

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 673**  
**Asked on 9 May 2006**

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

**QUESTION:**

With the closing date for the small business discussion paper, “Small Business – a high priority for the Smart State” fast approaching, will he outline some of the issues small businesses in Queensland are raising?

**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.

On 21 March 2006, I launched a comprehensive consultation process to gather feedback on issues affecting Queensland’s small business community. These issues were canvassed in the Queensland Government discussion paper, *Small Business – a high priority for the Smart State*.

As part of the consultation process I undertook a road trip throughout Queensland promoting the release of the discussion paper and encouraging the small business community to participate in the consultation process. Areas visited during my road trip included Mackay, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Ipswich, Rockhampton, Townsville, Caboolture, Bowen, Proserpine, Logan and Virginia.

Small business operators and other interested stakeholders, who included trade, industry and professional associations, were given until Friday 12 May 2006 to respond to these issues.

This process has yielded considerable interest from the small business community, with over 300 responses received by email/mail. There have also been extensive meetings held with industry associations. Our 19 State Development Centres have held seminars and workshops with small business operators. There have been over 91 participants in public forums and a large number of mail outs have been sent, to name but a few. All of the responses/feedback received are currently being given careful consideration.

Responses received to date have been highly informative and cover a range of issues including:

- management skills;
- red tape reduction;
- industry liaison;
- home-based business;
- investment attraction;
- women in business;
- communication with small business;
- intellectual property; and
- skills shortages.

I'd like to thank all those businesses who contributed to the consultation process. This kind of industry feedback is crucial to reform and will help ensure a strong and healthy small business sector that will keep growth on track and maintain the lowest unemployment levels this State has had in 30 years.