

Question on Notice
No. 823
Asked on 24 May 2006

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

QUESTION:

What further plans has he in place to support small businesses in regions of Queensland and, in particular, the Sunshine Coast?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question. The Beattie Government recognises that small business represent 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 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 throughout Queensland. These services are delivered by a state wide network of 19 State Development Centres and through the Department's interactive online training known as 'Smart Skills'.

State Development Centre Sunshine Coast delivers the Department's services and programs within the three local government areas of Caloundra City and Maroochy and Noosa Shires. 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; and
- 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.

State Development Centre Sunshine Coast also provides access to financial assistance programs designed to help Queensland businesses expand and create new employment. These programs include:

- Queensland Industry Development Scheme – assisting businesses to increase markets, stimulate competitiveness, attract investment and foster innovation;
- Small Business Accelerator Program – assisting well managed, fast growing, Queensland-based small businesses to overcome growth barriers through the assistance of external experts;

- Leadership and Management Program – designed to encourage Queensland-based trade and industry associations, clusters of small businesses, franchisors, and other business and industry groups to assist small business members to recognise and acknowledge the value of leadership and management.

Other significant initiatives which are supporting small business owners in the Sunshine Coast area include:

- Women in Business Coaching Scheme – facilitating improved business performance by supporting the long-term growth and development of Queensland businesses that are owned and operated by women. The Scheme assists in the identification and implementation of strategic, practical, and cost-effective solutions to issues and challenges confronting their businesses through participation in monthly workshops and one-to-one mentoring. Since the launch of the Women in Business Coaching Scheme in 2005, 10 organisations have been approved to receive funding under the Scheme. Successful applicants include two from the Sunshine Coast and hinterland, namely the Hinterland Business Centre and the Maroochydore Chamber of Commerce.
- Small Business Week (30 July to 6 August 2006) – State Development Centre Sunshine Coast will be conducting a number of events designed to assist business owners and operators to develop their business management skills. Topics include marketing, protecting your intellectual property, business planning, franchising and exporting.
- The Premier of Queensland's Export Awards - the Export Awards identify and reward the most successful and innovative local exporters. Award winners are promoted in their local region, stimulating greater involvement in exporting among regional businesses. The 2006 Sunshine Coast Regional Export Awards will be held in October in conjunction with the Maroochydore Chamber of Commerce Regional Excellence in Business Awards.

The Queensland Government recognises the valuable contribution that small businesses in regional Queensland make to the State's economy and continues to provide support to assist these businesses to grow.