



Speech by  
**Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

Hansard Wednesday, 24 March 2010

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### **BIZNESS BABES**

**Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.47 am): Thirteen Brisbane women who have been out of work and struggling against personal barriers for some time are looking to business to turn their lives around—their own businesses, that is. Last week those women graduated from the Bizness Babes program, which is funded by the Bligh government's Participate in Prosperity strategy, that provided a grant of \$84,000 to the Wise Foundation to help disadvantaged women from the Sunshine Coast, Brisbane and Deception Bay areas get their lives back on track and be better placed to earn incomes. It was a pleasure to represent the Treasurer at the graduation function and to meet those fantastic women and congratulate them on completing the program.

Participate in Prosperity is part of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work \$101 million 2009-10 initiative. It offers long-term individual case management to help people who struggle to meet basic needs such as financial, health and housing needs. Funded organisations help disadvantaged people deal with their obstacles and give them the assistance they need to improve their skills and employability.

The Brisbane women who took part in the Bizness Babes program had a goal to set up their own micro or small business and the project has helped them to develop the skills to turn their goals into reality. The executive director of the Wise Foundation, Alex McDonald, said the women had come from diverse backgrounds, with some having been unemployed for several years. Despite their personal barriers, many of the women had clear ideas of the businesses they wanted to establish, including jewellery making, a mobile coffee van service for a nearby industrial area and screenprinted environmentally friendly fabrics.

It was great to witness the Wise Foundation provide a small interest-free loan to program participant Keelley Sheenan, who founded *Peppermint* magazine and will now have an opportunity to more widely distribute her magazine and earn income from her efforts. Other graduates will aim to grow their businesses and employ staff. Congratulations to everybody involved in this project. I wish the participants all the very best in the future.