

**Question on Notice
No. 816
Asked on 24 May 2006**

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

QUESTION:

What is the Government doing to assist residents and home-based business owners in my electorate of Ipswich West who are making the choice to work from home?

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.

Home based businesses are an important and growing segment of Queensland's small business sector. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 63% of all small business in Queensland are home based. Therefore, the Queensland Government, through the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation, has developed a range of products and services designed to assist small business operators, including home-based businesses, throughout Queensland. These services are delivered by a state wide network of 19 State Development Centres.

The Ipswich State Development Centre delivers the department's services and programs in a region which includes Ipswich as well as the Shires of Esk, Gatton, Laidley and Boonah. Services and programs offered include:

- Facilitation of *SmartLicence* applications. *SmartLicence* is the Department's one-stop-shop for business registration and licensing requirements.
- Dissemination of business information and business self help tools.
- One-on-one business consultations, assisting with business start-ups, business planning, investment attraction, adoption of new technologies and domestic and overseas market expansion.
- Workshops, seminars, forums and networking sessions covering small business management skills development, e-Commerce, women in business, industry cluster facilitation, enhancement of manufacturing capability and export development.
- The Small Business Accelerator Program which assists well managed, fast growing, Queensland-based small businesses to overcome growth barriers through the assistance of external experts.

In addition, the Department has undertaken broad research into the specific requirements of home based business. The findings of this research resulted in the development of two resource manuals for home based business operators working either *at home* or *from home*.

The home based business manuals have proven to be extremely successful. A total of 10,000 manuals were printed, and all have been consumed by Queensland businesses throughout Queensland. Electronic copies of the manuals have also been downloaded from the Smart Small Business website. The Department is currently revising the manuals and arranging reprinting to meet the high demand of these useful and relevant business tools.

The Smart Small Business website, www.smartsmallbusiness.qld.gov.au, which was developed by the Department comprises a wide range of online business development assistance measures, which are particularly relevant to the knowledge and information requirements of the home based business sector.

Online services and products include:

- downloadable copies of the home based business manuals;
- fact sheets about operating home based businesses;
- an online bookshop for clients to browse and buy business books;
- GOBiS (Government Business Information Service) Online, which helps to identify relevant State and Commonwealth Government services for businesses;
- *SmartLicence* Online which identifies business licensing requirements from all three levels of government and produces a tailored list of information and application forms for enquiring businesses;
- Smart Skills Online which offers a number of business skills programs; and
- a Business Readiness Diagnostic to assist business intenders to evaluate their state of readiness to commence in business.

Further, it is important to note that in 2004 the department participated on the Small Business Ministerial Council's national Home-based Business Working Party. The department proposed a case study to the Working Party, which focussed on a Queensland local government's efforts directed at identifying the needs of its local home-based business sector. This material was accepted by the Working Party, and incorporated into the Commonwealth Government publication *Home-based Business: Local Opportunities*, which is aimed at raising awareness among local councils to proactively support the home-based business sector. This publication has been circulated to all local governments in Queensland.

Operators of home based businesses may access the services offered by the Ipswich State Development Centre either in person at 26 East Street, Ipswich, or by telephone on 3280 1943.