

## Directorate Reports

### Small Business Services

**Overview:** One of the core services of the SBDC since its inception in 1984 is the provision of free, confidential, independent business advice and guidance to small business operators at all stages of their business development. The SBDC's team of experienced business advisors respond to telephone, e-mail and online client enquiries, offer appointments, visit clients' premises and deliver presentations to industry and business groups.

**Outcomes:** During 2010-11, the total number of client contacts across all delivery methods totalled 37,495. The single largest group (14,189) contacted the SBDC's Information Centre while 12,147 clients accessed the advisory services by phone, letter or fax. The SBDC business advisors conducted 1,377 direct appointments with small business operators. A further 5,072 clients generated their own business licence reports on the website while 2,166 clients asked for a report to be generated for them. The total number of client contacts is somewhat lower

this year compared to last year, due to the Business Licence Finder counting actual reports generated, rather than significant website user sessions.

In addition, business advisory appointments were also held on Christmas and Cocos (Keeling) Islands under the Service Delivery Agreement with the Commonwealth Government (see Indian Ocean Territories section below).

A survey of SBDC services, conducted during 2010-11, shows a high level of overall satisfaction with the quality and usefulness of the SBDC advisory services. Results indicate overall client satisfaction levels are slightly lower than last year's (down 3% to 88%), however satisfaction levels increased most in relation to "Benefit to business operations" (up 6% to 84%) and "Contribution to informed decisions on start up/purchase" (up 9% to 78%).

Indicators for customer services remain at a very high level and have not shown significant change compared to the 2010 results.

<b>Table1: Performance Evaluation – Total Sample (weighted data)</b>	<b>KPI Score 2011</b>	<i>KPI Score 2010</i>	<i>KPI Score 2009</i>	<i>KPI Score 2008</i>
Information/advice was useful	<b>88</b>	91	91	88
Satisfied overall with contact	<b>91</b>	94	95	89
Value to business *	<b>77</b>	79	76	78
Benefit to business operations*	<b>84</b>	78	81	73
Contributed to informed decisions on start up/purchase*	<b>78</b>	69	72	66
Saving in time/cost in obtaining licensing information and forms from the one location*	<b>92</b>	91	93	90
Likelihood of using the service again	<b>93</b>	96	94	93

*\*Note, these questions were not asked of all respondents*

<b>Table 2: Customer Service – Total Sample (weighted data)</b>	<b>KPI Score 2011</b>	<i>KPI Score 2010</i>	<i>KPI Score 2009</i>	<i>KPI Score 2008</i>
Access to the service was easy	<b>94</b>	93	96	91
Responses were timely	<b>93</b>	97	94	90
Satisfied with overall customer service	<b>93</b>	95	96	91

### Specialist advisory service – commercial tenancy

**Overview:** The SBDC provides a specialist commercial tenancy advisory service to assist small business tenants, landlords and other industry participants. The service provides information and guidance on the *Commercial Tenancy (Retail Shops) Agreements Act 1985* (the Act) and all aspects of leasing commercial premises, including negotiating a lease.

During 2010-11, the leasing of business premises continued to be an area of importance and concern to small business operators, particularly in regard to shopping centres.

The SBDC seeks to ensure that small business tenants and landlords are represented and their needs and views are heard. This is achieved by providing input to the Minister for Small Business and other government agencies on policy matters and commercial tenancy related legislation.

**Outcome:** During 2010-11, the SBDC assisted 2,143 clients with information and guidance on commercial tenancy issues. This information covered a wide range of matters including:

- business starters' advice,
- termination of tenancies,



*"I went to the SBDC before I started my business and got some very practical advice on what to expect in a lease agreement, what margins I should work on and what profits to expect."*

**Stacey Lenstra**

**Owner, Beans & Bunches,  
Northbridge.**

- rent and rent reviews,
- obligations in regard to repairs and maintenance,
- operating expenses, and
- tenancy options and rights of renewal.

The SBDC also assisted 92 clients in making applications to the State Administrative Tribunal, the current dispute resolution agency for retail tenancy matters.

SBDC specialists in commercial tenancy and small business policy assisted the Department of Commerce in drafting and progressing amendments to the Commercial Tenancy (Retail Shops) Agreement Amendment Bill 2011 and implementing recommendations outstanding from the 2003 Review of the Act.

