Gold Coast business networks have the capacity to act as effective clearing houses for information and intelligence exchange. At the very least, small and medium enterprises should not rely on industry associations and chambers to do their work for them. There is certainly scope for deeper information distribution and additional forums for business to facilitate this exchange; universities with a presence on the Gold Coast can play a more active thought leadership role in assisting business in this area.

Future research

Learning the key lessons of GC2018 for business is crucial, but this goes beyond the impact of the Commonwealth Games per se. Inevitably, there will be future mega-events on the Gold Coast and business must prepare for these at a firm level but also in collaboration with major stakeholders. Research will be crucial in preparing business for this, and further analysis of the impact of GC2018 that goes beyond the scope of this report is necessary. In particular, the following areas merit closer research scrutiny:

- The context in which businesses did prosper during GC2018. What were the conditions? And can these be replicated in future across different sectors?
- The impact of government investment. This was particularly apparent in the arts, culture and sport; what have been the payoffs for Gold Coast businesses?
- Ways in which the Gold Coast business environment has benefited from public sector investment associated with GC2018. Can this be further leveraged to benefit others?
- Quantifying the impact on the Gold Coast flowing from GC2018, such as destination image, tourism, and trade and investment.
CONCLUSION

Four months after GC2018 concluded, the Queensland government formally ruled out using the $35 million surplus generated by the Games to compensate Gold Coast traders who had lost income as a result of GC2018[3]. This was not unexpected—the State government argued that it had already invested significant amounts in Games infrastructure—but coming at the same time as event organisers were hailing the event overall as an unqualified success, the ‘optics’ of this decision were not positive.

Planning and executing mega-sporting events is highly demanding. It is difficult enough ensuring that sporting and related events go according to plan. But it is even harder for organisers to balance competing agendas among multiple stakeholders across government and industry. In the case of GC2018, while the organisers can be commended for executing a well-planned event, our research shows that the impact of GC2018 on Gold Coast business was far more mixed. In particular, inaccurate information from government and organisers regarding disruption as well as inflated forecasts around customer numbers and benefits exercised many respondents and interviewees.

There is also a sense in which small and medium enterprises feel they were not taken seriously in the preparation phase and that their concerns were downplayed or dismissed by government and organisers.

Our report recommendations underscore the need for a more proactive endeavour on the part of future event organisers and government to engage business across the board in the planning stages; this includes an integrated post-event assessment process. Genuine strategic collaboration between businesses, organisers, and government is not only preferable for future event planning on the Gold Coast, it is crucial.

But businesses too need to be more proactive in seeking out reliable sources of information to underpin their operational planning. Avoiding a situation where they are merely passive recipients of information from government and corporate entities is a critical first step. As this report has shown, the impact on business arising from major events endures after the caravan moves on.

REFERENCES

### APPENDICES

## A—About the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hard copy</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<th>Respondent position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Age (years) Avg           | 48       |
|                           |          |
| Min age – Max age         | 19–79    |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years operating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 2 years</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to &lt; 5 years</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
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<td>10 years +</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
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<th>FTE employees</th>
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<tr>
<td>1–19</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>20–149</td>
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</tr>
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<td>150–200</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;200</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public and Gov.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual turnover</th>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; $50 000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50 000–$200 000</td>
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<td>$200 000–$2 M</td>
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<td>&gt; $2 M</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main type of customer</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business to business</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumers</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary business location by region</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Gold Coast</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Gold Coast</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Gold Coast</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinterland</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (multiple locations)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry classification</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and food services</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration and support services</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and recreation services</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance services</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care and social assistance</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, media and telecommunications</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific and technical services</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental, hiring and real estate services</td>
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<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, postal and warehousing</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by the Griffith Business School.

**Why is the research being conducted?**
In April 2018, the Gold Coast hosted the XXI Commonwealth Games (GC2018). Questions remain about the impact of this mega-event on the city’s business community. The aim of this project is to learn more about how GC2018 impacted local businesses, and the city. We are seeking owners, operators, and/or managers of Gold Coast businesses to complete the survey. A better understanding of key issues facing private enterprise can assist with designing future strategies and agendas aimed at supporting businesses in the city.

**What you will be asked to do:**
You will spend about 20 minutes answering survey questions about: 1) The business, 2) Business impacts resulting from the GC2018, and 3) Impacts on the Gold Coast City.

