

Question on Notice
No. 262
Asked on 7 March 2006

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

QUESTION:

What is the Government doing to address business regulation in Queensland?

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 represent 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 recognises that good regulation is important as it supports and encourages business development and competition, while at the same time safeguarding the public and employees, therefore, the Queensland Government is currently undertaking a number of significant activities aimed at improving the business regulatory environment.

The Red Tape Reduction Taskforce has expanded its work program to include the public Review of 'Hot Spots' for Regulatory Reform launched by me on 1 December 2005. The Review builds on the three specific regulatory reviews in the manufacturing (include food processing), retail and tourism industries.

Together, these reviews will identify areas where the burden of regulation is considered excessive by business and the community and make recommendations to government on ways to address it. Queensland businesses' support of these regulatory reviews has been tremendous, with a total of approximately 1,100 responses from the business community to date. Clearly business in Queensland is keen to have its say in creating a more dynamic business environment, one that continues to support growth.

Consultation on the industry reviews closed on 24 February 2006 and consultation on the Hot Spots review closes on 31 March 2006. I would appreciate your further support of the Review by encouraging your business colleagues to lodge a written submission or complete a questionnaire online at www.sdi.qld.gov.au/businessregulatoryreview.

The Queensland Government also continues to be committed to reviewing new and amending subordinate legislation likely to impose an appreciable cost on the community or part of the community through its regulatory impact statement process.

The Red Tape Reduction Stocktake identifies actions by government agencies to reduce red tape on business, and is conducted under the banner of the Red Tape Reduction Taskforce.

In 2003-2004, the Stocktake reported savings to business of over \$16 million from new Queensland Government red tape reduction activities. In the five year period between 1999 and 2004, total savings of over \$78 million were estimated through new initiatives identified in the Stocktake.

Finally, the government is also contributing to the national regulatory reform agenda. Business often does not differentiate between national, state and local regulations and requirements. Through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), the Queensland Government is working to not only minimise any adverse impacts of its regulation on business but also to encourage other levels of government to do likewise.

You will be pleased to know that red tape and regulatory reform have been identified as a significant issue for attention at the national level. Further information on the outcomes of the Council's meeting can be obtained at <http://www.coag.gov.au>.