The SBDC also provided valuable advice and insights to the Department of Commerce and Parliament on proposed legislative changes, to ensure current problems in the retail tenancy market would be addressed without unintended consequences for market participants.

In addition, the SBDC provided comprehensive input on the effects of de-regulated retail trading hours on rents and operating expenses with respect to small business tenants, and on the creation of a lease information register.

### **BiZFiT business resilience program**

**Overview:** 2010-11 was the second and final year of the successful BiZFiT program which was developed to boost the resilience of small businesses in Western Australia. With \$2 million in State funding allocated over two years, the SBDC, in conjunction with Curtin University's Centre for Entrepreneurship,

the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Western Australia and the Small Business Centre Network, delivered the program to small business owners and operators throughout Western Australia. The program consists of the following key elements:

- BiZFiT Local Business Forums providing participants with customised, region-specific presentations on future economic forecasts and the impact of a changing environment on local conditions.
- BiZFiT Pulse Checks providing free, individual business reviews to assist business owners diagnose problems and determine actions to build the resilience of their business. Reviews are conducted by Small Business Centres and the SBDC.
- BiZFiT Extend providing owners of established businesses, a two-day workshop specially developed and delivered by Curtin University's Centre for Entrepreneurship.
- BiZFiT Mentor offering BiZFiT Extend participants five hours of personal mentoring to assist them in turning their learning into action for their business.
- BiZFiT scholarships providing small business owners opportunities to further develop their business skills through additional, longer term learning at Curtin University's Centre for Entrepreneurship.

**Outcome:** During 2010-11, the SBDC, together with the BiZFiT project partners, delivered 11 BiZFiT Local Business Forums, conducted 114 BiZFiT Pulse Checks and 13 BiZFiT Extend workshops, provided 88 mentoring opportunities and awarded 36 BiZFiT scholarships.

In response to participants' requests, additional events were held on the topics of 'time management', 'profit planning', 'human resource management', and 'how to generate and implement new ideas in business'.

As a result of this successful program, during 2010-11 the SBDC has:

- facilitated the participation of 1,028 business owners and operators in at least one, and in many cases, several elements of the program,
- presented a total of 31 BiZFiT events in suburban and regional locations,
- ensured regional businesses had opportunities to participate in BiZFiT events, with events held in Albany, Kalgoorlie, Karratha, Lancelin, Narrogin, Northam, Margaret River and Merredin,
- held metropolitan events in Balcatta, Bentley, Gosnells, Joondalup, Maylands, South Perth and West Perth, and
- forged an innovative partnership with Curtin University's Centre for Entrepreneurship in both the design and delivery of the program.

The feedback from participants in the BiZFiT program has been positive with many participants reporting outstanding improvements in their business results.

### **Business Online Services (BOS) project**

**Overview:** In keeping with the Western Australian Government's goal to reduce regulatory burdens on the private sector, the SBDC is the nominated agency representing the State on the Business Online Services (BOS) Project. BOS is a key component

of the Australian Business Number (ABN)/Business Name (BN) Registration Project and one of 27 regulatory priorities identified by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

BOS aims to help businesses be more productive and cut the cost of meeting government regulations through the development of a suite of online services. These services will significantly reduce business compliance costs while also delivering cost-savings for government.

The BOS project comprises two key elements:

- The Australian Business Licence and Information Service (ABLIS) – a single, national online 'discovery' service to assist businesses to identify relevant government related licences and permits, and
- The Australian Business Account (ABA) – to provide businesses with a single, national online account for their dealings with government.

The BOS Project is a collaboration between the eight Australian states and territories and the Commonwealth Government. While the federal Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) has the policy lead for the ABN/BN Registration Program and principal responsibility for the implementation of the BOS Project, the SBDC has responsibility for encouraging and facilitating the uptake of the BOS platform by regulatory agencies in Western Australia (including local governments).

**Outcome:** The BOS project has been scheduled for a number of releases with a project timeline spanning ten years. The ABLIS and the ABA will be released in stages, with both systems to go live to the public during 2011-12.

