



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR THE HON NICK SHERRY

Minister for Small Business
Minister Assisting on Deregulation and Public Sector Superannuation
Minister Assisting on Tourism

GO ONLINE AND EXPLOIT YOUR LOCAL ADVANTAGE, RETAILERS URGED

Australian retailers have been urged to develop online trading capabilities and exploit their local advantage.

During his closing address to the Australian Government's Online Retail Forum, Small Business Minister, Senator Nick Sherry, said recent research showed that while consumers were hungry for bargains, they still preferred to buy locally.

"Australian Government commissioned research shows a large proportion of between 50 and 80 per cent of online trading in Australia occurs with local sellers," Senator Sherry said.

"The most frequent reason buyers give for shopping overseas is a lack of availability of an item in Australia.

"An important selling advantage for Australian retailers is that access to after-sales service and fast turnaround. The reality is that Australians want to buy locally wherever possible."

Senator Sherry said a strong online retail sector is an important part of Australia's digital economy.

"The digital economy offers all Australian businesses, but particularly retailers, opportunities for improved productivity, reduced overheads and to expand their customer bases," Senator Sherry said.

"Having an online presence means retailers are, in effect, opening their doors to everyone with access to a computer, whether they are in the next street or half a world away.

"The Government recognises some businesses often don't know where to start an online venture or they might be wary.

"They may not understand the potential benefits or are apprehensive about the set-up and maintenance costs of an online presence.

“That’s why we have the Small Business Online program, which is being delivered through 47 expert providers nationally to help small businesses develop and improve their e-business capabilities.

“And digitalbusiness.gov.au is a new Australian Government website outlining the benefits of being online and helps businesses and community groups to establish an online presence.

“There are always two sides to each scenario, and it’s true of online trading – consumers can benefit from using the global marketplace and Australian businesses can benefit from being part of that same marketplace.”

SYDNEY

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Media contact: Joe Scavo 0413 800 757