Interpreter services

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty understanding this discussion paper, you can contact us on 131 450 and we will arrange an interpreter to effectively communicate the paper to you.

Providing feedback

We continually strive to meet best practice reporting standards and value the views of our readers. We invite you to provide feedback on this report by completing a survey at desbt.qld.gov.au/smallbizstrategy

Copies of this publication can be obtained at desbt.qld.gov.au, by phoning 13 74 68, emailing SmallBusinessStrategy@desbt.qld.gov.au, or by contacting Strategic Policy at PO Box 15033, City East Qld 4002.

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Content from this discussion paper should be attributed as:

Cover image: Employees at Marrawah Law, an Indigenous legal firm and small business in Cairns.
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Minister’s Foreword

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to building a strong economy for Queensland and creating jobs for Queenslanders.

Small businesses are the engine room of the Queensland economy, working across every industry sector. They make up 97 per cent of all businesses in Queensland and employ more than 970,000 people.

Small businesses are both economically and socially vital to our regions, they provide local jobs and reinvest back into their local communities.

In 2016, the Palaszczuk Government released the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20 and under this strategy has invested $26.2 million over four years to support Queensland’s small businesses. The government also introduced $885 million in targeted payroll tax initiatives over the next four years (from 2019–20) to support businesses to grow and employ more Queenslanders.

Technology, globalisation, demographic and social changes in the economy will continue to affect Queensland small businesses. It is important that Queensland small businesses have the right skills and capabilities to respond to future opportunities and challenges.

This government is committed to supporting small businesses and creating the right environment for small business to invest, grow and create jobs. Building on the strong foundation established by the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20, we are proposing to develop a new small business strategy to drive economic and jobs growth across Queensland.

This discussion paper seeks feedback on the issues that matter for Queensland small businesses and will be used to shape future programs and services.

The Queensland Government will continue to work closely with the sector to develop opportunities for small business in Queensland and ensure that this is the best place for small business to start, grow, and employ.

The Honourable Shannon Fentiman MP
Minister for Employment and Small Business
Minister for Training and Skills Development
Introduction

This discussion paper invites feedback from small business and other stakeholders to inform a new small business strategy for Queensland.

The Queensland Government wants to work with small business and other partners to ensure a strong and resilient small business sector that will continue to grow and create jobs for Queensland’s communities, regions and economy.

We want to hear from you about the issues that are important to small business. Your views are essential to informing the development of a new small business strategy for Queensland that meets the needs of our small businesses and the sector.

Feedback to the questions raised in this discussion paper can be made:

Online – complete the online survey at desbt.qld.gov.au/smallbizstrategy

By email – send your submission to: SmallBusinessStrategy@desbt.qld.gov.au

By post – send your submission to:
Queensland Small Business Strategy
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
PO Box 15033
CITY EAST
BRISBANE QLD 4002

Feedback should be provided to the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training by 5pm, 13 December 2019.
Small business in Queensland in 2019

What is a small business?
In Queensland, we use the Australian Bureau of Statistics definition of small business which is:

Small business is:
a business that employs less than 20 staff

Small business can be further categorised as:
• non-employing businesses – without employees, and
• micro-businesses – businesses employing between one and four people.

The highest growth industries for Queensland small businesses in 2017–18 were:
1. Transport, postal and warehousing
2. Professional, scientific and technical services
3. Financial and insurance services
4. Health care and social assistance
5. Administrative and support services

Small businesses employ more than 970,000 people, and around 45% of the private sector workforce in 2017–18.

There are more than 438,000 small businesses in Queensland (2017–18), an increase of 2.7% from 2016–17.

Small businesses contributed around $119 billion to the Queensland economy in 2017–18, an increase of $6 billion from 2016–17.

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Characteristics of small business in Queensland

- **64%** of small businesses are non-employing, 27% employ between one and four people and 9% employ between five and 19 people.  

- **35%** of small businesses are owned or run by women, the second highest rate in the country behind the Northern Territory.  

- The number of small business owners or operators that identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander increased by 44% between 2011 and 2016.  

