

25 November 2011

Mr Roger Arwas
Executive Director
Small Business Victoria
GPO Box 4509
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Mr Arwas,

SMALL BUSINESS VICTORIA DISCUSSION PAPER

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Small Business Victoria Discussion Paper.

For your information, the City of Melbourne has circulated the details of the paper to the associations that represent our precincts to distribute to their members. We have also circulated the details of the paper to our various business advisory boards such as the Melbourne Retail Advisory Board and Melbourne Hospitality Advisory Board to encourage their contacts and networks to consider putting a submission responding to the discussion paper.

In regard to the discussion paper, the City of Melbourne would like to offer the following points:

- The City of Melbourne uses the Small Business Mentoring Service (SBMS) for its Small Business Grants scheme recipients and offers to pay for sessions by SBMS mentors for businesses that Council has identified as likely candidates for a future grant but require further advice on how to better structure business plans and financial information. The Council is supportive of SBMS and receives positive feedback from those who use it.
- Council has partnered with Small Business Victoria on allowing use of the City Square and Town Hall for the mobile business centre and considers it a worthwhile initiative in taking mentors to where busy business people are located.
- The *business.vic.gov.au* website is generally well received with the level of assistance and resources it contains.
- Local government is often the most likely interface between government and the community. It is considered that a strong partnership between Small Business Victoria and the economic development functions of individual municipalities in terms of collaboration and channelling information through to businesses would make that information more relevant to that community.
- The City of Melbourne has set up the Enterprise Melbourne Board consisting of senior representatives of some of the key sectors of Melbourne's economy such as biotechnology,

environmental management, hospitality and retail. Most of these sectors are characterised by small business.

- The Council's Small Business Grants scheme has been in operation for 15 years and has supported close to 300 small businesses to the tune of \$6 million. 86% of the businesses in the City of Melbourne are small businesses and to that extent, they are Council's natural constituency.

Any further queries can be directed to me on 9658 8874 or michael.anderson@melbourne.vic.gov.au .

Yours sincerely

Michael Anderson

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