While the interim ABLIS was scheduled to go live nationally on 30 June 2011, this was delayed due to unresolved system defects and performance issues. Despite this, the SBDC and all other jurisdictions have migrated their licence data into a centralised national data store, achieving proof of concept of the ABLIS system.

The SBDC and other project partners have also identified key user and administrative service delivery targets, which will be integrated into the ABLIS for delivery in December 2011.

The SBDC has completed system and performance testing in all development and production environments and has migrated, cleansed and tested data and user interfaces with a view to informing the target solution and the ABA.

The ABLIS and the ABA are both on schedule for release in December 2011.

### Specialist Online Networks

**Overview:** The SBDC has five specialist online network groups, each offering targeted information and guidance tailored to the needs of each group. Member benefits include opportunities to meet in person, access to interactive online forums, online guidance, up to date relevant news and information, being featured in online success stories, a free

members' online directory, media opportunities, and links to relevant contacts.

**Women in Business (WIB)** – commenced in 2008 to provide women in small business with information and support to overcome barriers to success, improve networking skills and maximise the potential of their businesses.

#### Home Based Business Network (HBBN)

– launched in 2004 to provide a forum for home based business operators to exchange information and ideas, and overcome the issue of professional isolation.

**Young Business Network (YBN)** – established in 2004 to support youth enterprise and foster business skills development, while providing inspiration for and encouragement to young entrepreneurs.

**Business Migration Network (BMN)** – developed in 2006 to provide business information, support and networking opportunities for business migrants to establish and develop their business operations in Western Australia (see Business Migration Centre section below).

#### Small Business Exporters Network (SBEN)

– to assist first time and emerging exporters to develop exporting skills and knowledge with a view to stimulating export growth (see TradeStart section below).

Online Networks	Members 2010-11	Activity
Women in Business Network (WIB)	1647	120 posts on 104 topics
Home Based Business Network (HBBN)	5,240	406 posts on 282 topics
Young Business Network (YBN)	3,575	185 posts on 134 topics
Business Migration Network (BMN)	333	82 posts on 82 topics
Small Business Exporters Network (SBEN)	1,720	181 posts on 151 topics

**Outcome:** During 2010-11, membership across the SBDC online networks increased to a total of 12,563 members. Network events held during 2010-11 included:

- ‘An Evening of Networking’ attended by 100 BMN members,
- ‘End of Year Networking Event’ attended by 70 BMN members,
- ‘Harmony Week Networking Event’ attended by 60 BMN members, and
- ‘Are you paying too much Tax?’ seminar attended by 34 network members.
- ‘Social Media for Business’ – ten events focussed on five topics related to Facebook, Google, Twitter, Blogs, and Social Media Policies. These events were attended by 87 network members.

### **BIZLinks**

**Overview:** BIZLinks seminars are designed to provide an introduction to the services offered to small business starters by a range of government agencies. This collaboration between seven State and Commonwealth government agencies began with a pilot seminar in July 2008 and has continued on a regular basis since that time.

The seven partner agencies are: the SBDC, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, Australian Taxation Office, Office of State Revenue, IP Australia and the State Library of Western Australia.

BIZLinks is a successful inter-governmental collaborative project and a proven method for promoting SBDC services and the services of the other participating agencies. The program is set to continue in 2011-12.

**Outcome:** Three BIZLinks seminars were delivered in 2010-11 to a total of 226 participants.

### **SBDC Information Centre**

**Overview:** The SBDC Information Centre (formerly the Business Information and Licence Centre) is a one stop shop for business information and licensing requirements to help streamline the business start up process and assist existing small business operators.

The SBDC Information Centre offers information on:

- General small business enquiries
- Business start ups
- Business licensing requirements
- Specialist advisory services
- Publications
- Business taxation
- Small business employment
- Research Information via IBISWorld

Information on topics of interest to small business is provided in the form of business briefs, website content, start up packs, and business licence reports, all provided free of charge. The SBDC Information Centre also offers business publications for sale.

**Outcome:** During 2010-11, the SBDC Information Centre had a total of 14,189 client contacts across all delivery methods. Most clients (9,032) physically visited the Information Centre while 5,157 clients accessed the Information Centre by phone, letter, fax or email. The slight decline in client contacts since last year reflects a continuing trend towards accessing information online. The SBDC is addressing this shift by providing more comprehensive information online.