Small business in our regions

- **27%** of Queensland small businesses are located outside South East Queensland.  

- **26.6%** of regional small businesses are in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry.  

- Transport, postal and warehousing has seen the highest increase in the number of regional small businesses.
Building on our support for small business

It is proposed that the next Queensland Small Business Strategy builds on existing support for small business – driving growth and job creation.

In 2016, the Queensland Government introduced the *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20* and has invested $26.2 million in a range of actions, programs and services for small business.

The *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20* has supported more than 2,100 Queensland small businesses to start, work smarter, be more resilient and grow through the Small Business Grants program; and almost 1,300 through the Mentoring for Growth program. An estimated 4,300 new jobs have been created as a result of the grants program.

Small Business Digital Grants have assisted small businesses and entrepreneurs to access digital opportunities to innovate and establish better ways of working. Small businesses have reported higher levels of confidence, including gaining new knowledge to make business improvements and expand into new markets, such as export markets.

The *Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20* has supported small businesses to overcome challenging issues in operating a business through the Mentoring for Growth program. Individual mentoring chats and panel sessions have provided Queensland small businesses with expert advice to assist them tackle issues facing their business, including financial management, marketing strategies and planning for growth.

Case study

**R&F Steel Buildings, Gatton**

R&F Steel Buildings started as a small shed business servicing local farmers in the Lockyer Valley. The business specialises in the design and construction of steel buildings, providing custom-designed solutions for residential, rural, agricultural, commercial and industrial markets.

Director Ryan Folkard credits accessing the *Mentoring for Growth* program as “one of the top five decisions that we’ve had to make, and it turned out it was one of the greatest things that we ever did”.

A grant through the *Business Growth Fund* helped the business to access external consultants and to formalise their strategic planning. It also helped them to realise the opportunity with their software platform about two years ahead of what they would have been able to do on their own.

“Don’t be afraid to seek professional advice and make sure you do your research as there’s always other options and alternatives out there that might challenge your own pre-existing views and ideas and ultimately improve your business,” says Joshua Holopainen, Business Development and Marketing Manager.
Since the **Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016–20** was introduced, the Queensland Government has continued to deliver for small business, supporting growth and jobs in this vital sector, through:

- **Supporting Artisan Producers** initiative – fostering growth in the artisan food and beverage sector
- **Queensland Small Business Procurement Commitment** – making it easier for small business to supply to government
- **Queensland On-time Payment Policy** – committing to reducing payment terms for identified small business suppliers to 20 days by 1 July 2020
- **Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy** – supporting the growth of this important sector and employment opportunities for disadvantaged jobseekers, and
- **Works with Small Business** – minimising business disruption during capital works.

The Queensland Government’s employment and training programs provide benefits to small business. This includes the $383 million **Back to Work** program which gives Queensland businesses, in particular small businesses, the confidence to hire eligible jobseekers. As at 30 October 2019, 78 per cent of approved Back to Work applications were for small businesses.

Queensland has one of the most competitive payroll tax rates in Australia. The Queensland Government recognises that wages and salaries are a significant cost of operating a small business. The Queensland Government’s **$885 million Payroll Tax Package**, announced in the 2019–20 Budget, provides small and medium businesses with an increased payroll tax threshold from $1.1 million to $1.3 million and a new payroll tax rebate of up to $20,000 for new full-time employees. From 1 July 2019, a one per cent regional payroll tax discount will apply for employers with 85 per cent of their employees outside of South East Queensland.

![Bennett’s Barber Shop, Townsville. Owner Karen Bennett received valuable advice and information from the Small Business Recovery Centre after her shop suffered water and electrical damage during the North Queensland floods earlier this year.](image)
Our vision for small business

Queensland should be the best place for small business to grow and employ.

The Queensland Government’s vision is for strong and resilient small business – to drive economic and employment growth across Queensland.

Our objectives

We want Queensland small business to be ready to create jobs, invest and participate in the economy to:

- **Build strong and resilient small businesses, ready for change**
  - small businesses have the skills and capability to be ready for change, prosper and be resilient.
  - small businesses have access to advocacy and dispute resolution services.

