

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2008-09
2-3 June 2008

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: INNOVATION, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

TOPIC: Business Enterprise Centre Funding

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Abetz

QUESTION No. BI-63

What service obligations are imposed on BECs as part of contractual arrangements?

ANSWER

The types of service obligations that are expected to be imposed on BECs as part of the contractual arrangements are set out below:

- **Mentoring for New Business:** BEC staff or consultants are to provide advisory service meetings and networking opportunities for new small businesses.
- **Business Planning Advice:** BEC staff or consultants will provide a diagnostic assessment of individual small businesses, followed by business planning advice.

The BEC will assist small businesses with networking opportunities, assessing and improving supply-chain management, e-commerce take-up, information technology and broadband, succession planning, and creating security for the business over leased premises or intellectual property.
- **Loans and Banking Products:** BEC staff or consultants will provide independent information and guidance on available banking and finance products for small and micro-businesses.
- **Simple Marketing Plans:** BEC staff or consultants will prepare simple marketing plans for small businesses on promotional opportunities and advertising options in their local area.
- **Legal and Accounting Services:** The BEC is to dedicate at least a portion of the recurrent funding towards:
 - Small business intenders and new small businesses to access legal and accounting advice; and
 - Established home-based/micro businesses to obtain advice on issues such as retail tenancy, intellectual property and credit management.
- **Leasing Guidance:** The BEC will provide information and guidance on leasing terms and conditions during negotiations with prospective landlords.
- **Government Regulation:** The BEC will provide advice to businesses on regulatory compliance at all tiers of government.

- **Staff Training Programs:** When significant new regulations are implemented, the BEC will develop and deliver training programs for small businesses.
- **Women:** Women are an increasingly important part of Australia's enterprise culture, and the BEC will ensure its programs cater for the needs of this client group.
- **National Referrals:** Where a BEC client is looking to conduct business interstate or intrastate, the BEC will refer the client to the most appropriate BEC for assistance. Where appropriate, the BEC will refer clients for industry specific assistance to another BEC that has specific expertise in that industry.