Your participation is voluntary, by completing the survey you consent to participate in this research. Your responses are confidential, and you will not be identified. This project has ethics approval from Griffith University #2018/791

For further information please contact.
Prof Andrew O’Neil Phone: (07) 5552 8472, Email: a.oneil@griffith.edu.au
Dr Joan Carlini Phone: (07) 5552 9094, Email: j.carlin@griffith.edu.au
FIRMOGRAPHIC

How many years has this business been operating?
- Under 2 years
- 2 to under 5 years
- 5 to under 10 years
- 10 years and over

What is the number of FTE employees this business employs?
- 1 – 19
- 20 – 149
- 150 – 200
- over 200

Over the past year, the number of employees in the business has:
- Significantly decreased
- Slightly decreased
- Remained the same
- Slightly increased
- Significantly increased

What industry sector does your business operate in?
- Profit
- Sole trader
- Partnership
- Company
- Other, please specify ____________________
- Not-for-profit
- Charity
- Club
- Association
- Other, please specify ____________________
- Public and Government

What industry classification best describes the business? (Select one)
- Accommodation and food services
- Manufacturing
- Administration and support service
- Agriculture
- Marine
- Arts and recreation services
- Mining
- Construction
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Education and training
- Renting, hiring and real estate services
- Electricity, gas, water and waste services
- Retail trade
- Health care and social assistance
- Tourism
- Information, media and telecommunications
- Transport, postal and warehousing
- Other, please specify ___________________
- Wholesale trade

Who is the main user of your products or services?
- Other businesses
- Consumers
- Government
- Other, please specify___________

Is this an indigenous business?
- Yes
- No

To what extent do you agree that this business has experienced growth over the past year?
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Which figure best represents this business' annual turnover in the last financial year:
- Less than $50,000
- Between $50,000 and $200,000
- Between $200,000 and $2 million
- Over $2 million

My position in this business is:
- Owner
- CEO
- Manager
- Other, please specify

Which GC2018 venue is closest to this business' primary location? (Select only one)
- Broadbeach Bowls Club
- Carrara Stadium
- Commonwealth Games Village
- Coomera Sport and Leisure Centre
- Banana/Curumbin Valley (road cycling)
- Gold Coast Aquatic Centre
- Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre
- Queen Elizabeth Park (beach volleyball)

The proximity of this business to the closest GC2018 venue is:
- Less than 1 km
- Between 2 – 5 km
- Between 6 – 20 km
- More than 20 km

What is your birth year? __________

What is your gender?
- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
Thinking about the business that you own/manage/operate, please answer the following questions about the information you used for the GC2018.

**How often did you use these information sources?**

- **1. Get Set for the Games**
  - Did not use at all
  - Used a bit
  - Used moderately
  - Used often
  - Always used

- **2. Personal contacts (e.g. friends)**
  - Did not use at all
  - Used a bit
  - Used moderately
  - Used often
  - Always used

- **3. Professional contacts (e.g. business network)**
  - Did not use at all
  - Used a bit
  - Used moderately
  - Used often
  - Always used

- **4. Formal industry/business associations (e.g. Chambers of Commerce)**
  - Did not use at all
  - Used a bit
  - Used moderately
  - Used often
  - Always used

- **5. Mainstream media (e.g. online and paper newspapers, television news)**
  - Did not use at all
  - Used a bit
  - Used moderately
  - Used often
  - Always used

- **6. General ‘hearsay’ within the community**
  - Did not use at all
  - Used a bit
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- **7. Government agencies and associated publications**
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- **9. Various websites**
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- **10. The 2017 Griffith Business School, Gold Coast Business and the Commonwealth Games: Impact, Legacy and Opportunity study**
  - Did not use at all
  - Used a bit
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- **11. My own observations**
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  - Used often
  - Always used

- **12. Social media**
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  - Used often
  - Always used

- **13. Other, please specify _______________________________**
  - Did not use at all
  - Used a bit
  - Used moderately
  - Used often
  - Always used

**How valuable did you find these information sources to base your business decisions for the GC2018?**

- **1. Get Set for the Games**
  - Not valuable at all
  - Somewhat valuable
  - Moderately valuable
  - Above average value
  - Very valuable
  - NA (did not use)

- **2. Personal contacts (e.g. friends)**
  - Not valuable at all
  - Somewhat valuable
  - Moderately valuable
  - Above average value
  - Very valuable
  - NA (did not use)

- **3. Professional contacts (e.g. business network)**
  - Not valuable at all
  - Somewhat valuable
  - Moderately valuable
  - Above average value
  - Very valuable
  - NA (did not use)

- **4. Formal industry/business associations (e.g. Chambers of Commerce)**
  - Not valuable at all
  - Somewhat valuable
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  - Above average value
  - Very valuable
  - NA (did not use)

- **5. Mainstream media (e.g. online and paper newspapers, television news)**
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- **13. Other, please specify _______________________________**
  - Not valuable at all
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  - Above average value
  - Very valuable
  - NA (did not use)
How easy was it to get information to make business decisions for the GC2018?

How accurate would you say the information was?