The free, two-hour BizBasics workshops are successful in attracting new clients to the SBDC's Information Centre and promoting awareness of the SBDC's new premises at 140 William Street.

As in previous years, SBDC publications continue to be the best sellers in the SBDC Information Centre. Total sales of 2,096 publications during 2010-11 included 770 copies of SBDC's *Step by Step Business Plan* and a *Guide to Operating a Small Business*.

A survey of SBDC Information Centre clients shows a high level of satisfaction across most indicators.

There has been a significant increase in the category of "Contributed to informed decisions on start up/purchase" (up 7% to 78%) but a decrease for "Value to business" (down 9% to 80%). All other attributes remain largely unchanged.

Although there were slight decreases for all three customer service attributes ranging from 3% to 5%, satisfaction remains very high at over 90%.

<b>Table 3 – Performance Evaluation – SBDC Information Centre Clients</b>	<b>KPI Score 2011</b>	<i>KPI Score 2010</i>	<i>KPI Score 2009</i>	<i>KPI Score 2008</i>
Information/advice was useful	95	96	95	86
Satisfied overall with contact	94	97	95	93
Value to business *	80	89	78	68
Benefit to business operations*	89	92	80	77
Contributed to informed decisions on start up/purchase*	78	71	65	68
Saving in time/cost in obtaining licensing information and forms from the one location*	92	91	93	90
Likelihood of using the service again	97	97	95	93

\*Note, these questions were not asked of all respondents and the standard error is much larger than for the overall results.

<b>Table 4 - Customer Service – SBDC Information Centre Clients</b>	<b>KPI Score 2011</b>	<i>KPI Score 2010</i>	<i>KPI Score 2009</i>	<i>KPI Score 2008</i>
Access to the service was easy	92	96	92	86
Responses were timely	93	98	94	92
Satisfied with overall customer service	93	96	94	90

### Business Licence Finder (BLF)

**Overview:** The Business Licence Finder (BLF) has a database of more than 6,000 federal, state and local government licences, registrations and permits required to operate businesses in Western Australia. The database can be searched to create a report, tailored to clients' requirements. The BLF database also includes relevant codes of practice. The BLF is an easy-to-use online service available 24 hours a day for clients to generate their own business licence reports.

**Outcome:** During 2010-11, a total of 7,238 reports were generated; 5,072 clients generated their own reports on the website while 2,166 clients asked for a report to be generated by the SBDC on their behalf.

Most licence enquiries involved the local government authority areas of the City of Perth, City of Stirling, City of Melville and the City of Fremantle. The four most often requested licences for 2010-11 were:

- Business name registration,
- Australian business number registration,
- GST registration, and
- Registration of a trade mark.

The highest interest in licence enquiries relating to industry type during 2010-11 were for:

- Retail trade,
- Arts and recreation services,
- Health care and social assistance,
- Accommodation and food services, and
- Education and training providers.



*“During 2010-11, the SBDC conducted 192 small business workshops for a total of 2,198 potential and existing small business operators. This represents a 21 per cent increase on last year.”*

### Small business workshops

**Overview:** During 2010-11, the SBDC provided 12 practical business workshops covering the process of starting and operating a small business. These workshops were delivered by experienced business operators and enabled clients to understand and implement good business practices.

In February 2010, a free, two-hour information session, BizBasics, was introduced. This very popular initiative provides business starters with information required to start planning for a business. Topics covered include researching a business idea, business planning, business licences, leasing premises, marketing and financial forecasting. The BizBasics sessions also showcase the SBDC services and other assistance available.

**Outcome:** During 2010-11 a total of 2,198 participants attended 192 workshops, which represents an increase of 21% in attendance. This increase can be attributed to the free BizBasics workshops as a total of 1,650 participants attended 79 BizBasics workshops during the year. A practical, customised workbook and starters' checklist was developed for BizBasics participants. This booklet is also distributed through the Small Business Centre network and is used as a reference resource for the SBDC advisory team.

In April 2011, the SBDC suspended its workshop program (with the exception of BizBasics), while the Corporation moved to new premises. To ensure workshop content remains relevant and effective, a review of the full SBDC workshop program will be undertaken during 2011-12 and content updated where necessary.

