

Senate Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Tourism and Resources Portfolio
Additional Estimates 2005-2006, 16 February 2006

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND RESOURCES
TOPIC: REGULATORY BURDEN ON SMALL BUSINESS
REFERENCE: WRITTEN QUESTIONS

QUESTION No.AI-95

Senator Campbell asked:

What action has the Department taken to try and ease the compliance burden on small business?

ANSWER

The Office of Small Business (OSB) has developed a number of initiatives to ease the compliance burden on small business. For example, the OSB has developed a business cost calculator to assist government agencies to cost the compliance burden of proposed regulations with the aim of keeping the burden to a minimum.

In addition, following the last election, the OSB was tasked to develop a competitive grants program, the Regulation Reduction Incentive Fund, to encourage local government to ease the regulatory burden on small business. This program was launched in July 2005.

The Department also manages the Australian Government's www.business.gov.au website. This is an online resource, which provides information and services in a business-friendly manner to businesses so that they can more easily deal with the three tiers of government in Australia. It includes the delivery of a range of free online products and services for business including a range of ABN Lookup tools, syndication of business.gov.au content to third party websites, and the Transaction Manager suite (including the new Forms Manager tool) which provides access to some 6000 government forms across all three tiers of government. This is an example of how the Government has successfully used information and communications technology to provide greater, more convenient access to government as well as reduce business compliance costs.

For further information on what the Government is doing to reduce the red tape burden, see the press release issued by the Prime Minister and the Treasurer on 7 April 2006, when releasing the Government's interim response to the report of the Taskforce on Reducing the Regulatory Burdens on Business.

QUESTION No.AI-96

Senator Campbell asked:

Have any of these measures had a real impact?

ANSWER

Yes.