- **Access opportunities to develop, upskill and create jobs**
  - small businesses can grow their workforce through training and workforce development.
  - small businesses can invest, employ more staff and expand their operations.

- **Pursue new opportunities to grow**
  - small businesses can easily navigate the regulatory environment and access procurement opportunities with the Queensland Government.
  - small businesses are motivated and confident to seek new opportunities, markets and develop new products, services or ways of doing business.

- **Drive economic growth, strengthening our regions and communities**
  - small businesses can continue to provide local jobs, particularly in our regions.

Question for discussion

- Are there other objectives that the Queensland Government should consider?

Case study

Powerhouse Collective have conducted Building Business Success workshops and intensives thanks to a grant from the Advancing Women in Business initiative.

Ms Sherriff said she developed the workshops to help women attain real business growth.

“We’ve achieved so much with the help of the grant. These workshops and intensives dive deep and use trainers with real-world expertise to help inform and empower our members,” Ms Sherriff said.

“We cover topics from digital strategies for small business, to how to market your product or service to your target audience, and the workshops are a first of their kind in Noosa and the Sunshine Coast”.

Powerhouse Collective, Noosa

In just over two years, Aimee Sherriff has transformed Powerhouse Collective from a small meeting of likeminded businesswomen into Noosa’s leading business development hub for women.
Achieving the vision

To create the right environment for strong and resilient small businesses to drive economic and jobs growth across Queensland, we are developing a new Queensland Small Business Strategy.

We want Queensland small businesses to be ready for future opportunities as technology, globalisation, demographic and social changes impact on our economy.

It is proposed that the strategy will support small businesses at all stages of the business journey, from intending and starting, to growing and maturing.

It is proposed that action will be taken across five focus areas to support small business to grow and employ.

Focus area 1 – Giving small business the tools and support to grow

• Providing small businesses with access to the training and development they need to start, run and grow their business.
• Supporting small businesses with tools to increase sustainability and participate in the circular economy.
• Ensuring small businesses can access the skilled workforce they need to grow and respond to change.

Focus area 2 – Simple and easy to do business

• Continuing to ensure that regulation does not unnecessarily impact on small businesses.
• Continuing to streamline and improve processes and systems to make it easier to interact with government.

Focus area 3 – Creating sustainable jobs in regional Queensland

• Ensuring small business initiatives are focused on creating jobs across Queensland.
• Increasing small business resilience in regional Queensland.
• Building on existing support and services for small business in regional Queensland.

Focus area 4 – Supporting a diverse small business sector

• Developing a better-connected sector to encourage sharing and learning through networking and mentoring.
• Supporting and promoting small business diversity.

Focus area 5 – Giving small business a voice

• Engaging and partnering with peak bodies and the sector on small business issues.
• Continuing the focus on strong advocacy for small business.
• Providing a clear pathway for dispute resolution for small business, to help resolve disputes quickly and easily, and to reduce costs.

We want to test these focus areas and get your ideas on what can be done to create the right conditions and opportunities for small business to grow and create jobs.

Question for discussion

• Are there other opportunities or challenges facing small business that should be considered?
Focus area 1 – Giving small business the tools and support to grow

A range of skills and capabilities are required when starting, running and growing a business and having skilled business owners and staff is fundamental to success and sustainability.

The Queensland Government wants to ensure small business can access the skills and capabilities needed to prosper and be confident to pursue ambitious and innovative ways to grow and employ.

Challenges

A common challenge for small business is time and resource constraints, which can lead to an under investment in developing skills for themselves and their staff. Smaller workforce size can also mean that employees need to have a broader range of skills to cover multiple tasks. Informal training options are more likely to be used by small business owners to meet skilling gaps, than formal training pathways.5

Technology is changing our economy. Most small business owners have internet-connected digital devices however, they often lack the skills to use digital technology in the business.6 Technology is also reshaping how jobs are organised and performed, which is driving the need to upskill and retrain existing workers in higher level skills.7

Sustainability is a key issue for society and small business, with the circular economy (focused on reusing and recycling resources) gaining an increased focus internationally in response to growing waste and a need to better manage finite resources.