### Small business taxation information

**Overview:** The business taxation information service, provided by agreement with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), has been operating within the SBDC Information Centre three days per week. In October 2010, the ATO withdrew its business taxation information service due to other ATO priorities.

**Outcome:** Prior to its withdrawal (in the four months to October 2010), the ATO recorded 254 clients visiting the onsite ATO officer. The most frequent topics for assistance during the year were ABN applications and tax deductions.

Tax information is now provided by the SBDC business advisory team and clients are referred to the ATO where appropriate.

### Small business employment advisory service

**Overview:** Since April 2009, the Labour Relations Office at the Department of Commerce has provided an education officer at the SBDC Information Centre two days per week to provide information and guidance on small business employment issues. During 2010, the service provision changed to a "by appointment" basis.

**Outcome:** The employment advisory education service ceased in 2011, with enquiries now being handled directly by the SBDC specialist employment advisor, with referral to the Department of Commerce or Fair Work Ombudsman as appropriate.

## Indian Ocean Territories service delivery agreement

**Overview:** The SBDC provides specific programs and services to individuals and businesses within the Indian Ocean Territories (IOTs) islands of Christmas Island (CI) and Cocos (Keeling) Island (CKI). These services are delivered through a local representative and by private sector consultants, and are supported through visits by SBDC specialist advisors. The current Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) was signed in November 2008 and expires on 30 June 2012.

**Outcome:** During 2010-11, the SBDC representatives visited CI three times and CKI twice. The objective of these visits was to deliver specialised workshops and events, and to meet with local businesses, government officials and industry organisations.

A total of 96 appointments were held on CI and CKI between small business owners/operators and SBDC representatives, providing specialist advice on topics including online marketing, financial management, business planning, start up and growth.

During 2010-11, attendance at the workshops and events was high, participation active and feedback very positive. A total of 322 people participated in the workshops covering the topics; “understanding financial statements”, “systemising your business” and “succeeding online”.

Networking events were also held on each island, including presentations to Christmas and Cocos Islands school students.

The SBDC maintains high brand awareness on-island through:

- advertisements in island publications,
- regular email communication with small businesses and Island organisations,
- large scale networking functions, events and presentations,
- relationship building within the community,
- distribution of SBDC branded promotional material, and
- distribution of IOT-specific business publications.

SBDC services and activities	2010-11	2009-10	2008-09
Client appointments Christmas Island*	51	84	55
Client appointments Cocos Islands	45	37	32
Workshop/event attendees Christmas Island	192	172	15
Workshop/event attendees Cocos Islands	130	66	43
Short appointments, phone, e-mail both islands	284	199	55
Meetings both islands	48	45	43
TOTAL	750	603	243

\*The decrease in client appointments on Christmas Island can be attributed in part, to a change in economic circumstances brought about by the increased population of workers and boat arrivals at the Detention Centre. During 2010-11 many of the business owners on CI were focussed on the day to day running of their businesses, and did not seek business advice. During 2011-12 the SBDC plans to address this issue through a campaign entitled ‘Are you ready?’

## TradeStart

**Overview:** TradeStart is a Federal program delivered through local public sector and industry organisations and is designed to assist small to medium businesses become sustainable exporters.

**Outcome:** The SBDC delivered export advisory services under the TradeStart program from late 2002 until the end of November 2010. During 2010-11, the SBDC recorded 179 contacts with clients seeking export information and guidance.

In 2010, the SBDC tendered for a new contract to deliver the TradeStart export advisory services for a further four years however, in November, the SBDC was advised that its tender had been unsuccessful. The new TradeStart contract for the Perth metropolitan area was awarded to the Western Australian Department of State Development.

## Export Accelerator

**Overview:** The aim of the Export Accelerator Program is to assist small Western Australian businesses in developing their export capability, and to provide specialised additional assistance to the SBDC's TradeStart clients.

**Outcome:** In November 2010, the SBDC collaborated with the Western Australian Chinese Chamber of Commerce Inc (WACCC) and representatives from several Western Australian wineries to seek export opportunities in China. The delegation exhibited Western Australian wines at the five-day Ningbo Food Fair on the central eastern coast of China and promoted the product to wine importers in Shanghai.

