2026's biggest small-business website mistakes

The ten we fixed most often in 2026 on Australian trade, allied health and local service sites. None is about taste: each one loses enquiries you already paid to attract. Self-check on page 4.

1 No phone number above the fold on mobile

What we see: the number is in the footer, or behind the hamburger menu, or in an image that can't be tapped. On desktop it's top right; on a phone it has vanished.

Why it costs you: most visits to a local service site are on a phone, often by someone standing in front of the leaking pipe. If they can't tap to call in three seconds, they go back to Google and tap the next result.

The fix: a tappable *tel:* link in the header of every page, visible without scrolling, plus a sticky "Call" button at the bottom of the mobile screen.

BEFORE
Mobile header: logo, hamburger menu. Number at the bottom after 11 screens of scrolling.

AFTER
Mobile header: logo, "Call 08 9xxx xxxx" button. Sticky bar: Call | Get a quote.

2 The homepage is about you, not the customer

What we see: "Welcome to Smith & Sons. Established in 1998, we are a family-owned business committed to excellence." Three paragraphs later, still no mention of what you do or where.

Why it costs you: a visitor gives you about five seconds to answer three questions: what do you do, for whom, where. Miss any one and they leave. Nobody has ever chosen a plumber because of a commitment to excellence.

The fix: a headline that names the service, the area and the outcome. Then proof, then the button. History goes on the About page.

BEFORE
"Welcome to Smith & Sons. Established 1998. Committed to excellence."

AFTER
"Hot water replaced same day across Perth's northern suburbs. Fixed quote before we start. 4.9 stars from 180 reviews."

3 No prices, not even from-prices

What we see: "Contact us for a quote" on every service. The owner says every job is different. The customer hears "expensive, and they'll decide once they've sized me up".

Why it costs you: price is the first thing people want to know and the first thing they type into Google. Sites with a from-price or typical range get more and better-qualified enquiries, because the people who can't afford it have already left.

The fix: a "What it costs" section on each service page: typical range, what moves the price, what's included. Under Australian Consumer Law a from-price must be a genuine price someone can actually pay, so use real numbers.

BEFORE
"Every project is unique. Request a free quote."

AFTER
"Most initial physio appointments are $120 for 45 minutes. Follow-ups are $95. HICAPS on the spot. No referral needed."

4 The stock photo of the handshake

What we see: a glossy handshake, a woman with a headset, a diverse team laughing at a laptop. The same images appear on your competitor's site and on a bank in Ohio.

Why it costs you: people can spot stock in a blink and it reads as "they're hiding something" or "they're bigger and more corporate than I want". Real photos of your actual van, your actual face and your actual shopfront are the cheapest trust you can buy.

The fix: one half-day photo shoot (Door 18 has the shot list). Until then, a phone photo of the real team beats a perfect photo of strangers.

BEFORE
Hero image: two men in suits shaking hands in front of a glass building. The business is a Bunbury electrician.

AFTER
Hero image: the owner in front of the signwritten ute, looking at the camera, outside a house in Bunbury.

5 A contact form with nine fields

What we see: Name, Surname, Company, Email, Phone, Address, Suburb, Service type (dropdown of 14), How did you hear about us, Message, and a CAPTCHA that asks you to find the traffic lights.

Why it costs you: every field you add loses some of the people who were about to enquire. You are asking for the whole job history before you've said hello. The form is a door, not a questionnaire.

The fix: Name, mobile, and "What do you need?" Three fields, one button. Ask the rest on the phone. If spam is the worry, use an invisible check (Cloudflare Turnstile or reCAPTCHA v3), not a puzzle.

BEFORE
Nine fields, four of them required, a dropdown and a puzzle. Most people who start it give up.

AFTER
Three fields, a "Send" button, and a confirmation saying "we'll call within two business hours".

6 Slow, image-heavy pages

What we see: a 6 MB photo straight off the camera as the hero, a video that autoplays, five fonts, and three tracking scripts nobody remembers installing. The page takes eight seconds on a phone on a building site.

Why it costs you: most people won't wait more than about three seconds. Google also uses speed as a ranking signal, so a slow site gets fewer visitors and then loses more of them.

The fix: run the page through PageSpeed Insights (pagespeed.web.dev). Compress images to under 300 KB and 2000 px wide, use WebP, remove the plugins you don't use, and pay for hosting that isn't shared with 400 other sites.

BEFORE
Homepage 11 MB, mobile score 23, loads in 8 seconds on 4G.

