

**Question on Notice
No. 1086
Asked on 9 June 2006**

MR McNAMARA asked the Minister for Small Business, Information Technology Policy and Multicultural Affairs (MR CUMMINS) —

QUESTION:

How has this Government supported small business in Queensland since the 1998 election?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question and for his strong support for small business within his electorate. The Beattie Government recognises that small business represents 96.5% of all Queensland businesses and employs around 50% of all private sector workers, and as such, this Government is committed to driving economic growth and innovation, developing business and industry and securing employment opportunities for Queenslanders.

The Queensland Government, in particular the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation, has a long history of strong support for the State's small business community.

The establishment of the Office of Small Business in 1998 and the Premiers announcement of a Minister for Small business in 2005 introduced a new and innovative focus on small business development and support for Queensland's small business community.

In May 1999, the Queensland Government established the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council to identify critical small business concerns and provide advice, recommendations and effective solutions to the Government. Council membership comprises representatives of Queensland business and industry associations and small business operators.

Since 1998, a range of financial assistance programs have been offered by the Queensland Government to support small business. Examples of key programs which have contributed to enhancing the development of Queensland small businesses during this time include:

- Queensland Industry Development Scheme – assisting businesses to increase markets, stimulate competitiveness, attract investment and foster innovation;
- Small Business Accelerator Program – assisting well managed, fast growing, Queensland-based small businesses to overcome growth barriers through the assistance of external experts; and
- Regional Business Development Scheme – assisting in the identification and development of regional business opportunities that contribute to the economic development and the diversification of industry and employment opportunities in each region.

Other significant initiatives which are supporting small business owners in Queensland include the:

- Women in Business Coaching Scheme – facilitating improved business performance by supporting the long-term growth and development of Queensland businesses that are owned and operated by women;
- Leadership and Management Program – designed to encourage Queensland-based trade and industry associations, clusters of small businesses, franchisors, and other business and industry groups to assist small business members to recognise and acknowledge the value of leadership and management; and
- Growing Regional Business initiative, an election commitment of the Queensland Government, is designed to stimulate investment and re investment into key regions. The Growing Regional Business initiative has also enabled the regions to formulate industry specific growth plans which include key industry projects that will generate investment strategies.

As indicated, the Department has, and continues to, offer a range of products and services designed to assist small business operators throughout Queensland.

Services are currently available from:

- SmartLicence – providing both over-the-counter and telephone information and support services for SmartLicence, the Government Business Information Service (GOBIS) and the Business Resource Centre;
- the Smart Small Business website (www.smartsmallbusiness.qld.gov.au) providing access to information and assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and
- 19 State Development Centres or assistance ‘shopfronts’ located around Queensland.

In 2006 I released the Small Business: a high priority for the Smart State discussion paper to provide small business owners with the opportunity to share their views on the issues impacting on their businesses. There was strong feedback to the paper from the small business community. By getting the views of the small business community, we can look at how these issues can be addressed to help businesses grow and keep delivering more jobs for Queenslanders.

Furthermore, the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation take a leading role in active regulatory reform. Since 1998 the Red Tape Reduction Stocktake has identified savings of over \$90 million to business and the community through red tape reduction initiatives undertaken across Queensland Government agencies.

The extensive range of support services and programs delivered by the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation demonstrates the Government’s commitment to supporting long term sustainability of Queensland’s vital small business sector.