




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Office of Small Business

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (10.19 am): As part of the Palaszczuk government's soon-to-be-released Advancing Small Business Strategy, we will be creating an Office of Small Business to help make Queensland the place for business to start, grow and employ. Our plans to further assist small business are part of our \$405 million whole-of-government Advance Queensland agenda.

The Office of Small Business will work proactively across government to achieve better coordination and connectivity, delivering improved outcomes for small business when interacting with government departments. One particular area of focus will be improving outcomes for small business when it comes to state government procurement programs. Another critical task of the Office of Small Business will be collaborating with stakeholders across the state to drive the implementation of the Advancing Small Business Queensland strategy. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that our state's 406,000 small businesses get the support they need to employ more people and create jobs. The establishment of the Office of Small Business is one of many actions that will be taken to ensure that Queensland's small businesses have the support they need to compete on global markets.

In addition to the Office of Small Business, the Palaszczuk government is also establishing the position of Small Business Champion to advocate on behalf of Queensland's small businesses on the national stage. The Small Business Champion replaces the position of Small Business Commissioner, which was abolished by the former LNP government. That move was yet another example of the LNP's refusal to engage the sector in any meaningful way with regard to the challenges it faced, particularly in the wake of the downturn in the resources sector.

Queensland's new Small Business Champion will perform several important functions, including advocacy to all levels of government on matters of concern to small business; representation at a national level on the Small Business Commissioners' forum—something that we have been absent from as a state since the abolishment by the LNP government of the Small Business Commissioner; and supporting small businesses to access information and education. The Small Business Champion will not have responsibility for investigating complaints or providing dispute resolution services as this would be a duplication of existing services.

Expressions of interest for the position of Small Business Champion will open soon and potential candidates will need to be an experienced businessperson and highly respected by small business. As with all senior appointments in the Palaszczuk government, they will be appointed through a merit based selection process. The Palaszczuk government's commitment to and support of small business is in stark contrast to the disregard shown towards the sector by those opposite when in government. They had no plan to support small business when they were in government, and they still do not.