



Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Budget, Small Business

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (9.51 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that our state's small businesses embrace digital technologies and the opportunities arising from digital disruption. As our economy resets itself, it is vital that we put in place support to help Queensland's small businesses compete in global markets and remain competitive domestically. That is why the Palaszczuk government has put in place a three-year \$6 million small business digital grants program as part of a suite of new and expanded programs under our Advancing Small Business Queensland strategy. Funding received through the program will be able to be spent on the purchase of hardware, software and services, such as digital coaching. Two million dollars per year over three years has been allocated for the program, which will provide grants of up to \$10,000 to be matched by participants. The digital grants program will be implemented by the new Office of Small Business and will be opened later this year.

This program is important, because research tells us that the adoption of digital technologies by Australian small business is low and seen as a barrier to growth. Many small businesses face global competition through the increase of low capital intensive e-commerce models. Queensland's small businesses will be in a stronger position to respond to competition, embrace new opportunities and grow into globally competitive businesses through utilising technologies, working smarter and fostering an entrepreneurial culture.

A report prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2015 estimated that the Queensland economy could be enhanced by up to \$11.3 billion over the next 10 years through the greater uptake of digital technologies by businesses. Small businesses have been found to be less likely to use e-commerce than larger businesses. They are also less likely to have an online presence through a dedicated website or social media. The Palaszczuk government wants to help small business embrace digital technologies and make the most of online business opportunities. Our digital grants program also aligns with the Queensland government's accelerated Advance Queensland agenda to help create jobs now and jobs for the future.

Empowering businesses to drive innovation, growth and employment is one of three key focus areas of the Advancing Small Business Queensland strategy. Helping small business to enter the digital economy will form a key action in the strategy to empower small business and support the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.