

Small Business Grants for Digital Growth



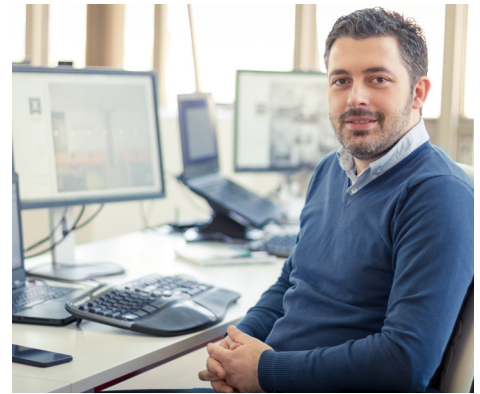
The Liberal-led Government recognises that small businesses make a huge contribution to the Western Australian economy.

Increasingly, the use of digital technology is becoming more important for businesses to be competitive, communicate with customers, increase their productivity and flourish in a modern business environment.

But many small to medium businesses have not modernised their operations because of financial inability, a lack of time and knowledge and a reluctance to embrace new technology.

Fast Facts

- Small businesses with fewer than 20 employees represent around 97% of all businesses in Western Australia and employ around 44% of the State's total workforce.
- Collectively, small and medium-sized businesses (those with fewer than 200 employees) are responsible for almost 70% of the State's total workforce.
- They operate across a wide range of industries including manufacturing, professional services, retail, hospitality, agriculture and construction.
- Research shows more than 90% of Australia's small and medium-sized businesses are not taking full advantage of digital technology.
- Research also shows that businesses who are digitally engaged experience higher revenue growth, create more jobs, are more likely to export and have a more diversified customer base.
- A 2015 survey by the WA Small Business Development Corporation found that around 24% of small businesses do not have a website and almost half generate no business from online sales.



Our Commitment

A Liberal Government recognises the importance of online presence, social media and digital technology to business productivity and competitiveness, and will support small and medium enterprises by:

- Investing \$4 million over 2 years to provide a program of Digital Grants to small to medium businesses to encourage companies to engage in digital technology and modernise their business.
 - Grants of up to \$20,000 in matched funding (dollar for dollar) will be provided to successful applicants wishing to digitally enhance their business operations.

This may involve purchasing of new software, equipment, enhanced cyber security, developing websites and digital marketing, enhancing product development and supply chains, and funding access to short term specialist advice and/or staff training.

- Grants will be offered to small employing businesses and medium sized enterprises with 50 or fewer employees. Businesses will be required to outline a project proposal including the expected benefits the new technologies will bring to their operations and report the outcomes.

A Strong Record

The SME Digital Grants program extends the Liberal-led Government's ongoing Industry Facilitation and Support Program which commenced in 2011.

So far, the program has provided \$4.8 million to 277 SMEs across Western Australia (including 172 regional businesses) resulting in more than \$340 million in contracts being awarded to those companies and contributing to 667 new jobs including 84 apprenticeships.

The Liberal-led Government's \$20 million Innovation Fund will also provide a range of incentives, grants and awards to further drive entrepreneurship and job creation in the WA small business and start-up sector.



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