Ningbo was offered as a new port for wine entry into China and the delegation used this opportunity to

promote Australian food and beverage products in China.

The SBDC also arranged for a Chinese language brochure promoting Western Australian food and beverage products to be displayed and distributed at both events.

The Export Accelerator program was finalised during 2010-11.

## Special projects

The SBDC works collaboratively with other government agencies and departments on projects and programs concerning small business operators around the State. During 2010-11, the SBDC successfully completed the following special projects:

### Special project: Tourism BOOST

**Overview:** Changes to global economic conditions including a high value Australian dollar and conservative consumer spending has brought challenges to the Western Australian tourism industry. In recognition of this, Tourism Western Australia (TWA) provided the SBDC with funding of \$150,000 to develop and deliver a program to assist small business operators in the tourism industry to build resilience in their businesses.

**Outcome:** During 2010-11, the SBDC designed and developed the Tourism BOOST program to target new and potential tourism operators, employees of larger tourism businesses and existing tourism business operators wanting to improve their understanding of the tourism industry and increase their marketing reach.

The Tourism BOOST program consists of two elements:

- The Tourism BOOST online tool provides comprehensive tourism industry information, marketing strategies, costing and pricing tools and contact details for key industry organisations. The SBDC extensively reviewed, rebranded and invigorated the content of TWA's original Jumpstart Guide into a more user friendly, interactive, easy-to-read online tool.

The guide is scheduled to be accessible online, from the SBDC website, by mid November 2011.

- The Tourism BOOST workshops are designed to be delivered in three sessions covering; "Understanding the tourism industry", "Marketing", and "Succeeding online".

Promotion of the workshop program began in March 2011 through engaging stakeholders in the tourism industry, including the Small Business Centre (SBC) Network and local councils, to market the workshops to their members.

The initial roll-out of the workshop program is scheduled for delivery from August to December 2011 throughout the State, after which it is envisaged that the workshops will be delivered by organisations such as the SBCs, Visitor Centres and local councils.

Special project: Dry Season Assistance Scheme 2010-11

**Overview:** In November 2010, the Western Australian Government allocated funding to the Department of Agriculture and Food to help farming communities and small businesses deal with the effects of the exceptional dry seasonal conditions.

The funding included \$500,000 to assist non-farm small businesses seeking professional services.

**Outcome:** The \$500,000 funding for the small business grants was administered by the SBDC through the 16 Small Business Centres located in the 100 affected shires. Vouchers for up to \$1,500 were issued to eligible businesses, to be used for accounting, legal or financial planning advice. The program proved very popular and funding was fully allocated to businesses by February 2011.



*"The Tourism BOOST presentation was excellent! My colleagues and I were very impressed and we learnt a lot. I now have some new ideas to help me move forward in my business."*

**Sue Stein, owner Trigg Retreat Bed and Breakfast,  
and  
Director, Bed and Breakfast Farmstay  
and Accommodation Australia Ltd**

A total of 335 vouchers were issued under the Scheme, for a funding total of \$499,500.

Most of the businesses assisted by the Scheme were located in the Albany to Central Wheatbelt and Dalwallinu area and included businesses involved in manufacturing, transport, repairs, retail and fencing.

#### Special project: Department of Fisheries' Rock Lobster Industry Program

**Overview:** Since late 2008, significant changes to the Rock Lobster Fishing Industry were phased in to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the State's western rock lobster stocks. These restrictions and reductions in quotas have had a significant effect on the many small business owner/operators involved in the industry and some were considering the viability of their businesses under the new regulations. The Department of Fisheries contacted the SBDC to assist these operators to better understand their businesses, improve operations if possible, and explore their options for the future.

**Outcome:** In 2010, the SBDC delivered presentations to approximately 270 participants at the Department of Fisheries' "Going to Quota 2010" conferences in Fremantle and Geraldton. SBDC's presentation titled 'Should I stay or should I go?' examined alternatives for those assessing their future within the industry.

The SBDC developed an information and resources pack specifically tailored to help business operators in the fisheries industry. Participants were offered free individual appointments through the SBDC or their local SBC to discuss their particular circumstances and options. The main issues discussed at the advisory appointments included resistance to the changes, alternative forms of fishing, employment issues, and the possibility of financial assistance.

