




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Small Business Week

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (10.11 am): Last week, I connected with more than 500 small businesses around the state as part of Queensland Small Business Week celebrations. On my travels throughout Queensland, small businesses delivered a strong message about what they believe will have a huge impact on their ability to grow, thrive and employ. I attended events on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane, Dalby, Toowoomba, Innisfail, Cairns, Yeppoon, Rockhampton and Logan. The message was the same. What I heard above all else across the week was that remaining positive about our economy and about the opportunities that we are seeing for growth in Queensland will have a positive impact on small business.

It was disappointing to see the LNP members try to turn the attention on themselves and spend most of the week talking down the Queensland economy during a time when we should all have been focusing on the vital role that small businesses play in regional economies throughout the state. Queensland Small Business Week was a fantastic celebration of small business in our state and an important opportunity for the government to connect directly with small business right throughout the regions.

More than 100 events were held in Queensland for Small Business Week, bringing together small business owners and operators to learn, network and find new ways to collaborate to innovate. At government hosted events in Toowoomba, Cairns, Rockhampton and Logan more than 250 people participated in the #fit4change workshops, which engaged participants in activities to prepare their business for greater innovation and participation in the digital economy. At each of these events a panel of innovative Queensland small business owners also provided insights into how thinking differently about business can deliver incredible outcomes.

The response from businesses that attended events has been incredibly positive, particularly in regard to the calibre of speakers, practical advice and the focus on innovation. Feedback that I have received directly from small business owners throughout the week was that mentoring was key to helping deliver greater results for the sector in Queensland.

Unfortunately, the former Newman-Nicholls LNP government failed to recognise this need and cut funding to the highly successful Mentoring for Growth program. The Palaszczuk government is putting resources back into the program and we are looking at ways to ensure that more small businesses can access quality mentoring. This will form part of our soon-to-be finalised Advancing Small Business Queensland strategy, which, along with our \$180 million Advance Queensland innovation and jobs plan, will help small businesses start, grow and employ.