




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 13 August 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Coronavirus, Small Business

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.13 am): The Palaszczuk government knows our small businesses have been doing it tough during the global coronavirus pandemic. We have already paid more than \$130 million in grants to small businesses right across the state supporting almost 15,000 small businesses. Gaven based school uniform manufacturer, Mr Charles, will use their grant to promote their ecowear school uniforms produced from fabrics made from recycled plastics, such as drinking bottles. The 48-year-old business saw a decrease in sales when schools closed and they will use the grant to promote their business to schools across Queensland. Since they received the grant, their managing director, Deanne Wells, has seen an increase in sales, which is great news.

The grants are also supporting businesses in the regions, such as the Townsville Turf Club, which is using its \$10,000 small business grant to help it to increase its online presence and enhance its website. The Townsville Turf Club general manager, Natalie, said the grant would help improve their online platforms to get information out not only about the racing but also about their capacity to host events and functions while observing new ways to do business to restrict the spread of COVID-19.

The Mackay based Hotel Oceans International are using their grant to upgrade their website and make it more mobile friendly. The grant will also support a digital marketing campaign for the hotel to attract more tourists and let them know that Queensland is good to go. The business owner, Hannah, said that the grant will enhance their online presence and audience reach which will go a long way towards increasing their business. COVID-19 has forced our small businesses to adapt, and it is great to see that our grants are helping them pivot to become digitally capable but, most importantly, keep their businesses running and keep employing Queenslanders.

We are also investing in small business owners to give them the skills they need to adapt their business. Through our online skills hub, small business owners and their staff can access over 400 courses for free to learn across topics such as leading a successful business, digital skills, foundation business skills and more. So far we have seen almost 3,000 enrolments through the skills hub, and I would encourage more small businesses to jump online and look at how they can upskill and take their business to the next level. We know that small businesses are the engine room of our state's economy and provide jobs for close to one million Queenslanders. Delivering for small businesses is key to our government's economic plan.