

**Question on Notice
No. 957
Asked on 6 June 2006**

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

QUESTION:

How is the Department of State Development helping the growing numbers of women business owners in their business operations?

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, this Government is committed to driving economic growth and innovation, developing business and industry and securing employment opportunities for Queenslanders.

The Beattie Government recognises and appreciates the important contribution that women business operators make to the Queensland economy. Latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicate that women business operators, which include women business partners, comprise 33.8% of all business operators in the State.

This Government is committed to enhancing and promoting the participation of women in business and to ensuring our programs are relevant to the needs of Queensland's women in business. Furthermore, the Queensland Government is focused on helping Queensland business women meet the challenges of today's highly competitive global marketplace.

While Queensland business women can access any of the business assistance products and services available from the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation, two programs have been specifically developed to assist Queensland business women develop their business and management skills.

The first of these programs is the Smart Women Smart State Workshop Series. Since 2003, five series of workshops have been delivered, which have attracted almost 3,500 participants to date. These workshops have focused on a variety of business development topics, such as, communication, marketing, leadership, human resource management and business networking.

The second program for women in business is the Women in Business Coaching Scheme, which provides grant funding to business, professional associations and community-based organisations with a business development focus to deliver coaching programs in their local area.

Coaching programs funded through the Scheme deliver tailored management skill workshops and provide participants with access to business coaches in both one-on-one and group situations, allowing them to work on real business issues. A total of eight coaching programs are currently underway in the following locations: Gladstone, Helensvale, Logan, Mackay, Maroochydore, Rockhampton, South Brisbane and Sunshine Coast Hinterland.

Whether it's coaching programs, workshops or financial assistance, we know that by supporting women in business, we can support ongoing economic growth and prosperity – it's a smart strategy paying dividends.