

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 621**  
**Asked on 21 April 2006**

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

**QUESTION:**

What is the Department of State Development doing to encourage business growth in regional Queensland, particularly on the Gold Coast?

**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, the small business sector plays a key role in the Queensland economy.

The Queensland Government is committed to driving economic growth and innovation, developing business and industry and securing employment opportunities in Queensland. The Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation actively seeks to promote and support small businesses through a range of business assistance and skills development initiatives offered through its state-wide network of 19 State Development Centres.

My recent launch of the discussion paper “Small Business – a high priority for the Smart State” heralded the commencement of intensive consultation with small businesses across the State. Outcomes from this consultative process will inform the future direction of small business support delivered by the Department throughout Queensland.

The Gold Coast State Development Centre delivers the Department’s full range of business skills and export development programs to a region which has over 56,000 businesses, and serves a good example of how the Department is encouraging business growth throughout regional Queensland.

Services to small business include one-on-one business consultation, workshops and seminars and the provision of information on licensing and support available from government. Of particular interest is the Small Business Accelerator Program, under which grants of up to \$5,000 are available for small businesses with identified growth potential, but which are hampered by issues such as difficulty in attracting investment capital or difficulties with financial management, marketing or recruitment.

Major outputs for State Development Centre Gold Coast for the 2005-2006 financial year (as at end March 2006) include:

- delivery of 60 workshops and seminars to 1,281 small and medium sized businesses;
- provision of 60 business information packages;
- delivery of eight Exporter Development initiatives to Queensland business;
- delivery of four business and industry development forums to 35 Queensland business and industry participants;
- delivery of 33 grants totalling \$489,538 to Queensland business and industry under the Queensland Industry Development Scheme, the Small Business Accelerator Program and the Leadership and Management Program – projects supported by grants included export and strategic planning, product, process and business development and process improvement; and
- delivery of 2,369 significant one-on-one business consultations.

The Department also delivers a range of online information and training services through its Smart Small Business Website ([www.smartsmallbusiness.qld.gov.au](http://www.smartsmallbusiness.qld.gov.au)), the most comprehensive website for small business in Australia. Services include SmartLicence Online, Smart Skills Online and the Steps to Growth program. The website is being expanded to include more online services tailored for regional or remote small businesses, which have difficulty accessing Queensland's 19 State Development Centres, so that they can get support such as export assistance, business mentoring and financial advice over the internet.

Additional resources for small business information, licensing and support are available through the Department's Call Centre on telephone 1300 363 711.