

**SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION — INDUSTRY LINK PROGRAM —
PRISON SYSTEM**

Statement by Minister for Small Business

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Small Business) [9.25 am]: I rise briefly to inform the house about the fantastic work being done by the Small Business Development Corporation to improve self-employment opportunities for people exiting our prison system. In line with our commitment to provide training and rehabilitation programs and reduce recidivism, I would like to share a valuable initiative being championed by the SBDC. We know that the difficulty of securing traditional employment can often be a barrier to re-assimilating into society, and can contribute to people finding themselves back in prison. For some, self-employment may be the only realistic option for working again. Through its Industry Link program, the SBDC has in recent months been running business skills workshops at the Boronia Pre-release Centre for Women, Bandyup Women's Prison, and Karnet Prison Farm. The workshops provide simple, practical, step-by-step advice, and cover a range of topics, including starting a business, how to write a business plan, and marketing a business. The SBDC also offers free business advice to help guide small business operators through the pitfalls of starting and running a business. While running these workshops, the SBDC discovered that it can often be difficult for individuals with a criminal record to obtain the business insurance they typically require. The SBDC then successfully sourced providers that are willing, under a set of circumstances, to provide insurance for people who are seeking to start a business after exiting the justice system, and made sure that program participants were aware that this is available to them. The Small Business Commissioner recently received feedback that through this initiative, some students have gone on to start successful businesses in areas such as landscaping, retail clothing, personal training and food service. I highly commend the SBDC and the Department of Justice for collaborating on this fabulous initiative that is helping to make a positive difference in the lives of offenders.