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Very Difficult</th>
<th>Somewhat Difficult</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Relatively Easy</th>
<th>Very Easy</th>
<th>NA (did not use)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Get Set for the Games</td>
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<td>13. Other, please specify</td>
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</table>
Thinking about the business that you own/manage/operate, please answer the following questions about the information you used for the GC2018.

### How would you rate the credibility of the following information sources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Not at all credible</th>
<th>Somewhat credible</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Relatively credible</th>
<th>Very credible</th>
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</table>

Did the information you have regarding the GC2018 meet your business needs?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

What other information would have assisted your business for the GC2018?

- Not at all credible
- Somewhat credible
- Neutral
- Relatively credible
- Very credible

Do you have any general comments about GC2018 and information?

Now, we would like to know about how the information influenced your business decisions.

For what purpose did you use the information in your business planning?

1. Operational decision-making (e.g. change operating hours, predicting client demand, rostering and staffing, etc.)
   - Did not use at all
   - Used a bit
   - Used moderately
   - Used often
   - Always used

2. Risk assessment (whether changes from the GC 2018, such as road closures, would affect your business)
   - Did not use at all
   - Used a bit
   - Used moderately
   - Used often
   - Always used

3. Marketing (promoting your business, activities, etc.)
   - Did not use at all
   - Used a bit
   - Used moderately
   - Used often
   - Always used

4. Investment decisions (e.g. capital expenditure to produce more)
   - Did not use at all
   - Used a bit
   - Used moderately
   - Used often
   - Always used

5. Finance and budgeting (such as catering for changes in demand produced by the GC2018)
   - Did not use at all
   - Used a bit
   - Used moderately
   - Used often
   - Always used

6. Other, please specify
   - Did not use at all
   - Used a bit
   - Used moderately
   - Used often
   - Always used
Based on what actually happened to your business during the GC2018, how effective was your planning?

- Not at all effective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Neutral
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

The cost of business planning for the GC2018 was a lot.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

If the Gold Coast hosted a similar event to the GC2018 in the future, I would prepare my business in the same way.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I understood how I could leverage opportunities from the GC2018 to benefit my business.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My business was able to adapt quickly to the unexpected change in increased or decreased demand during the GC2018 period.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

In this section, we want to know about how this business has been impacted by the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games (GC2018).

The GC2018 contributed to value creation in this business (e.g. new processes, technology, consumers, premises, knowledge).

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

The GC2018 contributed to this business being distinct in the market compared to its competitors.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Financially, the GC2018 provided our business with a boost.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Holding the GC2018 during the Easter trading period was a good choice.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Overall, the return on investment from the GC2018 on our business was good.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Which best describes how your business was impacted by GC2018?

- Very negative
- Somewhat negative
- No impact
- Somewhat positive
- Very positive

If the Gold Coast were to hold another large event like the GC2018, what time of the year would best suit your business (e.g. month, holiday period, etc.)?

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Which best describes how your business was impacted by the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games (GC2018)?

- Very negative
- Somewhat negative
- No impact
- Somewhat positive
- Very positive

Thinking about the impact of the GC2018 on your business, please rate the following:

1. Change in customer numbers

2. Change in customer behaviour (e.g. change in length/time of visit)

3. Change in sales volume

4. Change in pedestrian access to business

5. Change in vehicle access to business

6. Change to business opening hours

7. Staffing (availability/rostering)

8. Change in resource expenses (e.g. hiring equipment, etc.)

9. Supply chain interruption (e.g. difficulty receiving stock, products, or services)

10. Change to business opening hours
Thinking about the impact of the GC2018 on your business, please rate the following:

11. Change in discretionary spending
   - Very negative impact
   - Relatively negative impact
   - No impact
   - Relatively positive impact
   - Very positive impact
   NA

12. Change in my working hours
   - Very negative impact
   - Relatively negative impact
   - No impact
   - Relatively positive impact
   - Very positive impact
   NA

13. Change in work atmosphere
   - Very negative impact
   - Relatively negative impact
   - No impact
   - Relatively positive impact
   - Very positive impact
   NA

14. My personal wellbeing
   - Very negative impact
   - Relatively negative impact
   - No impact
   - Relatively positive impact
   - Very positive impact
   NA

15. Business reputation
   - Very negative impact
   - Relatively negative impact
   - No impact
   - Relatively positive impact
   - Very positive impact
   NA

16. Other, please specify ______________________________________________
   - Very negative impact
   - Relatively negative impact
   - No impact
   - Relatively positive impact
   - Very positive impact
   NA

In your opinion, why was this business impacted in the ways that were selected in the previous question?

Would you like to make any other comments about how the GC2018 affected this business?

Now, we want to know about your business expectations of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games (GC2018).

The benefits to this business from the GC2018 met my expectations.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

Overall, the GC2018 benefits to this business were worse than expected.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

The GC2018 benefits to this business were better than expected.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

Now, we are asking about your business satisfaction of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games (GC2018).

