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## Supporting business resilience and sustainability in Geelong

Faced with the deluge of information about climate change, emissions trading and carbon reduction schemes, business operators are often unsure how they may be affected. It can also prove difficult to accurately assess and adjust business operations to prepare for a future with higher energy, water and material costs

There is no doubt that in every direction we look we are constantly reminded of the never ending challenges businesses are likely to face in the future. Does coverage of Climate Change issues and the Federal Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme ring loud and clear? But with every cloud comes a silver lining – isn't that how it goes?

In a determined bid to provide hope and give a practical insight into what individual businesses can accomplish, a 2007/09 Leaders for Geelong Project Research Group is exploring how to improve a business's capacity to cope with future challenges, in particular office based micro and small businesses.

Working in collaboration with Barwon Regional Waste Management Group and Geelong Chamber of Commerce, the Leaders for Geelong Group is conducting a survey to assess how businesses (particularly small businesses) can be best supported and assisted.

An online survey has already been distributed to members of the Barwon Regional Waste Management's Waste Wise Geelong Network to seek feedback. In March, a second round of the survey will be distributed to Geelong Chamber of Commerce members, seeking further responses.

Key findings from round one of the survey includes:

- 81% of respondents acknowledge the importance of environmental sustainability to their business
- 60% of respondents had taken part in programs to assess environmental sustainability (82% had used the Waste Wise program)
- 83% of these respondents indicated that there were benefits from participating in these programs
- 46% of respondents are very aware of the impacts of climate change to their business
- 51% of respondents are very aware of steps to take to reduce water, waste and energy use
- 38% of these respondents indicated that they would like to take part in a case study to learn more about environmental sustainability and 96% of these respondents indicated that they would be willing to attend a forum to learn more about the case study process

To announce the findings of the survey, and further explore feedback from Geelong's business community, an invitation is extended to business owners to attend a breakfast Question & Answer Forum on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April at the Gordon TAFE's Davidson Restaurant. RSVP essential please contact [Carmen.clifford@committeeforgeelong.com.au](mailto:Carmen.clifford@committeeforgeelong.com.au) or register at [www.committeeforgeelong.com.au](http://www.committeeforgeelong.com.au)

The Leaders for Geelong participants thank Barwon Regional Waste Management Group's Waste Wise Geelong Network and Geelong Chamber of Commerce for supporting their endeavours and look forward to seeing a positive turnout at the Breakfast Q & A forum in April.

**ATTENTION:** *Geelong Chamber of Commerce members - keep an eye out in your inbox for the survey in the coming weeks. Your feedback will contribute to creating a purposeful support system to help local businesses adapt to change and succeed.*

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