

**SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, BOARD APPOINTMENT**

*Statement by Minister for Small Business*

**MR J.B. D'ORAZIO (Ballajura - Minister for Small Business)** [2.14 pm]: I announce a new appointment to the Small Business Development Corporation Board. I also wish to acknowledge outgoing board member Ms Denise Price, who has provided a valuable contribution to the board over the past two years. The newest member of the board is Ms Linda Liu Bearne. Ms Liu Bearne is the Vice President of the Western Australian Chinese Chamber of Commerce. She also holds the position of Executive Director at the Kingston International College. Ms Liu Bearne is credited with in January 2004 obtaining the appropriate accreditation for the college to enable the recruitment of overseas students. This significant step enabled the college to provide pathways for students to enter Australian universities at the second year university level. It has also provided a healthy boost to this state's educational exports. Prior to commencing at Kingston, Ms Liu Bearne ran her own successful small business providing consultancy services to business migrants from Malaysia and Singapore.

The addition of Ms Liu Bearne to the Small Business Development Corporation Board will further enhance the corporation's ability to develop strategies to ensure that Western Australia remains a preferred destination for business migrants. The Small Business Development Corporation's business migration program is now one of the state's key investment attraction initiatives. In 2004 alone, 356 business migrants were granted Western Australian state sponsorship; that is, nearly one new business a day planning to come to Western Australia with concrete investment plans and employment opportunities. Based on their business proposals, more than \$370 million will be injected into WA's economy, with \$164 million to be invested directly into business. In addition, nearly 1 000 jobs will be created by these new businesses in WA; that is, 1 000 jobs that may not have existed without this additional infrastructure.

The range of business migrants welcomed to WA come from diverse backgrounds and with a variety of plans for their businesses. The majority - 117 - were from the United Kingdom, followed by China with 68, and Singapore with 48.

Ms Liu Bearne's experience in dealing with Asian business migration markets will be a valuable addition to the skill set of the SBDC board. Her first-hand knowledge of these markets will help Western Australia to retain its edge over other states in the competitive business migration market. Ms Liu Bearne was also a member of the small business committee of the Department of Education and Training's State Training Board. In this role she was responsible for identifying strategies to improve training in the sector so that small businesses could continue to remain innovative, creative and competitive.

I welcome the contribution Ms Liu Bearne will make as a new board member. Her strong skills in training and business migration will be valuable to the make-up of the board. Ms Liu Bearne's appointment is yet another example of how the Gallop government is providing a supportive environment for our small business sector. This in turn is providing new jobs and opportunities for all Western Australians.