

MEDIA RELEASE

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FACILITATION STANDARDS SET TO RISE

On the eve of the National Small Business Summit, Australia's peak body for Facilitation, The Australasian Institute of Enterprise Facilitators (AIEF) has announced the development of a strategic alliance with Business Enterprise Centre Australia (BECA).

The AIEF was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills. Their mission is to establish the high standard of skills required for enterprise facilitation.

A comprehensive accreditation process is in place to ensure that business owner/managers are being provided with a consistent and easy method of identifying suitably skilled trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors, advisers, and facilitators.

While "national" standards provide an acceptable measure for business advisors, AIEF will be assisting BEC Australia to push for its network to lift their skills base to higher, "international" levels.

AIEF National President, Carol Hanlon said, "The new alliance between BEC Australia and AIEF will highlight to the Australian small business community, the depth of quality accredited business facilitators and the great contribution that both these organisations are making to small business across Australia."

"In the memorandum of understanding we have signed, AIEF would provide accreditation and BEC Australia would provide APEC program training." Carol Hanlon said, "AIEF accreditation will give small businesses even greater confidence in advice they receive from BEC's."

The training has been devised by an international panel of experts and ratified by Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation nations including Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the USA.

The agreement is due to commence on July 1, 2009 for an initial period of two years.

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BACKGROUND AUSTRALASIAN INSTITUTE OF ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS FROM www.aief.org.au

The Australasian Institute of Enterprise Facilitators (AIEF) was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills. In their report, entitled *Enterprising Nation*, the taskforce recommended that "a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.

The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) program was developed by an international panel of experts. Its objective is to create a professional standard across APEC for the small business counselling industry. It was endorsed by APEC Small Business Ministers in 1997. It is recognised by Canada, Australia, Brunei, Darussalam, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Thailand and the USA.

On completion of the program business counsellors (including facilitators, advisers and consultants), gain international recognition of their status throughout APEC countries and gain professional membership of AIEF with nationally recognised professional status through use of the letters "MIEF".

BACKGROUND BEC AUSTRALIA INFORMATION FROM www.beca.org.au

Business Enterprise Centres operate throughout all states and territories in Australia endeavouring to work with and on behalf of the micro and small business sectors.

BECA Charter: -

BEC Australia is a not-for-profit organisation whose primary role is to support and grow the national network of Business Enterprise Centres and provide representation on behalf of its members to key stakeholders.

BECA Vision:-

A nationwide network of Business Enterprise Centres that are recognised as the first and best point of contact for small business operators seeking quality business information, advice and guidance.