




Speech By
Nikki Boyd

MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS

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ADJOURNMENT

Women in Small Business

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (1.01 am): On Wednesday, 7 March—the eve of International Women’s Day—it was my pleasure to host a local small business women event at Wantima Country Club in Brendale with the Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business and representatives from the Office of Small Business, connecting women with the range of programs that the Palaszczuk government has launched to support small business. I know that small business is such an important part of our local economy, with over 4,000 small businesses in the Moreton Bay region.

Last year, we launched the Advancing Small Business Strategy, with a key focus to develop women in business and encourage them to start and grow their own business. We know that women in business have to juggle priorities and that they desire mentoring opportunities and connections with other business operators. Women who attended received information on the Accelerate Small Business Grants Program, allowing established businesses to access matched funding of up to \$10,000 to engage business coaches or advisory panels.

The Small Business Digital Grants program provide up to \$10,000 to access the latest digital technologies—hardware, software and services such as digital coaching. I have had a number of successful applicants in my community through round 1 and have met with them to discuss how this grant will transform their business and make them more productive and competitive.

The Small Business Entrepreneur Grants Program provides new small businesses with up to \$5,000 in matched funding for professional advice and support in the critical early stages of establishing a business. The Digital Scorecard checks businesses’ digital readiness and identifies ways to improve digital capability and be more competitive in a global digital economy. The Business Queensland website has a new look and it is easy to navigate, with its customisation feature allowing for fast personalised searches, which is essential for information on regulatory or licensing information, business tips and tricks, or templates for business planning.

During that evening, it was great to talk to many women who had undertaken the Mentoring for Growth program, which offers a panel of between six and eight volunteer business experts with insights, options and suggestions on challenges relating to growth and innovation. The feedback about the event from small business women was outstanding, with many attesting that the networking session saw them expand their customer base, providing key local contacts for follow-up and future business relationships.

On behalf of my community, I would like to thank the Office of Small Business, which hosted the event, and the minister, who provided us with empowering words through an energising address. I also acknowledge the local Pine Rivers Chamber of Commerce, particularly president Cheryl Springer, who has done a wonderful job in providing connection and information to local businesses in my area for many years.

I am proud to be part of a government that is launching programs that will see more successful small businesses, particularly for women. There will be a number of initiatives to support women in business over the next 12 months, including workshops catering to those at different stages of a business life cycle. I look forward to continuing on this journey with the local small business women of my area.