

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION — THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Statement by Minister for Small Business

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot — Minister for Small Business) [2.10 pm]: On 29 April the Small Business Development Corporation marked its thirtieth anniversary. This event celebrated the vital role that the SBDC has played in supporting the small business sector. The SBDC was established in 1984 as an independent statutory authority, under the Small Business Development Corporation Act 1983. Throughout the past 30 years, the SBDC has continued its role as the primary provider of advice and guidance for small businesses at all stages of development. Last financial year the SBDC handled more than 18 500 personal client contacts and provided almost 7 500 business licence packs to new and existing business owners. The SBDC also works collaboratively with business and industry associations and chambers of commerce throughout the state, and supports 25 small business centres in metropolitan and regional locations. On the policy front, the SBDC is a relentless advocate for the sector. The SBDC is the voice of small business at all levels of government—local, state and federal. It speaks for the sector in submissions and inquiries, putting forward the interests of the sector to parliaments and parliamentarians.

Around 30 000 new business names are registered in Western Australia every year. We know that not all of these names will become active businesses, but it would be fair to say that around 15 000 to 20 000 may well come into operation each year. That represents a lot of people joining the ranks of small business and needing business licences; business advice and guidance; specific information on their chosen industry; advice on lease agreements, franchises and business partnerships; and, in some cases, sadly, help in resolving disputes. The SBDC's alternative dispute resolution service has become the benchmark for other states to follow, and programs such as Tourism Boost, which supports small businesses in the tourism industry, have brought accolades from far and wide.

As an organisation that continually reinvents itself, maintains relevance and meets the ever-changing needs of its clients, the SBDC should be proud of its achievements. I congratulate the SBDC on reaching this very important milestone.