



Government grants boost opportunities for designers

Cooperative workshops, forums and an online national communication network are giving new and emerging designers the opportunity to receive mentoring in building their businesses.

Starting a fashion label has been a challenge for many young designers who don't have the industry connections or business knowledge.

To overcome this, the *Designedge Fashion Incubator National Training and Mentoring Project* was set up by Carol Hanlon of Perth.

The project received \$299,475 in AusIndustry funding under the *Building Entrepreneurship in Small Business (BESB)* program and is also supported by the Textile Clothing Footwear Resource Centre of WA Inc and Belmont Business Enterprise Centre Inc.

"The grant has really helped to boost the opportunities for designers to build a successful business," Carol said.

"It gives them the chance to develop their business skills, build networks in their area and possibly show their designs to the world through online showrooms."

Workshops and forums cover topics from fashion trends to business development and marketing.

Designers can sign up for business mentoring sessions via email. The project is also looking into setting up a virtual fashion incubator network with a focus on multicultural, Indigenous and young designers.



Carol Hanlon - helping designers become entrepreneurs.

Carol said the services provided by the project had so far been very popular, with hundreds of designers across Australia in the textile, clothing, footwear and leather industries, taking part in workshops, forums and mentoring.

"People can contact us and we will run workshops in any area of Australia," Carol said.

"At the workshops, designers can share information about raw materials that are available locally or where they can source other unique materials to include in their designs.

\$299,475 in Building Entrepreneurship in Small Business funding

“The BESB grant has really helped to boost the opportunities.”

“It’s a huge worldwide industry and it can be very hard to find materials if you don’t have the connections. The workshops are also helping to set up national and global directories that will help designers find the supplier they need.

“All of this helps get to the end result quicker with better access to options and assistance.”

Other services on offer include providing space on the *Designedge* website for designers to develop their own online shop. Already 25 designers have applied to the project for space on the website. E-commerce mentoring is available to those who are not yet ready to run a shop.

This mentoring will help designers understand what is involved with developing a website and through the

final stages of supply and demand to make sure they can deliver goods that are ordered online.

“We are also working towards linking people who may like to develop collaborative projects or licence agreements with Indigenous textile artists across Australia,” Carol said.

“There are fashion agents who are interested in keeping an eye on the emerging fashion market in Australia.”

International fashion agent Margaret Farrell of Suki Moo has committed to personally view each label at *Designedge* to assess their suitability for the European, Ireland, UK and USA markets.

Carol said the project was uncovering talent and making business organisations and other government bodies aware of the talent in their region.

At a glance

The *Designedge Fashion Incubator National Training and Mentoring Project* runs workshops and forums about:

- market research
- product development
- promotion and marketing
- fashion trends and directions
- Indigenous business opportunities
- linking retailers and agents

Contact

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Textile designer Colin Heaney showcases his line of accessories.



Building Entrepreneurship in Small Business

AusIndustry’s *Building Entrepreneurship in Small Business* (BESB) is a suite of four competitive merit-based grant initiatives which support a new culture of entrepreneurship by providing grants focusing on the ongoing improvement of Australia’s small business operating skills.

AusIndustry is the Australian Government’s business program delivery division in the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources.

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