

Businesses lacking in confidence

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SUBDUED business confidence is not expected to improve over the next few months, despite a declining unemployment rate in the Far North.

The latest Suncorp-CCIQ Business Pulse Survey, released today, revealed uncertainty around the federal election, benign economic growth and difficult operating conditions continued to weigh on the small business sector.

CCIQ noted an increased number of responses from Cairns businesses in the survey, which Cairns Chamber of Commerce president Nick Loukas explained was due to an increase in membership.

Businesses reported that

red and green tape were making it difficult to do business.

“The Cairns region has also been slammed by the southern media making out it is virtually a “no go zone”, which has impacted greatly on the tourism sector,” the report read.

“We need our tourism bodies to be proactive in telling our southern counterparts that the north is open for business.

“Businesses do not have any confidence to invest in growth nor increase employment opportunities while all governments are interested in infighting and back stabbing behaviour.

“The north Queensland region has had a tough six to 12 months, with disasters/weather events causing major costs/losses to businesses.”

Mr Loukas said the situ-

ation was not a case of riding out a few tough months.

“Decreases in general business conditions, profitability, capital expenditure, sales and revenue and employment levels while increases in operating costs saw a decrease in employment,” he said.

“They are worrying results however it is to be expected.

“Employment levels being stable continue to point towards increases in Queensland government employment artificially keeping overall employment numbers up.

“Cairns is seeing similar results and the next quarter is not looking better. We need more commercial sector business opportunities. We need jobs from the Convention Centre building project, from new mines and new roads.”