



The Hon Andrew Stoner MP
Deputy Premier of NSW
Minister for Trade and Investment
Minister for Regional Infrastructure and Services

The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Small Business

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW SMALL BUSINESSES TO BENEFIT FROM \$5M ASSISTANCE FUND

Deputy Premier and Minister for Trade and Investment Andrew Stoner and Minister for Small Business Katrina Hodgkinson today launched the NSW Government's \$5 million Small Biz Connect program.

Mr Stoner said the NSW Government will expand small business support services across the State through the redevelopment of the existing Business Advisory Service (which expires on 30 June 2012) into the Small Biz Connect program.

"The NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is committed to backing small business in NSW and as part of this commitment we are dedicating \$5 million for the delivery of small business support services under the Small Biz Connect program," Mr Stoner said.

"In these times of economic uncertainty, it is important for small businesses right across the State to know that the NSW Government is standing alongside them for support and advice to help them start, grow and prosper.

"We want to give more depth to small business service delivery across the State, especially in regional areas of NSW where business confidence suffered a serious blow under the former Labor Government.

"The NSW Government is using this opportunity to refocus its resources on improving small business performance and growth by expanding small business support at a grass roots level."

Ms Hodgkinson said that a key finding of the NSW Small Business Commissioner's listening tour was that small business operators across the State value face to face advisory assistance.

"As a former small business owner, I understand the importance of having someone in your region working face to face with you on developing your business. This was not a priority for the former Government," Ms Hodgkinson said.

"I have asked that the Small Business Commissioner seeks out innovative solutions to deliver small business advisory services across the State from not for profit providers of small business services, by calling for Expressions of Interest for the delivery of the Small Biz Connect program.

“Small Biz Connect will directly engage with small business operators through a range of innovative services tailored to meet the particular small business needs of each region in NSW while providing linkages to further pathways and business improvement programs.

“All current contract holders for Business Advisory Services will have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate in the EOI for this new program,” Ms Hodgkinson said.

Anyone interested in the EOI should visit tenders.nsw.gov.au