



Media release

Minister for Employment and Small Business and
Minister for Training and Skills Development
The Honourable Lance McCallum MP

30 May 2024

Queensland Small Business Month culminates with conference in Cairns

- The Queensland Small Business Friendly (SBF) Program's annual conference and inaugural awards ceremony in Cairns today is one of the final events on the Queensland Small Business Month calendar.
- This month celebrated Queensland's more than 482,000 small businesses.
- Today's conference brings together the 49 councils from Gold Coast to Burke that have joined the Small Business Friendly family since it started in 2020 as an initiative of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner.

As Queensland Small Business Month ends, the 4th annual Small Business Friendly (SBF) Program conference and inaugural awards ceremony is on in Cairns today.

Minister for Employment and Small Business Lance McCallum officially opened the conference and presented the awards to the Member of the Year - City of Moreton Bay, Regional Member of the Year - Balonne Shire Council, and Innovator of the Year - Ipswich City Council.

The SBF Program is a community of 49 like-minded organisations championed by the Queensland Small Business Commissioner to work together to ensure their small business community is flourishing.

By signing the Small Business Friendly Charter, councils commit to creating operating environments that help their small business communities to grow and thrive.

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Employment and Small Business Lance McCallum:

"Small businesses are vital to Queensland's economic wellbeing, contributing more than \$117 billion each year and fueling the cycle of growth by providing employment for over one million Queenslanders.

"The new Miles Government is committed to supporting our small business sector and this is reflected in the new \$250 million *Queensland Small Business Strategy 2024-27* to help power small businesses to grow and thrive.

"The inaugural Small Business Friendly Awards are another important initiative to recognise the role that local councils play in supporting their local business communities.

"Congratulations to all the winners. As the Member for Bundamba, I'm particularly proud to see the Ipswich City Council in this year's winner's circle as part of Queensland Small Business Month."

Quotes attributable to Mayor Peter Flannery City of Moreton Bay:

City of Moreton Bay's Mayor Peter Flannery said the win recognised Council's strong commitment to supporting small business and the collaboration involved in building a cohesive and productive local business community."

"I'm incredibly proud of Council's hard work in supporting such a strong local business community. Small businesses are core to our community, and we want them to thrive."

"We'll continue to work closely, with our business community, to grow the economy in City of Moreton Bay," Mayor Flannery said.

Quotes attributable to Mayor Samantha O'Toole, Balonne Shire Council:

"We are so thrilled to receive the Regional Member of the Year Award for 2024 at the Small Business Friendly Awards."

"As a Council, we aim to consistently collaborate with our local business community to ensure that Balonne is a great place to do business."

"In receiving this Award, we also really need to acknowledge the great work our local businesses do for our community."

"This is further recognition of how our Shire is a great place to set-up and do business with the full support of your local Council."

Quotes attributable to Mayor Teresa Harding, Ipswich City Council:

"As Queensland's first small business friendly council, Ipswich City Council continues to explore new and innovate solutions to support our more than 12,000 small businesses.

"Council has worked in partnership with our small businesses to introduce new initiatives that encourage residents and visitors to shop, stay and spend in Ipswich. This includes our Queensland-first street patio program which offers local restaurants and cafes an additional and attractive outdoor dining space.

"Small businesses are a big deal for our city, and we are delighted to see Council recognised as the Innovator of the Year for our ongoing efforts to support and advance local businesses in Ipswich."

Quotes attributed to the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, Dominique Lamb:

"Queensland small businesses are the heart and soul of our communities from our remote towns to our metropolitan cities.

"As a community we cannot survive without small businesses, and they can't thrive without vibrant communities, which is why the Small Business Friendly Program is so important.

"The conference and the workshops give members an opportunity to share their success stories and learn together. This is about supporting councils and chambers with economic development."

Explainer/fast fact and or further information

The Small Business Friendly inaugural awards attracted a large number of nominations that exceeded the expectations of judges who had the challenge of shortlisting and selecting the winner for each category.

Member of the Year 2024 - City of Moreton Bay

The City of Moreton Bay fosters a strong bond with its business community and nurtures a sense of belonging and collaboration through events such as workshops, networking and information sessions, expos, and mentoring programs. Its online resources, including its award-winning app, Ask Morty, help businesses understand the council's procurement process. The council's proactive response to natural disasters, such as the floods of 2022 and 2024, underscores its commitment to resilience and recovery and dedication to assisting communities in times of crisis. Emphasising a culture of 'having a go,' building external coalitions, and celebrating successes, the City of Moreton Bay fosters a dynamic business landscape driven by pride, confidence, and trust.

Regional Member of the Year 2024 - Balonne Shire Council

Since joining the Small Business Friendly Program in late 2022, the Balonne Shire Council has developed initiatives supporting its 900 small businesses, including business mentoring, beautification programs, digital connectivity, and procurement enhancements. The Buy Balonne campaign, in partnership with the St George and District Chamber of Commerce, has stood out as a remarkable success. The Buy Balonne cards are accepted at 79 participating businesses with more than \$300,000 loaded onto the cards, with \$241,000 actively circulating locally.

Innovator of the Year 2024 - Ipswich City Council

The Ipswich City Council has embarked on an innovative placemaking program to foster a shared vision for Ipswich Central, the vibrant cultural hub and beating heart of the Ipswich community. As part of the Ipswich Central Revitalisation project, a 12-month Street Patio trial was initiated across four locations in Ipswich Central for three months. The primary aim was to bolster small businesses and stimulate foot traffic. The trial's feedback was very positive, with 90% supporting more such initiatives. A significant outcome of the trial is the increased participation of businesses that typically would not operate on Sundays, allowing them the opportunity to capitalize on the increased foot traffic.

Find out more about the Small Business Friendly program at: <https://qsbc.qld.gov.au/the-small-business-friendly-program/>

Media contact: Andrew Churchill 0472 645 871