

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 701**  
**Asked on 10 May 2006**

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

**QUESTION:**

With reference to the release of the Federal Government's Banks' Report on reducing the regulatory burdens on business —

What is the Queensland Government doing to encourage the reduction of red tape 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 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.

Red tape reduction is a high priority for the Beattie Government and it is something that we are tackling at both the State and national levels.

At the State level, the program of work conducted under the Government's Red Tape Reduction Taskforce is a key contributor to these efforts. The taskforce, which I chair, is the Government's main business body advising on regulatory reform. In recognition of this contribution, the membership of the taskforce was expanded in December 2005 and its activities now include:

- Providing advice to inform Queensland's contribution to the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) national reform agenda.
- Conducting the Public Review of Hot Spots for Regulatory Reform and reviews of the impacts of regulations on the manufacturing (including food processing), retail and tourism industries. These reviews were underpinned by direct engagement between business and government to identify key issues for attention as part of the Queensland Government's regulatory reform agenda.
- Conducting the annual Red Tape Reduction Stocktake, which identifies initiatives across government to reduce the regulatory burden on and deliver savings to Queensland business.

The four regulatory reviews focussed on obtaining information directly from business on what they see as the biggest red tape problems. We have received an outstanding response with over 1,200 submissions across the four reviews from the business community.

Recommendations from these reviews are currently being finalised and will be considered by the Government in mid-year.

I also released the report on the 2004-2005 Red Tape Reduction Stocktake on 10 May 2006 outlining great examples of where the Queensland Government is continuing to make it easier for businesses to operate. Now in its eighth year, the 2004-2005 Stocktake details 26 initiatives which have achieved estimated savings in total of more than \$14 million for Queensland business. In fact, since 1999 savings to business reported through red tape reduction stocktakes now total more than \$90 million.

These initiatives range from the continued expansion of online services to the abolition of unnecessarily burdensome regulatory requirements. Queensland has in been taking the lead in this area for years with initiatives such as *SmartLicence Online*.

In addition to the financial benefits identified, indirect savings flow from a number of initiatives which have broad ranging impacts.

While not reported as part of the stocktake, the Beattie Government's focus on red tape reduction extends beyond the business community, and many Queenslanders are benefiting from initiatives continually being introduced to streamline government processes and improve access to services.

Finally, at the national level, we are working with the Australian Government and the other states and territories through the COAG process to address areas of inconsistent or duplicated regulation across jurisdictions. At its February 2006 meeting, COAG agreed to a national reform agenda, which features recommendations on best practice regulation and reducing the regulatory burden on business.

Red tape reduction will continue to be high on the COAG agenda at its next meeting in July 2006. The recent Federal Report of the Taskforce on Reducing Regulatory Burdens on Business was released publicly on 7 April 2006.

The Beattie Government is committed to undertake regulatory reform initiatives that will bring about real and continued change. Collectively, the initiatives being undertaken by the Queensland Government are a direct recognition of the desire of business for meaningful improvements in red tape reduction which will contribute to the competitiveness of the Queensland business environment.