



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR NICK SHERRY

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

SENATOR JAN McLUCAS

Parliamentary Secretary for
Disabilities and Carers
Labor Senator for Queensland

ADVISORY CENTRE OPENS IN CAIRNS TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES

Small businesses in Far North Queensland have received a timely boost with the opening today of a new Business Enterprise Centre (BEC) in Cairns to provide advice and assistance to local small businesses.

Small Business Minister, Senator Nick Sherry, and Senator Jan McLucas, officially opened the centre which will be run by local organisation Advance Cairns.

The Gillard Government is investing \$500,000 over two years to deliver the Centre to help small business get free or low cost advice on cash flow management, retail leasing, marketing, accounting and taxation; as well as customised business planning advice and independent guidance to help small businesses access finance.

“Small businesses represent almost 95 per cent of all registered businesses in the Cairns region and it’s important for the community that this major economic force is back on its feet as soon as possible,” Senator Sherry said.

“This new BEC is open to assist all small business, not just in Cairns, but across the Far North Queensland region.”

“I urge all small business operators in the Far North to make use of this service and learn how to take advantage of the wide range of Australian Government support services,” Senator Sherry said.

Senator McLucas said the opening of the centre delivered on a Gillard Government election commitment to the Far North.

“The establishment of a dedicated business advisory centre for the Far North is very welcome and I’m sure will be well utilised by local businesses,” Senator McLucas said.

“It’s been a tough time for the Far North and the recent floods and cyclone have proven to further challenges for the region to overcome.”

“The Australian Government’s investment in Advance Cairns will provide vital assistance such as mentoring for new businesses, guidance on loans and banking products, development of marketing plans as well as valuable networking opportunities. These are practical measures to help small businesses and support the region’s economy.”

The new Cairns-based BEC means the Australian Government has provided \$42.5 million to 37 BECs throughout Australia for the delivery of small business advisory services. BECs have to date provided more than 182,000 services to small business.

The network of advisory services is one of many small business assistance measures, such as the Small Business Support Line and the Small Business Online program, set up to provide expert advice.

For information on the Small Business Support Line call 1800 777 275 or visit www.business.gov.au or www.ausindustry.gov.au for details of other small business assistance measures.

Minister Sherry also addressed the *Small Business Support and Information Session* in Cairns today.

The session included a range of speakers and provided small businesses in the region the opportunity to learn more about the various support measures available during the tough economic times, particularly in the aftermath of Cyclone Yasi.

CAIRNS

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