

Australia's top small businesses want tax relief

16 August 2010: A survey of 100 of Australia's top small and medium businesses has nominated company tax cuts as the most important action the federal government could take to better demonstrate its support of the sector.

The survey was conducted in the past fortnight among state and territory winners and finalists of the 2010 Telstra Business Awards ahead of the national awards to be announced in Sydney this Friday.

Nominating a single priority for government, 41 per cent named tax relief, 19 per cent called for a dedicated Minister for Small Business with Federal Cabinet status, 14 per cent favoured cutting red tape and compliance costs and nine per cent nominated changing workplace laws to make it easier for SMEs to dismiss employees.

The business owners surveyed are optimistic about business conditions in the coming year.

Almost two-thirds believe conditions will be better and only five per cent predict they will be worse, while 11 per cent said trading in the year ahead would depend on the election outcome.

State and territory winners representing micro-business owners, small and medium enterprises will compete for the title of Telstra Australian Business of the Year as well as national awards in their categories and for leadership in innovation and social responsibility.

The survey of 100 Telstra Business Awards finalists and state winners also shows:

- Almost a quarter of businesses (23 per cent) surveyed named managing cash flow as their current biggest challenge while 20 per cent listed a shortage of skilled labour.
- Almost a third of businesses said they spend between 10 and 20 per cent of their time complying with the current tax regime and a third said they spent the same amount of time complying with workplace relations requirements.
- Sixty-one per cent of the business owners were aged less than 35 when they launched their business and of that number 20 per cent were under 25.
- Sixty-five per cent nominated the Liberal/National Coalition as better for SMEs, with 15 per cent choosing the ALP and seven per cent The Greens with the remainder choosing others.

The finalists and winners in the 18th year of the Telstra Business Awards come from a wide range of industry sectors, including retail, engineering and construction, education, health, manufacturing, communications and IT services, accommodation and tourism, and personal services.

Asked if they were concerned about the commercial impact government action on climate change may have on their business, 57 per cent of those surveyed said they were slightly concerned or unconcerned while 18 per cent were concerned and 12 per cent very concerned or alarmed.

Fifty-seven per cent of respondents to the survey were men and 43 per cent were women while 18 per cent were aged less than 35, 23 per cent were aged from 35 to 39 and 59 per cent over 40.

State and territory winners and National winners of the Telstra Business Awards share in more than \$400,000 in cash grants and business products and join an alumni of Australia's most prestigious business awards program.

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National finalists for the 2010 Telstra Business Awards

| BUSINESSOWNER MICRO BUSINESS AWARD | | MYOB SMALL BUSINESS AWARD | |
|---|-----|---|-----|
| ATS Australian Educational Group Pty Ltd trading as Advance Tutoring School | VIC | Aqualogical Pty Ltd | QLD |
| Calamvale Veterinary Clinic | QLD | Axios IT Pty Ltd | SA |
| Catnip Cattery | TAS | City Ceramics (NT) | NT |
| KAPP Engineering Pty Ltd | WA | Electro Medical Group | WA |
| Makin Trax Australia | ACT | InSPArations Day Spa | TAS |
| Penny's Fancy Dress | NT | Intact Group | NSW |
| Sydney Writers' Centre Pty Ltd | NSW | International Medical Recruitment Pty Ltd | VIC |
| teachers.on.net | SA | Today's Homes & Lifestyle | ACT |
| PANASONIC MEDIUM BUSINESS AWARD | | AMP INNOVATION AWARD | |
| Abacus ALS | QLD | Akcelik & Associates Pty Ltd trading as SIDRA SOLUTIONS | VIC |
| Ezypay Pty Ltd | NSW | HGFitness | NT |
| Handley Surveys Pty Limited | WA | Insight4 | TAS |
| Jape Furnishing Superstore | NT | Neutrog Australia Pty Ltd | SA |
| Kelly Engineering | SA | Quicklock Partitions | WA |
| Maintenance Systems Solutions Pty Ltd | TAS | Signmanager Pty Ltd | QLD |
| Melbourne Medical Deputising Service | VIC | Soprano Design | NSW |
| stratsec | ACT | Viridis E3 | ACT |
| SENSIS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARD | | TELSTRA AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS OF THE YEAR | |
| Chewyings Lawn & Horticulture | NSW | Abacus ALS | QLD |
| Greenies Real Food | NT | City Ceramics (NT) | NT |
| Melbourne Medical Deputising Service | VIC | Intact Group | NSW |
| Neutrog Australia Pty Ltd | SA | KAPP Engineering | WA |
| Northern Project Contracting | QLD | Kelly Engineering | SA |
| Park Homes | TAS | Maintenance Systems Solutions Pty Ltd | TAS |
| Richard Luton Properties | ACT | Melbourne Medical Deputising Service | VIC |
| The Bodhi Tree | WA | stratsec | ACT |

For further information about the national finalists in the 2010 Telstra Australian Business Awards, please contact Lighthouse Communications Group on 02 92623868.

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