

Question on Notice
No. 264
Asked on 7 March 2006

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

QUESTION:

With International Women's Day approaching, will he advise what the Government is doing for women in business?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and for her strong support for small business within her 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. Further, the Beattie Government is committed to ensuring its programs are relevant to the needs of Queensland's women in business.

Queensland business women can access any of the business assistance products and services available from the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation. However, two programs exist specifically to assist Queensland business women develop their business management skills.

The first of the Government's programs for women in business is the *Women in Business Coaching Scheme*. This scheme is a Queensland Government initiative which aims to help Queensland women business owners and operators identify and implement strategic, practical and cost-effective solutions to issues and challenges confronting their business.

Eligible organisations, which are approved for financial assistance under the Scheme, will be required to develop and deliver a Business Coaching Program within the organisation's local area. Programs funded under the Scheme will match participating women business owners and operators with a qualified business coach on the basis of identified business needs and the coach's individual abilities and strengths.

To be eligible for financial assistance under the Scheme, organisations must be not-for-profit, incorporated, and possess a business or economic development orientation.

Since the launch of the Scheme last year, a total of nine regionally-based organisations have been approved to receive between \$5,000 and \$15,000 each to conduct coaching programs for women in business in their local area.

Secondly, in February this year, the 2006 Smart Women Smart State Workshop Series commenced and are currently being delivered throughout Queensland. Global networking specialist, Robyn Henderson, will deliver 22 workshops in 17 locations throughout the State.

These workshops will provide women in business with valuable insight on how to maximise opportunities for business growth and development through effective relationship-building strategies. The workshops will also cover such topics as how to generate referrals; identify and network with decision-makers; establish a return on investment from all networking opportunities; turn business cards into business; and many more innovative interpersonal techniques that can advance their business.