Overall, I was satisfied with how the GC2018 impacted this business.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

Overall, I am happy with the business decisions made in response to the GC2018 for this business.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree

The benefits of the GC2018 outweigh the consequences for this business.
   - Strongly disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly agree
Now, we want to know what you think about the planning for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games (GC2018).

Those who planned the GC2018 helped to stimulate flow-on benefits for my business (e.g., increased customer demand, increased exposure to new markets).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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There was transparency in the planning of the GC2018.

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When planning the GC2018, the organisers listened to local experts.

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When planning the GC2018, the organisers considered the needs of business.

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Gold Coast businesses were well represented during the GC2018 planning process.

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Have you provided feedback about the GC2018 impact on your business?

- Yes, who did you provide feedback to?

- No, why didn’t you provide feedback?

Do you have any comments on how the GC2018 planning could be improved to help business outcomes?

Did you attend any GC2018 sports or trade events?

- Yes, how would you rate your overall experience of attending the GC2018 events?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very poor</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
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This section is about the GC2018 impact on the Gold Coast City.

- No, why did you not attend any of the GC2018 events?

The GC2018 increased awareness of the Gold Coast city internationally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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The GC2018 improved the reputation of the Gold Coast for attracting new businesses.

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The GC2018 increased awareness of the Gold Coast city nationally.

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The state/federal government assisted businesses during the GC2018.

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The local council assisted businesses during the GC2018.

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‘Informal leadership’ (e.g. community groups, industry associations) assisted businesses during the GC2018.

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The GC2018 improved my business’ access to infrastructure (e.g. technology, communications, transport).

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The GC2018 improved my business’ access to suitable and affordable commercial property/real estate (e.g. warehouse, office buildings, studio space).

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The GC2018 improved the Gold Coast’s spatial layout (e.g. clusters, hubs, precincts, zones of activity) for businesses.

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Overall, the GC2018 has contributed to the Gold Coast’s image as a good place to do business.

Overall, the GC2018 has contributed to urban infrastructure that will build the city’s image.

The GC2018 will aid in attracting more sporting events to the Gold Coast.

The education and training associated with the GC2018 has improved the skill of Gold Coast workers.

The GC2018 has enhanced job prospects for workers on the Gold Coast.

The GC2018 has contributed to the Gold Coast growing into a world-class city with distinct strengths.

The GC2018 has assisted the Gold Coast in becoming more attractive to international trade and investment.

The GC2018 has improved residents’ support of local business.

The ways in which locals changed their behaviour during the GC2018 has become embedded (e.g. use of public transport, shopping, entertainment).

The GC2018 has improved relationships between different sectors (e.g. businesses, institutions, governments).

The GC2018 has improved relationships between businesses on the Gold Coast (e.g. sharing of resources such as knowledge, supplies and technology).

The GC2018 has improved the supply of relevant and reliable business information.

In your opinion, which best describes how the Gold Coast city was impacted by the GC2018?

The benefits to the Gold Coast City from the GC2018 met my expectations.

Overall, the GC2018 benefits to the Gold Coast were better than expected.

Overall, the GC2018 benefits to the Gold Coast were worse than expected.

The benefits to the Gold Coast from the GC2018 outweighed the consequences.

The Gold Coast should hold similar events to the GC2018 in the future.

The GC2018 provided ongoing benefits for businesses on the Gold Coast.

Would you like to make any other comments about how the GC2018 affected the Gold Coast City?
I would like to be updated with a summary of the research at the completion of the project.

[ ] Yes, please provide your e-mail below: __________________________________________
[ ] No

I would like to participate in future Gold Coast City research activities that may provide useful information to the Gold Coast business community.

[ ] Yes, please provide your e-mail below: __________________________________________
[ ] No

I would like to go into the draw to win 1 of two $500 Coles Myer vouchers.

[ ] Yes, please provide your contact below: __________________________________________
[ ] No

Name: __________________________________________
Phone number: _________________________________
Postal address: _________________________________

Thank you very much for finishing this survey!

Your answers will help inform businesses and planners for future events in the city.
Joan Carlini

Joan Carlini is a lecturer in the Department of Marketing at Griffith Business School. Her scholarly work specialises in the intersection of business, government and society. She chairs the Gold Coast Health Consumer Advisory Group, whose members actively work with Gold Coast Hospital to provide a consumer voice in the design, delivery, and planning of health services. Joan has significant industry experience having worked extensively in marketing and hospitality.

Andrew O’Neil

Andrew O’Neil is Professor of Political Science and Dean (Research) at Griffith Business School. He is the author of a range of scholarly publications and a regular contributor to international and national media outlets. Andrew is the recipient of a number of grants, including from the Australian Research Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Japan Foundation. Prior to entering academia in 2000, he was a Commonwealth Public Servant.

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