Case study

Molten Store, Fortitude Valley

Brisbane local Jessy Cameron took her jewellery business, Molten Store, from popup stalls to a permanent store in the heart of Fortitude Valley thanks to small business grants.

With the help of a digital grant in 2017, Jessy not only redeveloped her online store but also enhanced her in-store business. Since then, Molten Store has gone from strength to strength and she has been able to grow her business and employ more staff.

“Because of the digital grant, I’ve seen sales increase and I’m now inspired to harness this growth and plan for the future,” Jessy said.

“The entrepreneur grant I received in 2018 means I can now access high-level accounting expertise and undertake an in-depth analysis of what I need to keep growing in stride with our grand ambitions. This grant has empowered me to plan for sustainable financial growth and the future is an exciting place.”

5 Employers use of the VET system. NCVER. 2017.
Responding to changes and taking advantage of new markets requires new skills and capabilities.

Globalisation, demographic and social changes will continue to impact the economy, how small businesses operate and their markets. Preparing small businesses to be ready to export and enter new global markets requires additional capability and capacity building.

**What we have done so far**

- Introduced **Small Business Grants Program** to help small business owners obtain the right advice, access the latest digital technologies and accelerate business growth.
- Delivered **Mentoring for Growth** for small business owners to access expert advice on specific issues for their business, including future planning, financial management and marketing strategies.
- The **Advance Queensland Innovate Queensland** program helps innovative small to medium enterprises develop the skills required to commercialise new products and services.
- Providing access to information, services and assistance for small business through the **Business Queensland** website.
- Introduced the **Small and Medium Enterprise Sector Adaptation Plan** to support small and medium businesses to better manage climate risk by incorporating adaptation into their core planning.
- Released a new Queensland Skills Strategy – **Skills for Queensland – Great training for quality jobs** which focuses on industry and small business and has specific actions to build stronger collaboration between Government, industry, employers, and training sector stakeholders.
- Reducing training costs for small businesses by providing **free apprenticeships for under 21s** for young people to gain a trade qualification.

**Case study**

**Jamworks Gourmet Foods, Glen Aplin**

The **Back to Work** employment program supported Jamworks Gourmet Foods to expand and diversify their small business south of Stanthorpe in the Granite Belt.

Jamworks has been a family business since 2001, manufacturing gourmet jams and preserves using almost 100 per cent Australian ingredients.

Current owners Christine Hood and Stephanie Ingall have accessed the Back to Work program on several occasions to hire unemployed jobseekers to help them in their business.

“With the help of the Back to Work program, Jamworks has been able to employ additional people, which has assisted us to continue to grow as a business since 2015,” said Christine.

“This Back to Work program has allowed us, as the owners, to step out of the day to day tasks and focus and invest time into developing and growing our business,” said Stephanie.
Opportunities

We need to create an environment where small business can access the skills and capabilities they need for their business and workforce to operate, grow and innovate as markets change and evolve.

For small business owners to take advantage of change – whether it is adopting new technologies, innovating, entering new markets, exporting or increasing sustainability – we need to provide flexible ways to develop skills and capability. This will help drive the creation of high-value jobs and increased productivity.

Questions for discussion

- What are the skills small business owners need most to remain sustainable, grow or innovate?
- How do we help innovative small businesses who are thinking of expanding into new technologies and emerging and international markets get ready?
- What other support and assistance do small businesses need to start-up and grow?
- What challenges do small business face in upskilling their workforce?
- What other support and assistance can help small businesses be more sustainable and participate in the circular economy?
Focus area 2 – Simple and easy to do business

The Queensland Government recognises it should be simple and easy to run a small business in Queensland. We want to make it easier for small business to comply with regulation so they can focus on running their business and creating jobs for Queenslanders.

To ensure smaller firms are well positioned to share in the government’s multi-billion-dollar investment in goods and services, we are making it easier for Queensland’s 438,000 small businesses to supply to government.

