

**Question on Notice
No. 459
Asked on 6 June 2013**

MR MINNIKIN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM, MAJOR EVENTS, SMALL BUSINESS AND THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES (MRS STUCKEY) —

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise how small businesses in the Chatsworth Electorate will benefit from the Queensland Small Business Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2015?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Chatsworth for the question.

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting all Queensland small businesses including small business owners and operators in Chatsworth. As a demonstration of our commitment, I was pleased to launch the Queensland Small Business Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2015 at the HomeBiz Connect Expo held in Brisbane in May 2013.

The Strategy and Action Plan is a whole-of-government framework which provides a planned and coordinated approach to set the economic conditions for business success, and to get small businesses across the state back on track.

Specifically, under the Strategy and Action Plan, the government is implementing 32 actions over the next two years aimed at lowering unemployment, cutting red and green tape, increasing opportunities to access major project supply chains, strengthening business to government engagement, and maximising business potential.

A number of initiatives are already in place. The government has expanded the payroll tax exemption threshold to \$1.1 million, removing the need for approximately 90 per cent of Queensland's employing businesses to pay payroll tax. The previous government's Commercial Waste Levy, a \$35 a tonne tax which would have imposed additional costs on small businesses, has been abolished. Also, the government payment systems are now monitored to ensure all bills from suppliers to the government involving contracts of up to \$1 million are paid within 30 days.

Another key initiative under the Strategy and Action Plan is the "Think Queensland, buy locally" campaign which encourages all Queensland residents and visitors to buy goods and services in their local area. To help get the message across to consumers, promotional material can be downloaded from the business and industry portal at www.business.qld.gov.au. Businesses from the Chatsworth electorate are encouraged to get behind this initiative and help support Queensland's small businesses.

This year's budget allocates \$7 million to continue support for small businesses and deliver business to government services. This investment is enhancing the successful business and industry portal, our one-stop shop for business access to government services. Since taking office, we have grown the number of guides on the business and industry portal from 150 to over 600. Over the last 12 months we have seen an increase of over 300 per cent in unique visitor numbers to the portal, and I am pleased to report that on 2 June the portal recorded over 1 million unique visitors for this financial year — a sure sign it is delivering what small business wants.

The portal, www.business.qld.gov.au, provides Chatsworth's 4,213 small businesses with access to a wide range of support services including information, online resources and tools, for example, checklists and tips for preparing a business for natural disasters, or advice on developing a marketing plan or preparing a credible business plan. In addition, information relevant to specific industry sectors is available through the portal. Businesses in the major small business sectors in the Chatsworth electorate, such as construction, agriculture, real estate services, and professional services will benefit from these resources.

We will also continue other initiatives which will directly assist small, micro and non-employing businesses. This includes coordinating and opening up opportunities for small businesses to supply goods and services for government major projects, raise awareness of the huge range of business services offered by the Queensland Government, and stage the inaugural Queensland Small Business Week. The Week, which will be held from Wednesday 24 July to Wednesday 31 July, aims to promote the importance of small businesses to the Queensland economy, and give small business owners and operators the opportunity to hear new ideas, connect with other businesses and access information to help them grow and become more resilient. I encourage all Chatsworth businesses to get behind the Queensland Small Business Week and celebrate the contribution they make to the Chatsworth and Queensland economies. Further information is available by visiting www.business.qld.gov.au/smallbusinessweek.

In addition, eligible businesses in the Chatsworth electorate can also access "Mentoring for Growth", a program in which potentially high growth firms can get advice from volunteer private sector mentors to develop commercial opportunities. Web based seminars on key business topics are also regularly delivered, recorded and made available 24/7 to help small businesses increase their capacity to grow.

The government has also moved to simplify administrative processes for small business and has joined other states and territories in merging into a single national register for business names, to streamline the application process and reduce the costs on business, particularly those trading across state and territory borders.

All of these actions are directed at supporting a climate in which Queensland small business can operate and grow, including small businesses in the Chatsworth electorate.

The government is committed to working with the business community and our industry partners to implement the actions under the Strategy and Action Plan, and to secure the future prosperity of small businesses in Chatsworth and across the state.