

Media Release

Australian TCF Industry Support Programs Cut Off One Year Early!

Textile Clothing Footwear Resource Centre of WA Inc. & TCF Australia are most concerned about the early cutting of TCF Industry Support Programs announced in the recent Federal Government budget. These valued Industry support programs were scheduled to finish 2015 and have been cut short one year early, at a time when all areas of the textile clothing and footwear Industry are struggling through the entire supply chain to manufacture within Australia.

In particular, the TCF Small Business Program provided up to \$50,000 for an Australian fashion and apparel firm to improve their enterprise culture through the support of a grant to assist them develop new equipment processes or develop management ability to improve competitive advantage by manufacturing locally designed and made product.

The Australian Fashion & TCF Industry is suffering not only from the continued importation of large volumes of low cost 'fast fashion' through the 15% reduction in import tariffs over the past 10 years, and in 6mths there will be a further 5% reduction; but also from the large increase of international fashion retailers who have established major retail outlets across Australia with imported 'low cost' product which is increasing pressure on the Australian designer and Australian fashion retailer who are quickly losing market share to compete in their local market place. Now is not the time to cut support to this creative and innovative small business sector who has the potential to target global export markets if they can gain assistance at this most critical time in the future of the Australian Fashion & TCF Industry. This \$2.5 million annual TCF SBP program has assisted many of our small business designers and manufacturing network across Australia in past years and by keeping this program running until 2015, would assist a further 50 Australian designers and local manufacturers that include bridal, swimwear, uniforms, fashion, evening, sportswear, menswear, womenswear and childrenswear to name just a few.

Carol Hanlon, Founder & Manager, TCFWA & TCF Australia commented "Only a few days ago did I meet with a local Victoria Park WA small business looking to improve their enterprise culture to bring the manufacture of their TCF product to WA, where at present they need to freight their niche product from a Melbourne factory with huge additional daily/weekly freight costs. The TCF Small Business Program would have been ideal for this firm to improve their enterprise culture to bring their timelines, service delivery of their unique speciality TCF product to be locally made in WA"

"Australia wants to celebrate its fashion designers & TCF Industry at Fashion Weeks across the country & globally with Federal & State Government representatives laying claim to local fashion design talent, but how can the Industry continue to survive, when support programs like this are being cut short? TCFWA and TCF Australia over the past 16years have assisted over 6,000 Australian designers and manufacturers with fashion business training & mentoring, global opportunities and supply chain support and I personally have volunteered my time for 16years as Founder & Manager of the TCF Resource Centre of WA & TCF Australia to continue to provide this much needed support to talented, creative and very hard working fashion small businesses and the TCF Industry sector.

During the Productivity Commission hearings into the Australian TCF Industry in 2003, I presented at the Commission that the ABS statistics on the TCF sector was not an accurate indication of those working within the TCF sector, as it did not count home-based, self-employed designers, nor did it count designers producing & retailing their own label like thousands of bridal and evening wear designers do across Australia. The true innovators of the TCF sector are the

small fashion businesses that TCF WA & TCF Australia supports in a tough volatile and globally competitive industry.

The other sector of the TCF Industry support programs that has been cut short is the Building Innovation Capability Scheme (BIC) which was to assist firms in the innovative textile production and/or processes which are vital with new TCF innovations of intelligent textiles, smart textiles and with developing nanotechnology fibre & yarn processes the ‘thinking’ textile and can be used in a vast array of new world medical, construction, defence, homewares, marine industries etc. to name just a few. This is not the time to cut Australia off at the knees to lose its competitive textile innovations one year earlier than scheduled.

“TCFWA and TCF Australia are most concerned that it is not in Australia’s best interests to cut support to the fashion design, creative TCF Industries and we urge Minister Macfarlane, Minister for Industry to reconsider the cutting of these TCF support programs and consider the loss of design, creativity and innovation to Australia”

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