Challenges
Regulatory compliance is a key concern for Queensland small businesses. Small business needs streamlined and simplified processes that make it easier for them to do business, access opportunities and grow.

Many small business owners do their compliance work themselves and feedback indicates that they often find it complicated and confusing to understand.8

The government also recognises that small businesses face a range of challenges that may create barriers to supplying to government, including the complexity of government procurement processes.

BlackCard, Cannon Hill

BlackCard was established six years ago and provides cultural capability training and services to enable people and organisations to work effectively with members of the Aboriginal community.

Mundanara Bayles, Managing Director at BlackCard, saw the grant under the Advancing Indigenous Business initiative as an opportunity to bring in someone with the skills and the experience to help them with their strategic planning.

“We’re educating people around Aboriginal people and Aboriginal culture but more importantly, about Aboriginal terms of reference.

“Having that strategic direction, we are now saving money in our business and we’re spending money in other parts of the business.

“Before then, I was running a business blindly, now I’m actually aware of some of the expenses that we didn’t need to necessarily spend.”

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What we have done so far

- Established the Better Regulation Taskforce to drive regulatory reform for small business. Each year the Taskforce recommends ways to cut red tape and in 2018 focused on using technology to reduce the burden of compliance. For example, the Queensland Government is trialling fish recognition technology to ease the burden of data collection for commercial fishers.
- Published an annual Queensland Better Regulation Update, which outlines small business red tape reduction achievements across government.
- The Queensland Government’s $885 million Payroll Tax Package has increased the payroll tax threshold to $1.3 million and introduced a new payroll tax rebate of up to $20,000 for new full-time employees. From 1 July 2019, a one per cent regional payroll tax discount will apply for employers with 85 per cent of their employees outside of South East Queensland.
- Using advanced technology and digitisation of services, we are developing the new Business Launchpad to simplify and streamline how to start and operate a business in Queensland, and an online platform to help small businesses hire and manage apprentices and trainees in addition to providing access to key information, forms and contacts.
- Introduced the Queensland Small Business Procurement Commitment to make it easier for small businesses to supply to government. This includes engaging better with small business suppliers and working towards establishing a measurable target to drive an increase in small business participation in procurement activities across government.
- Introduced the Queensland Government On-time Payment Policy, including a commitment to reduce payment timeframes for small business suppliers from 30 calendar days to 20 calendar days.
- Introduced the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy which aims to increase Queensland Government procurement spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to three per cent of addressable spend by 2022.
- Introduced the Buy Queensland policy that aims to increase the Queensland Government procurement spend with local businesses so that dollars are being invested back into our local communities.

Opportunities

It is important that it is easy for small businesses to comply with regulation, getting all the information they need in an easy-to-understand format and timely manner.

We are committed to supporting and making it easier for small businesses to supply products and services to the Queensland Government. To help drive increased participation, the government is currently measuring procurement spend with small business to establish a target.

Questions for discussion

- How can it be made simpler and easier for small business to understand and comply with regulation?
- In addition to the proposed small business procurement target, what other action can be taken to increase small business participation in procurement activities across the Queensland Government?
Focus area 3 – Creating sustainable jobs in regional Queensland

The Queensland Government recognises that Queensland’s regions are unique in their natural landscapes, climate, economies, communities and industries. Regional small businesses play a critical role in supporting local communities. It is important to build strong and resilient small businesses in our regions.

Challenges

Regional small businesses are growing at a slower pace than those located near more populated areas in the South East.9

Regional economies are often less diversified and this can make it harder for small businesses to be resilient during periods of change. Concerns about financial security can also discourage small business owners from hiring additional workers, which can have flow-on impacts for local jobs and economic growth.

The impacts of extreme weather events on business sectors include disrupted supply chains, workplaces and infrastructure, loss of customers during recovery and increased costs.10 The Queensland Government recognises that regional small business and their communities are especially vulnerable to extreme weather events and natural disasters. As many Queenslanders have witnessed in recent times, weather events like drought can last years, which creates additional barriers to recovery.

