

Business owners ready to rebound

By DAMIAN BATHERSBY

THE Sunshine Coast business community appears set to bounce back from a tough three months in which the confidence of operators took a hammering.

Almost half of the respondents to a recent Sunshine Coast Business Confidence Survey said they had experienced weaker results during the September quarter – the opposite of results from the same period last year.

But the survey showed the majority believed there were better times ahead, with 43% expecting an increase in profitability and 21% planning to add staff.

Michael Campbell, a senior consultant with Brisbane-based economics and property consulting company the AECgroup, said uncertainty about the federal election, the hangover from the economic stimulus package and uncertainty about the Super Profits Tax proposal had all added to the woes of Coast businesses.

But he believed the tradi-

tionally quiet off-season had had the greatest impact.

“Tourism Queensland indicates that visitor numbers are down compared to a year ago and noted a specific decrease in Brisbane-based visitors to the Sunshine Coast,” Mr Campbell said.

“Generally, a third to a half of the survey respondents come from industries heavily impacted by tourism, reflecting the nature of the Sunshine Coast economy.”

Most of the 429 survey respondents said they were positive about the future, with 77% expecting things to improve or stay the same for the rest of the year.

Jason Law, the head of the Sunshine Coast Business Council, warned it was difficult to compare one quarter with another.

“Some times of the year are the peak for retail while other times are the peak for tourism, and there are times which are peaks for both,” Mr Law said.

“You have to get an accumulative view as the economic cycles have their peaks and troughs and businesses respond in different ways throughout the year.

“Speaking to (business council) members about the next three months, they are saying ‘yes, times are tough’ but there is an economic cycle affecting this time of year – post end-of-financial year, pre-Christmas, post-election, with an interest rate rise looming.

“They all conspire against business confidence.”



JASON LAW: Difficult to compare one quarter with another