#### Special project: Timber Industry Assistance, Manjimup

**Overview:** In early October 2010, Gunns Limited announced its intention to close its main jarrah sawmill in Manjimup unless a buyer could be found. Four months later, Gunns formally shut down its Deanmill operation in Manjimup.

The South West Development Commission coordinated a State Government response to the Gunns announcement, including a request for the SBDC to provide support to local businesses as required.

**Outcome:** In anticipation of increased requests for business support from the region and to assist the Small Business Centre Manager in Manjimup, the SBDC prepared a range of crisis-response materials and developed a comprehensive 'Transition Checklist' for business operators affected by the closure of the mill.

## Business Migration Centre (BMC)

**Overview:** The role of the BMC is to attract business migrants into Western Australia to raise capital investment in businesses to assist with the State's economic growth. The BMC meets the Government's goals by;

- promoting and marketing the State as one of the world's leading migration destinations for business investment, employment, education and lifestyle,
- assisting potential business migrants with information on visa options and criteria, living, working and establishing a business in Western Australia, and
- supporting qualifying business migrants with State sponsorship.

The BMC promotes Western Australia internationally to potential business migrants with a marketing program focusing on three major elements of moving to the State; strong growing economy, excellent business and employment opportunities, and high quality lifestyle and education system. China has been Western Australia's fastest growing market during the year and accounted for around 33 per cent of all business migrants coming to the State. Malaysia and Singapore is the State's second ranked market, making up around 15 per cent of all business migrants coming to Western Australia, followed by South Africa with around 13 per cent and the UK with 11 per cent.

**Outcome:** During 2010-11, the BMC and representatives from the Western Australian Trade Offices participated in international migration expos and events, seminars and appointments in the

State's prime markets of China, Malaysia, Singapore and South Africa. In total, over 4,400 participants attended these combined events. These events form part of the overall marketing strategy to attract new business migrants to the State, and to develop and reinforce relationships with migration agents based in Western Australia's prime target market countries.

The BMC hosted three delegations of business migrants from China during the year, and briefed other participants visiting Perth on State Government and Industry Group delegations. External meetings were also arranged for the groups with the Perth City Council, WA Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Department of State Development.

In 2010-11, the BMC continued to work closely with the Federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) as a member of the Commonwealth and State Working Party on Skilled Migration, and of the State Client Reference Group, to assist with policy development, strategies and initiatives. The BMC provided three formal responses to DIAC discussion papers on behalf of the Government of Western Australia in regard to the ongoing review of Australia's Business Skills Program.

Despite the uncertain global economic climate and high value of the Australian dollar, the demand for business migration information and support from Western Australia remained high during 2010-11 with the BMC responding to 6,236 enquiries from clients and migration agents. State sponsorship application fees raised \$138,700 to assist with the cost of servicing clients and agents and undertaking the international marketing program.

During the year, there were;

- 267 State sponsorships approved for new business migrants and registration of a further 18 new business migrants for unsponsored visas to settle and go into business in Western Australia, and
- 108 State sponsorships approved for business migrants and registration of a further 16 business migrants on temporary residency visas converting to permanent residency visas.

The key outcome achieved for the Western Australian economy is that 155 business migrants finalised their investment this year injecting \$293.4 million into the State for business establishment, treasury bond investment, personal expenditure and settlement costs, which created over 200 new jobs and 20 new exporting businesses.

**Other major business migration activities for 2010-11 include:**

- Hosting three Business Migrant Network functions to connect business operators from around the world now living in Western Australia, to each other and to local business service providers. The network now has over 333 members and is a valuable source of business support to assist business migrants establish and develop their businesses in Western Australia.
- Sponsoring the WA Chinese Chamber of Commerce Migrant Story functions,
- Presenting information on State sponsorship requirements and visa criteria and options to business migrant clients of the major banks in Western Australia,

- Briefing members of the Migration Institute of Australia WA Branch on State Sponsorship requirements and policies at their State conference,
- Participating on the Western Australian Publications Committee to assist in showcasing the State's strong economy, business investment potential and lifestyle attributes to visitors to Perth for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).