

Question on Notice
No. 919
Asked on 19 August 2004

MS MOLLOY asked the Minister for State Development and Innovation (MR McGRADY) —

QUESTION:

What supports are in place on the Sunshine Coast for innovators of business?

ANSWER:

The Department of State Development and Innovation is committed to supporting a culture of innovation throughout the State and, in particular, opportunities for generating business growth, encouraging our local innovators and researchers to commercialise their new ideas, discoveries and technologies and creating more regional jobs.

Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast

In August 2000 the Queensland Government approved a contribution of \$500,000 toward the operating costs of a new technology incubator for the Sunshine Coast region.

Located on the campus of the University of the Sunshine Coast at Sippy Downs, this incubator has been branded the "Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast". Launched on 7 February 2002, the Innovation Centre has already attracted eight high potential companies in sectors such as software development, electronics, multimedia and nutraceuticals. The business incubator initially offered 600 square meters of flexible office space capable of supporting up to 15 tenants.

Stage 2 of the Innovation Centre was officially opened on 6 July 2004, creating office space for approximately 10 new companies and bringing the business incubator closer to its initial goal of creating 100 new jobs. The Innovation Centre will be part of a network of properly managed business incubators currently being developed within Queensland.

The Innovation Centre will be the key resource in the region for the development of new, largely high technology businesses and will act as the catalyst for the development of a knowledge precinct proposed in the newly planned Sippy Downs township. The precinct will include the recently established Sippy Downs Secondary College and is developing to include an area for enhanced business development of technology-related businesses.

State Development and Innovation Centre Sunshine Coast

State Development and Innovation Centre (SDIC) Sunshine Coast delivers the full range of business and export skills development initiatives offered by the Department of State Development and Innovation to a region which includes the three Local Governments of Caloundra City, and Maroochy and Noosa Shires.

These services and programs include:

- dissemination of business information and business self help tools;
- one-on-one business consultations assisting with business start-ups, business planning, adoption of new technologies and domestic and overseas market expansion; and
- workshop, seminars, forums and networking sessions covering small business management skills development, e-Commerce, industry cluster facilitation, enhancement of manufacturing capability and export development.

SDIC Sunshine Coast delivered over 74 business and market development workshops/seminars in the 2003/2004 financial year to 2,330 participants to support Queensland businesses expand and assist the local innovators and researchers to commercialise their new ideas, discoveries and technologies. The Centre is continuing its successful and popular business skills program and its continued commitment to the growth and success of business on the Sunshine Coast.

In particular, SDIC Sunshine Coast is holding a workshop, *Ideas2Market*, on 1 September 2004 in Maroochydore targeted at innovators, local business people, investors and commercialisation service providers regarding the many issues to consider when taking an idea or product to market. In addition the *Ideas2Market* website (www.ideas2market.qld.gov.au) provides specialised guidance on the processes of commercialisation to enhance successful commercialisation.

Additionally, SDIC Sunshine Coast, in partnership with QMI Solutions, is presenting *ProEdge – Manufacturing Excellence Program* in October 2004. This is a five day workshop to assist local manufacturing companies discover best practice techniques and improve their manufacturing performance through implementation of world class practices and technologies.

Further, development of the Manufacturing Industry Pipeline Mentoring for Growth program on the Sunshine Coast has assisted 12 small businesses to date. This program involves volunteer business mentors joining with departmental officers to provide mentoring sessions to assist high growth potential small businesses to move ahead.

Recently SDIC Sunshine Coast assisted the Noosa District High School with its Australian Business Week (ABW) Enterprise Education involving Year 11 students. This program assisted to bring the “future” potential business people in the Noosa area into a better business educated future.

On 11 October 2004, SDIC Sunshine Coast is championing a Making Local Futures Forum to promote understanding between industry, schools and training organisations. It will encourage schools and industry to address labour shortages, skills development and career pathways and secure futures.