AFTER
Homepage 1.4 MB, mobile score 84, loads in under 3 seconds. Same design, same photos, resized and compressed.

7 One "Services" page listing twelve things

What we see: a single page with twelve headings and two sentences under each. Blocked drains, hot water, gas fitting, bathroom renovations, all sharing one URL and one title tag.

Why it costs you: Google ranks pages, not businesses. A page about everything ranks for nothing. The person searching "hot water repair Joondalup" wants a page about hot water repair in Joondalup, with prices, photos and reviews about hot water.

The fix: one page per service you actually want more of. Start with the three most profitable. Each page: what, where, cost, proof, how to book. Four hundred words of plain English beats twelve headings.

BEFORE
/services (12 headings). Ranks on page 3 for "plumber" and nothing else.

AFTER
/hot-water-repairs-joondalup, /blocked-drains-joondalup, /gas-fitting-joondalup. Each one can rank for its own search; the old page never could.

8 The blog that stopped in 2023

What we see: a "News" link in the menu. Three posts: "Welcome to our new website" (March 2023), "Merry Christmas from the team" (December 2023), and nothing since.

Why it costs you: a dated blog tells a visitor the business might be dated too, or closed. It's a liability sitting in your main menu. An empty blog does less damage than an abandoned one.

The fix: either commit to one useful post a month (answer a question customers actually ask) or remove the blog from the menu and unpublish the old posts. Both are fine. Leaving it is not.

BEFORE
Menu: Home, About, Services, News, Contact.
News: last post 14 December 2023.

AFTER
Menu: Home, Services, Pricing, Reviews, Contact.
One "Guides" page with four evergreen articles, no dates shown.

9 No Google reviews or Business Profile link on the site

What we see: 140 five-star Google reviews that only exist on Google. The website has a "Testimonials" page with three quotes from 2019 and no names.

Why it costs you: reviews are the single strongest reason a stranger picks you. Hiding them from the people already on your site is throwing away the asset you worked hardest for. Anonymous quotes are read as made up.

The fix: show your live Google rating and the latest reviews on the homepage and every service page (free and paid plugins do this). Link to your Business Profile. Add a "Leave us a review" link to the thank-you page.

BEFORE
"Testimonials: 'Great service!' J.S."

AFTER
"4.8 stars from 143 Google reviews" with the five most recent, names and dates, pulled live, under the hero on every page.

10 Nobody owns the domain and hosting logins

What we see: the domain was registered by a nephew in 2014 with an email address that no longer exists. Hosting is paid by a card that expired. The web designer has moved to Bali. Nobody can get in.

Why it costs you: this is the mistake that kills websites outright. A surprising number of sites go dark in January because the domain renewal email went to an inbox nobody checks, and the .com.au on every van is gone.

The fix: this week, confirm the business owner is the domain registrant and the hosting account holder. Put both logins and renewal dates in a password manager you control. Door 22 has the register.

BEFORE
Domain registrant: a former staff member's Hotmail. Hosting: unknown. Renewal: unknown.

AFTER
Registrant: the business, at an address three people read. Hosting and domain in a shared password manager. Renewal dates in the calendar, 30 days early.

Self-check: ten questions, ten honest answers

#	Open your own site on your phone and answer	Yes / No
1	Can you tap to call from the first screen on mobile, without scrolling or opening a menu?	Y N
2	Does the homepage headline say what you do, where, and for whom?	Y N
3	Is there a real price, from-price or typical range on each main service?	Y N
4	Are the main photos of your actual people, vehicles and premises?	Y N
5	Does the contact form have four fields or fewer?	Y N
6	Does the homepage score above 70 on PageSpeed Insights (mobile)?	Y N
7	Does each service you want more of have its own page?	Y N
8	Is everything dated on the site from the last 12 months, or undated?	Y N
9	Are live Google reviews shown on the site, with a link to your profile?	Y N
10	Could you log in to your domain registrar and hosting right now?	Y N
	Number of "No" answers	

If you answered "No" to 4 or more: a rebuild is usually cheaper than patching, because fixing items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 9 properly means re-doing the pages anyway. A typical WordPress build is $4,400 + GST, six to eight weeks from brief to live. **Fewer than 4:** fix items 1, 5 and 10 yourself this week (or ask hosting support), and book the rest into February.

Bring your self-check to a free January planning call

We'll tell you which "No" answers matter most for you. Builds confirmed by 28 February 2027 get 10% off.

tidycal.com/ming/lets-jogo