

**Press Release 09-May-2008**

## **Labor's Razor Gang Axes Wide Bay And South Burnett Small Business Field Officer**

Wide Bay businesses will no longer have access to their Small Business Field Officer to seek free advice or information after Labor confirmed it will axe the programme in the upcoming Federal Budget, Federal Member for Wide Bay, Warren Truss said.

"It is an absolute outrage Small Business Field Officers will lose their jobs at the end of the financial year as part of the Rudd Government's misdirected budget priorities," Mr Truss said.

"The Small Business Field Officer initiative provides a vital service to small businesses, providing free advice, referrals, contacts within the industry and tips on how to expand or export. Small Business Officers offered a one-stop shop to help business improve performance.

"Peter Gregory has done a terrific job in Wide Bay and he will be sorely missed.

"Labor's decision to chop the local Small Business Field Officer, who is based in the Wide Bay Burnett Area Consultative Committee, will have a real impact in Wide Bay. Peter has cultivated years of knowledge and experience and has diverse networks that have added great value to local businesses.

"Just as small business confidence plummets to a 15-year low under the leadership of Kevin Rudd, the Labor Government rubs salt into the wounds by sacking Small Business Field Officers, which will only add to the nervousness of local businesses."

Small Business Field Officers were funded by the former Coalition Government as part of the Building Entrepreneurship programme, and strategically placed in areas including the Wide Bay, where they knew the area and could offer real assistance to local businesses.

"Where do businesses go to for free information and advice on business matters now? Labor doesn't care.

"The availability of the local one-stop-shop at the Wide Bay Burnett Area Consultative Committee offered businesses in the Fraser and Cooloola Coasts immediate access to a range of information.

"Locals are going to have to travel far and wide if they want to seek free advice as they'll no longer have access to this service, courtesy of Kevin Rudd's razor gang