

**Question on Notice
No. 308
Asked on 8 March 2006**

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

QUESTION:

With reference to International Women's Day and to a series of 18 Government sponsored workshops for women in business, which commences in Townsville on 9 March and concludes at the Sunshine Coast on 16 May —

Is there evidence that more Queensland women are starting and operating their own businesses and what are the expectations of workshops such as these and other Government initiatives for business women and women contemplating a business career in the Smart State?

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 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 Beattie Government recognises and appreciates the important contribution that women business operators make to the Queensland economy. Latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that women business operators, which include women business partners, comprise 33.8% of all business operators in the State.

To support the momentum for women's business ownership in Queensland, this Government has introduced the key initiatives specifically targeting Queensland's women business operators, as outlined below.

The Government launched the Women in Business Coaching Scheme in 2005. Coaching programs match participating women business operators with a qualified business coach on the basis of identified business needs and the coach's abilities and strengths. In doing so, women business owners are being given invaluable assistance to 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. 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.

The 2006 Smart Women Smart State Workshop Series commenced in February this year and is currently being delivered throughout Queensland. Global networking specialist, Robyn Henderson, is delivering this Series 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.