




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Small Business

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (10.07 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to growing the state's small business sector. Small businesses are the engine room of the economy, representing 97 per cent of all Queensland businesses and employing almost half of the state's private sector workforce. They play a vital role in generating economic activity and employment in communities across the state.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering on its election commitment to provide funding and support programs to small business. I will be in North Queensland with the member for Thuringowa tomorrow for a small business ideas forum, which is one way that we provide assistance to get new businesses off the ground and more people back into work. We also intend to include small business in our innovation agenda that is being delivered through our Advance Queensland initiative. We have put in place key initiatives to support small business, helping them grow and innovate through collaboration and the leveraging of digital technology.

In July last year the former minister for small business, the member for Ashgrove, launched the \$1 million Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow Home-based Business Grants Program to help stay-at-home parents establish or grow their home based businesses. In just one month almost 1,300 applications were received for the program and 202 of those applications were successful and are currently proceeding.

The Home-based Business Grants Program is already having a positive impact. Of the 87 per cent who have completed stage 1 so far, nearly two-thirds are expecting their revenue to increase substantially over the next 12 months. Further, 68 per cent believe the program has already or will improve their work-life balance.

The Mentoring for Growth program is another program that is making a tangible difference to small businesses in Queensland. In 2015, 160 panels were conducted and 596 growing businesses provided with advice and assistance across the state. Mentors volunteered 2,047 hours to the program at a nominal value of \$614,000. Just last week a team of mentors travelled to Kingaroy in the electorate of Nanango to conduct sessions with local businesses.

Small business has told us that offering advice and providing support to small business were the top two reasons for a favourable opinion of the Queensland government by small to medium sized business in the latest Sensis Business Index survey. The Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland is made for innovation and we intend to use it and other funding programs to help small business grow and create more jobs for Queenslanders into the future.