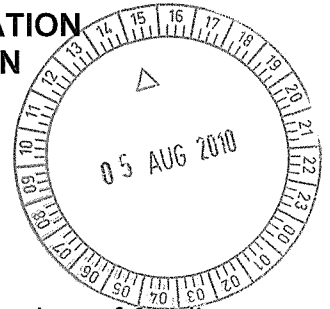


**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**



Friday, 16 July 2010

Ministry of Commerce

Question No D1: Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich asked for the results of the review of funding for Small Business Centres.

Answer:

The Small Business Centre Program funding is subject to ongoing review from an operational perspective to identify and address issues across the network and to ensure individual centres remain viable within existing resources.

During the 2009/10 financial period this ongoing review identified significant cost pressures affecting the Small Business Centres of West Pilbara (located in Karratha) and East Pilbara (located in Port Hedland). This resulted in a once off supplementary funding allocation of \$50,000 to each centre.

Also during this financial period, a total of \$96,000 resulting from the cessation of funding of the Small Business Centre Belmont was distributed amongst the following Small Business Centres:

- East Kimberley (Kununurra) - \$20,000
- East Pilbara (Port Hedland) - \$20,000
- West Pilbara (Karratha) - \$20,000
- Midwest (Geraldton) - \$11,000
- Warren/Blackwood (Manjimup) - \$10,000
- Goldfields (Kalgoorlie) - \$15,000

These Centres were experiencing high cost pressures and limited revenue opportunities, and the additional funds now form part of their core funding.

Question D2: Hon Ken Travers asked for client contact statistics for the last five (5) years including details of trends in the nature and type of inquiries received.

Answer:

The number of people accessing SBDC's services has increased by more than 50% over the last five years. This has been largely due to strong growth in people accessing our services online, the launch of the State Migration Centre and the Go West Now campaign.

An analysis of clients accessing the advisory service over the last five years reveals the two areas of greatest demand are trader versus trader and commercial leasing.

Other significant areas include business planning, marketing, starting a business and compliance (tax and legal).

Annual Client Contacts by Contact Type

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
In Person Client Contact	71934	86319	87214	100242	90241
Online Client Contact	120884	186890	222925	245138	204179
Total Direct Contacts	192818	273209	310139	345380	294420

The fall in contacts in 2009/2010 is largely due to:

1. In person contacts - a fall in skilled and business migration related enquiries. This is largely due to a significant scaling back in marketing and promotion of the State Migration Centre program along with the transfer of the Skilled Migration program to the Department of Training and Workforce Development in May 2010; and
2. Online contacts - a fall in the participation in the Home Based Business and Young Business online networks of almost 30 percent. This is likely due to the reprioritisation of SBDC resources from online networks to the introduction of the BIZFit program.

Question D3: Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich asked for the number of inquiries during 2009/10 in respect of franchising and commercial tenancy.

Answer: In 2009/10, 2323 clients sought information from the SBDC in relation to commercial tenancy issues. During the same period the SBDC assisted 121 clients to make application to the State Administrative Tribunal in relation to commercial tenancies.

The SBDC also dealt with 305 franchising inquiries in 2009/10.