What we have done so far

• Invested $383 million in the Back to Work program, which gives regional Queensland small businesses the confidence to take on eligible jobseekers.
• Delivered Go Local, Grow Local to help businesses promote their products and services and encourage Queenslanders to support small businesses in their community by shopping locally.

9 Top Five Registered Businesses by Industry by Region. QGSO Regional Profile data accessed 2 September 2019.
• **$10 million** joint Commonwealth/State funding for ongoing support to build resilient small businesses in Townsville and North Western Queensland. This includes Small Business Disaster Recovery Grants and establishing the Townsville Small Business Recovery Centre.

• Introduced the **Regional Business Support Package** to help businesses minimise their electricity costs.

• Building stronger regional economies through Building our Regions, Works for Queensland, the Jobs and Regional Growth Fund and investing in regional tourism infrastructure.

• The **Rural Economic Development Grants Scheme** funds projects that help generate economic and employment opportunities related to primary production across rural and remote Queensland.

• Increased the ability of regional start-ups and innovative small to medium businesses to translate their ideas into products and services through the Advancing Regional Innovation Program.

### Opportunities

There is an opportunity to further build the resilience of Queensland’s regional small businesses by aligning with state-wide strategies that focus on building a collective effort to quickly bounce back from disaster events.\(^\text{11}\)

There are opportunities to build the adaptive capacity of regional small businesses and help build resilience so they can recover and survive devastating events and natural disasters, as well as respond to new and emerging technology and changing workforce requirements and industries.

Opportunities to help build resilience and support regional small businesses will need to recognise and respond to the unique needs of different regions.

**Questions for discussion**

• What are the key issues affecting the resilience and growth of small business in Queensland’s regional communities?

• What can be done to assist small businesses in regional communities to build increased resilience?

### Case study

**No Boundaries Health and Osteopathy, Townsville**

Townsville business owner, Louise Marry lost her two osteopathy businesses in Townsville in the 2019 floods in North Queensland.

Louise accessed the Mentor for Recovery program after the floods and said “the support and advice I received at the mentoring session has been invaluable.”

“The mentors gave me advice for the present, such as keeping people informed, and long-term assistance with strategies to improve my business. Having one location offering information took the confusion and difficulty out of finding the support I needed at this time”.

Louise recently moved to new premises and rebranded as No Boundaries Health and Osteopathy. Through the Back to Work initiative, Louise has been able to put on new services and staff, and grow her business.

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Focus area 4 – Supporting a diverse small business sector

Feedback from small business indicates that establishing connections and peer support is valuable but can often be difficult to do. A better connected small business sector will help build more opportunities for innovation and growth and increase diversity.

Challenges

Queensland small businesses are diverse in gender, culture and purpose and there is an opportunity to continue to encourage and support more diverse small businesses to start and grow.

Small businesses without connections have fewer opportunities to innovate their business practices to save time and costs, to understand and be ready for market changes and to grow their business.

Thirty-five per cent of Queensland small businesses are owned or run by women, and this has increased 6.3 per cent between 2011 and 2016. However, feedback from small business indicates that more needs to be done to create networks that foster confidence and encourage more women in small business.

Queensland is home to more than a quarter of all Indigenous small businesses in Australia, this is around 3000 businesses from start-ups to large organisations.

Indigenous small business needs strengthening, including improving the visibility and networks of the Indigenous small business sector. Data suggests that a lack of Indigenous support services, particularly for start-ups, is making it harder to grow and expand to broader industry supply chains.

Marrawah Law, Cairns

Marrawah Law grew and created more jobs through a grant allocated under the Advancing Indigenous Business initiative.

Founder and Principal Solicitor, Leah Cameron, wanted to gain business planning skills to grow and expand Marrawah Law’s presence across Queensland.

The Indigenous owned firm was awarded a grant to develop a business growth model that would inform a more strategic approach to business planning and marketing messages.

“The project has helped to support me with confidence and strategies which have enabled me to acquire another two legal practices, one in Brisbane and one in Cairns. In addition, we have recently expanded and relocated our Cairns-based operations from a home-based practice to a commercial premise”.

