LABOR TO MENTOR SMALL BUSINESS TO SUCCESS

Labor Leader Michael Gunner has said that a Labor Government will employ 6 small business mentors to support the growth of small business in the Territory.

“There is no one better to get people through the processes of government than the government itself.

“Labor’s small business mentors will work with small business operators to guide them through the issues they will face starting out in business,” Michael Gunner said.

Speaking at Darwin Tactical Shop with business owner Colin Rogan Jnr, Michael Gunner laid out a 10 point plan focused on championing the growth of small business with critical support in its establishment phase.

Labor will:
1. Establish a Small Business Champions Unit (SCBU) that will act as advisors to small business and advocates for small business within government.
2. Within the SBCU establish 6 mentors whose job it is to support small business through their early interactions with government agencies. Three positions will be based in Darwin and Palmerston with a position in Alice Springs / Tennant Creek, one in Katherine and one focussed on remote businesses.
3. Provide an additional $1 million for Business Innovation Support Initiatives (BISI) to encourage innovators in small business across the Territory.
4. Provide start up assistance and seed funding for small business to assist in commercialising new and innovative ideas and develop local “Angel Investor” groups in the Territory.
5. Assist and advise small business to joint venture with larger companies.
6. Ensure the information and data needs of small business are highlighted in the work of Labor’s Independent Research and Data Unit.
7. Expand the number and type of small business training and professional development programs.
8. Set up a small business focussed Energy Smart and Water Smart program to help reduce business costs.
9. Ensure infrastructure expenditure is broken up into smaller packages that give small businesses a chance to bid for the work.
10. Special small business focussed roundtables in each regional centre annually and twice a year in Darwin and Palmerston.

“This focus will ensure that small business in the Territory will be given a greater chance of establishing and succeeding once established,” Mr Gunner said.
“In addition to this plan Labor has already announced that we will focus on Territory business receiving greater support from the Government procurement program.”

“Unlike the CLP, whose procurement board will only review contracts $5 million and above, Labor’s Local Content Board will be empowered to review all contracts, audit the practices of government procurement and recommend new training programs to ensure local content is the highest priority.”

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Costs

- The Small Business Champions Unit will be created from restructuring the Department of Business.
- Expansion of BISI grants – an additional $1 million from 2017-18.
- The Local Content Board will cost an additional $200,000 per annum from 2017-18.