media release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

$600,000 grant to support Geelong region small business

Business building workshops and mentoring will be offered to small businesses from throughout the Geelong region in an expansion of the Geelong Chamber of Commerce's successful Small Business Smart Business program.

Federal Small Business Minister Bruce Billson today awarded the Geelong Chamber a $600,000 grant to allow the continuation and expansion of Small Business Smart Business, which has delivered thousands of hours of training to small business operators over the past two years.

Geelong Chamber of Commerce chief executive Bernadette Uzelac said the Federal Government grant would give Geelong small businesses new opportunities to tap into low-cost support from experts via mentoring, workshops and seminars.

"This new three-year program is designed to provide real skills, and then follow-up support to small business owners as they implement change that builds business and opportunities for new jobs," Ms Uzelac said.

"We thank the Australian Government for recognising how hard the Geelong Chamber has worked to establish support services and networks through the existing Small Business Smart Business program and for giving us the opportunity to expand the program for another three years."

The Chamber's small business support program will be run in the Surf Coast Shire, Borough of Queenscliffe and Golden Plains Shire, as well as the City of Greater Geelong.

"The Geelong Chamber of Commerce's commitment to supporting small business overrides municipal boundaries. We are so pleased to be able to offer this support program to a wide range of businesses throughout the region."

The Chamber's expanded Small Business Smart Business program will offer support to hundreds of small businesses a year by delivering low-cost face-to-face intensive programs and individual mentoring under the five business solutions streams of :

- Funding avenues and financial analysis
- Building your business
- Making the most of your talent and team
- Management capabilities; and
- Digital engagement implementation

The Small Business Smart Business program will also continue to offer business tips and access to online resources via www.smallbusinesssmartbusiness.com.au and the Small Business Smart Business newsletter, which has more than 500 small business subscribers.

"Small business in the Geelong region is a very powerful community in its own right with a strong online and social media presence where members support each other and pass on valuable tools to build business," Ms Uzelac said.

"The Chamber's Small Business Smart Business program has established itself as a valuable resource and we're very pleased that this grant gives the program the opportunity to continue its role in supporting small business for the benefit of the broader Geelong region."

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