

Subject: Emailing: LAUNCH OF THE COUNCIL OF SMALL BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS OF AUSTRALIA BUSINESS BUILDING BLOCKS
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Conversation: Emailing: LAUNCH OF THE COUNCIL OF SMALL BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS OF AUSTRALIA BUSINESS BUILDING BLOCKS

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KIM CARR](#)

Minister for Innovation,
Industry, Science and
Research

LAUNCH OF THE COUNCIL OF SMALL BUSINESS ORGANISATIONS OF AUSTRALIA BUSINESS BUILDING BLOCKS

19 May 2011

Sydney

[check against delivery]

Thanks for the opportunity to speak to you all today and to launch the Building Business Blocks pilot.

Today's event is great news - particularly in view of COSBOA's role as the peak body representing the interests of Australia's small businesses.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations has funded this \$500,000 online training pilot which COSBOA will lead.

As BBB project manager, COSBOA will design and run an interactive website to deliver seven online modules of free business management training as well as a "train the trainer" module.

Thousands of businesses will be able to take up some, if not all, of the training opportunities.

Today's launch of the BBB pilot comes hard on the heels of several other Gillard Government initiatives.

All are designed to assist small business, help it become more competitive and make it more aware of other Government services available.

Budget initiatives

Last week's Budget shows our commitment to helping small business, with the announcement of a tax write-off of the first \$5,000 of any vehicle purchased from 2012-13.

Motor vehicles are the main capital item for many of Australia's 2.7 million small businesses - so this tax relief will deliver improved cash flows allowing operators to reinvest and expand their businesses.

This is on top of the other small business measures we've already flagged, including:

- an immediate write-off of all assets valued at under \$5,000 - a big increase on the present \$1,000 limit;
- a revised write-off of all other assets - except buildings - in a single depreciation pool at a rate of 30 per cent ... dropping the existing process where small businesses allocate assets to two depreciation pools with different rates; and
- a reduction in company tax rate to 29 per cent - to take effect a year earlier for incorporated small businesses.

I also announced the Small Business Support Line will receive \$7.1 million to continue for another four years. The support line, staffed by agents who have owned, operated or worked in a small business, provides expert advice to businesses regardless of their location.

It's helped more than 30,000 callers since its inception barely 18 months ago.

Businesses need help with issues ranging from finance to cash flow management, retail leasing, business diagnostic services, independent contracting and marketing - even personal stress and hardship counselling.

The support line meets these needs, with a satisfaction rating of 91 per cent.

Personal Property Securities Legislation

Cash flow and access to finance are big issues for business and the Gillard Government is creating a national lending framework to allow the use of personal property as security ... involving any form of property other than land.

Related Links

[Business Building Blocks](#)

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From October, there will be a national online Personal Property Securities (PPS) Register, replacing multiple Commonwealth, State and Territory registers of personal property security interests.

This will make it easier for borrowers to establish security when they apply for a loan; and it will be simpler for lenders to cross check the security that a would-be borrower puts up.

A national road show is underway to raise awareness of new PPS laws, which involve a single Commonwealth Act replacing over 70 pieces of legislation.

The road show is travelling to more than 50 centres across Australia over the next two months - major regional, rural and outer metropolitan areas in every state and territory are on the itinerary.

It is a good policy with potential for significant savings.

Access Economics reports that where unsecured lending is replaced by secured lending - as the Government proposes in these reforms - the cost of borrowing may drop by three to four per cent.

Small Business Resource Kit

Earlier this week, I launched the Small Business Resource Kit, a new way to access important information.

The kit is a selection of resources and guides loaded onto a USB flash drive.

It includes recently updated versions of the popular *Starting your business* and *Growing your business* checklists to guide users through stages of business development.

Users will be able to amend or add to these electronic checklists, ensuring access to the most up-to-date information.

The kit links into valuable online resources on the business.gov.au website, including:

[The Grants & Assistance Finder](#) - a free search tool that lets businesses find Australian, state and territory government grants most relevant to them

[Advisor Finder](#) - which helps small businesses locate government business advisory services in their area

[Business Loan Finder](#) - a useful guide for small businesses on finance options available from banks and other lenders, it can help locate and compare business loan options.

The kit also contains a range of planning templates, comprehensive handbooks and contacts - documents which are available in electronic form for the first time.

Building Business Blocks

Bearing all these programs in mind, I think I can safely say today's announcement is the latest in a long list of Government initiatives.

The Building Business Blocks project takes government assistance to a whole new level, extending beyond advice to a formally recognised training regime.

DEEWR allocated the money through its Workplace Innovation Program - or WIP.

WIP began in 1999 as the National Industry Skills Initiative, and was renamed the National Skills Shortages Strategy in 2004.

The program took its current name in 2008 to reflect the changing priorities focusing on workforce development as well as skills shortages.

DEEWR funding ends at the beginning of August, but I understand from COSBOA the pilot will probably go to the end of the year.

A number of organisations have come on board with COSBOA.

The University of Western Sydney is involved with development and design of the training modules and online platform.

The North Sydney Institute of TAFE has also worked on the training modules.

As Small Business Minister, I'm pleased to see a number of Business Enterprise Centres - Orange in central western New South Wales, the Kangan Institute at Essendon in Melbourne and Clearly Business in Sydney - are also involved.

The BECs are among the 37 Australia-wide that the Gillard Government has funded to the tune of \$42.5 million.

DEEWR identified three priority employment areas for the BBB pilot, Greater Western Sydney - particularly the Bankstown Parramatta region, Orange and Essendon.

The involvement of regional BECs is to facilitate at least 2000 businesses from these regions access the website and take up the training opportunities.

The experience BEC consultants will gain in helping deliver the BBB pilot training modules will be invaluable tools for their broader role of assisting businesses.

The reach of these BECs continues to grow in the business community.

And just last month, the Gillard Government made available additional funding of \$3.3 million to BECs and not-for-profit organisations to deliver advice and support for small businesses affected by recent natural disasters.

The big attraction with BBB is the opportunity for participants to receive accreditation for their learning through a registered training organisation once they complete the full online course - that is, all seven modules.

Once enrolled, participants will be assigned an assessor either from Business Enterprise Centres Australia or Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE.

For accreditation, participants will need to complete learning units and submit a business plan to their assessor using the format they can access via the website.

They will need to pay a registered training organisation if they want formal assessment for a Certificate three in micro-business operations.

PricewaterhouseCoopers will conduct a formal evaluation of the pilot.

As everything is conducted online, PwC will be able to assess which modules are accessed or completed most. PwC will also conduct exit surveys to explore participants' feedback.

As the Gillard Government's Minister for Small Business, I'm proud to be associated with this initiative and urge everyone to have a look at the website www.businessbuilding.com.au

I congratulate everyone involved in the development of this great idea and it gives me much pleasure to officially launch Business Building Blocks.