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Funding boost helps set TCFWA on road for TCF national success

The TCF Resource Centre Western Australia (TCPWA) is set to extend its national business mentoring program after receiving a \$300,000 shot in the arm.

The centre's project was one of 58 across the country to be allocated money through the Federal Government's \$11 million Building Entrepreneurship in Small Business (BESB) program.

In all, nine West Australian projects received more than \$3.2 million of funding through the training and mentoring, and succession planning funding round.

TCPWA manager Carol Hanlon said the money would have an enormous impact on both the voluntary organisation itself as well as the small businesses it was trying to help.

Principally, and most importantly, it would allow the voluntary group to continue providing business skills to women across regional and metropolitan Australia.

There would be a particular focus on young fashion designers aged under 35, young entrepreneurs in the TCFL sector, indigenous and multi-cultural TCF industry operators and value-adding to Australia's wool clip, Hanlon said.

It is understood the funding has been ear-marked for nine projects developed by TCPWA including an online small business support mentoring, the development of an online TCFL small business information service website and the setting up of a national online TCFL directory. Other initiatives included hosting targeted product development training and mentoring classes, assisting with the establishment of an indigenous TCF industry and helping TCF suppliers, wholesalers and retailers with their supply chain issues.

Hanlon said the project would also see the centre staging a series of TCF business opportunities forums covering topics such as starting a business, starting a fashion label, growing a business, financing a business, protecting trade marks and designs, pricing and costing, time management, media and public relation skills and credit management.

The project was in keeping with the 2002 10-year TCF Strategic Plan which referred to the need for a TCPWA-type TCF support centre being set up in each state to become TCF Australia.

Hanlon said she hoped to get the ball rolling on most of the initiatives by June however additional funding from other avenues would need to be sourced before all the objectives could be met. "I started TCFWA eight years ago and I'm still a volunteer. [To get the project fully funded] I would've needed to put in for ten times that amount."

Tracey McEldowney