

FEATURE YAMBA BUSINESS

Yamba businesses deserve to be supported. They employ local people, dig deep for local fundraisers, not to mention work very hard. With so many dedicated businesses in our very own community, why then do we see spending escape out of town?

Not a big consolation, but business communities globally are struggling with this very issue. An internet search will reveal a plethora of shop local mantras: *buy local smart thinking: shop with soul; support your community; buy local – you know you want to; create jobs - shop local; it pays to buy local;* and on it goes.

Even the best slogan will have little impact on those who don't already subscribe to the shop local principle. At best they preach to the converted. Behaviours don't change readily and consumers don't like being told what to do. In a democratic world, the reality is it's a buyer's choice as to how and where they spend their money.

So what can a Chamber of Commerce do to combat escape spending? If only we had the answer! (Then we could publish a best-seller and all go into early retirement!) In seeking that out we CAN positively feature what we do have in Yamba. We CAN promote our businesses in ways that put us in front of our market regularly and highlight our features. We CAN encourage awareness and nurture camaraderie with members which may have a flow on effect to the larger community. We CAN encourage business excellence – ALL year round and reward those publicly who continue to aim higher and do better. In our corner we do have local media who offer us a valuable tool in marketing our business community. With their help, we CAN ensure consumers are aware of the benefits of using Yamba businesses to meet their needs. Equally, Yamba businesses need to consider if they are indeed meeting the needs of its market. While this is a huge topic, for a snapshot, ask yourself if your environment is somewhere your customers want to be? Are your products and services right for your market? If pricing cannot be competitive with larger centres, are there alternatives or value adding strategies? Is your customer service REALLY hitting the right mark?

I have put my hand up to work with the Chamber, have ideas and hope to assist develop plans and set goals for implementing shop local initiatives. However, the Chamber will only be as successful as its members make it. We have a monthly newsletter in place and all Chamber members are encouraged to supply information about exciting initiatives, products or services. Not only members, but media outlets also receive this newsletter and may pick up on a story.

Next meeting, is a 'Good Ideas Session', aka strategic planning. Be they clever, obvious or even bizarre, our members have great ideas and we want to hear them. Let's brainstorm ideas and zero in on some specific new projects for the next financial year. Bring along your open minds and positive thinking. If you

can't get to the meeting but want your ideas shared, please email them through to info@yambansw.com.au and we will ensure they are added into the mix.

NEXT MEETING: Monday 4th August, Angourie Rainforest Resort, 7am. All welcome! Hot breakfast available - if taking advantage of breakfast please RSVP by 31st July, info@yambansw.com.au

Tania Williams, President Yamba Chamber of Commerce