Marrawah Law’s client base has tripled since receiving the grant funding, with four new staff employed, of which the majority are Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

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Queensland also has a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community and entrepreneurial migrants can face additional barriers to starting and operating a small business. Research indicates that cultural integration, networking and gaining local market knowledge are key issues for CALD small business owners.14

Social enterprise is a growing sector with developing networks and there is a need for greater connection to help social enterprises grow and thrive to increase employment for disadvantaged jobseekers.

**What we have done so far**

- Delivered the annual Small Business Week enabling small businesses to connect, collaborate and learn.
- Delivered the Women in Business initiative to support women business owners.
- Introduced the Queensland Women’s Strategy 2016–21 which includes actions to support women’s economic security through entrepreneurship and establishing or growing small businesses.
- Delivered the Advancing Indigenous Business initiative to deliver business support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Introduced the Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy to help social enterprises to grow to provide broader social, environmental and cultural benefits.

**Opportunities**

It is important that small businesses are connected to the right services and networks in order to grow and expand. There are opportunities to support small business connections to support strong and thriving business operations.

Queensland’s diverse small business sector is an asset and it is important to continue to encourage an inclusive small business sector.

There are opportunities to leverage and scale up existing support for small business groups including women, Indigenous and CALD small business owners and social enterprises, to build stronger connections that can continue organically and lead to collaborations and innovation.

**Questions for discussion**

- How can government help small businesses to connect and build a network to help them grow and prosper?
- Are there good examples of services or programs that are strengthening connections and collaborations that could be considered by government?
- What can be done to encourage more diversity in our small business sector?
- What are the best ways to promote awareness of, and engagement with, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned businesses?

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14 Migrant Small Business Report, 2017, CQU.
Focus area 5 – Giving small business a voice

It is important for the Queensland Government to understand the needs of small business, given the significant role they play in the Queensland economy, particularly in terms of their contribution to growth and jobs.

The Queensland Government recognises the need for an effective advocacy function that provides a voice for Queensland small business and effective dispute resolution.

Challenges
Small business needs the opportunity to engage with government so the issues and challenges facing small business in Queensland are understood. The needs of this sector are distinct from those of larger business and effective advocacy ensures small business issues are identified and services and programs are effectively targeted.

Dispute resolution has been identified as a key challenge for small business. Resolving disputes when they arise can be both costly and time-consuming for small business. The most significant impacts of disputes identified by small business include financial loss (87%), opportunity costs (16%) and damaged reputations (16%).

What we have done so far
• Introduced the Queensland Small Business Champion as an advocate for small business to provide a voice for small business at the state and national level.
• Continued the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council to provide advice to the government and hear first-hand the issues impacting small business.

Opportunities
There are opportunities to ensure the small business advocacy function in Queensland provides a clear voice for small business and can act as an effective interface with other levels of government.

Reviewing the accessibility and affordability of dispute resolution mechanisms for small business in Queensland has the potential to deliver time and cost savings.

Questions for discussion
• What can be done to help small business have a clear voice and an opportunity to provide advice to government?
• What can be done to improve dispute resolution information and services for Queensland small business?

Have your say

The Queensland Government is seeking input from all Queenslanders in developing the next Queensland Small Business Strategy.

You are invited to have your say on this discussion paper to share your ideas and suggestions on how we build strong and resilient small businesses.

We encourage you to have your say in one or more of the following ways:

• Complete an online survey at desbt.qld.gov.au/smallbizstrategy
• Email us your ideas to: SmallBusinessStrategy@desbt.qld.gov.au

Mail a written submission to

Queensland Small Business Strategy
Department of Employment, Small Business and Training
PO Box 15033
CITY EAST
BRISBANE QLD 4002

Where to from here

Your feedback will help to guide the development of the next Queensland Small Business Strategy that is expected to be released in mid-2020.

Your feedback will help shape a whole-of-government approach to better support Queensland’s small business sector.
Tradesmen on Time in Brisbane was the national Small Employer of the Year in 2017.