

Sharp Dummies

19 June 2003

The Commissioner
Textile, Clothing, Footwear and Leather Inquiry
Productivity Commission
PO Box 80
BELCONNEN
ACT 2616

To the Commissioners

Please refer to submission numbers 13 and 107. This is an additional submission:

SHARP Dummies seeks to contribute to the Productivity Commission "PC" "Review of TCF Assistance Position Paper April 2003" apropos the Strategic Investment Program ("SIP").

SHARP Dummies is a small start-up company with intellectual property ("IP") that SHARP Dummies believes will bring substantial savings and provide a sustainable, significant and competitive advantage to the Australian TCF, in particular the apparel industry (fashion, uniform, protective et al).

There does not appear to be any facility for a small start-up like SHARP Dummies with unique and new TCF industry IP to seek support to bring such a development to market, to commercialisation.

Present support facilities for small start-up:

1. The SIP programme which requires up front investment with later recovery of costs necessarily needs to be supported by an existing corporation/organization that can commit resources to SHARP Dummies IP development and commercialisation.
2. R & D Start Grants where SHARP Dummies competes for limited funds with applications from all other industries, organizations and causes.
3. TCF – TDF; submission made. Fund closed before processing. SHARP Dummies advised TCF – TDF closed by Government to fund "border protection" and "war against terrorism".

SHARP Dummies Preferred Position:

SHARP Dummies would like to see something like:

1. Organisation (joint industry/government) facility to submit TCF new inventions, productivity enhancement ideas, for consideration for up front

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funding ("Review Funding"). "Up front funding" being needed because organizations like SHARP Dummies are "start-up" and although a good idea lack resources (time and money) to fully develop the new idea AND bring it to market (commercialisation).

2. The new TCF productivity idea IP being accepted on its merits by the Review Facility as warranting support would then be referred to a small group (say 2-5 persons drawn from industry and government) to oversee and guide the conclusion of development and commercialisation of the idea/IP ("Development Committees"). This process to be funded by government /or a levy on industry. Industry could contribute in money /or kind.
3. The "Review Facility" would negotiate with the "Development Committee" creative and lateral ideas for concluding development of the new TCF productivity idea/IP and bringing it to market with a contract/commitment to repay cost of such support from future earnings from the marketing of the new TCF productivity idea/IP (e.g. Like recovery of HECS from tertiary educated students upon them entering the workforce at a particular income level).
4. The Review Facility may take "equity" in the start-up like that taken by venture capitalists in return for development support.
5. The ongoing support offered to the start-up could be a function of annual review (supportive report by the "Development Committee"). Members of the Development Committee should rotate say every 24 months.

Conclusion:

Vision: Australian TCFL to become more profitable, sustainable and to have a substantial competitive advantage in the international apparel market. It must become more "clever", smarter than its off-shore competition.

Implementation: For the Australian TCFL industry to achieve the VISION above mentioned there needs to be "generous" support for:

1. New ideas/intellectual property ("IP") to be developed in existing participants in the Australia TCFL industry. Present support from SIP and ATO for R & D, AND
2. New ideas/IP (applicable to TCFL) developed by organizations NOT existing participants in the Australian TCFL that are unable to conclude development and/or commercialisation of new ideas/IP of merit due to lack of resources.

SHARP Dummies is a company that falls into the second category above and strongly recommends to the PC that the Government /or Industry should develop a facility to capitalise on what organizations like SHARP Dummies may offer the Australian TCFL industry. Without such support such ideas may well leave

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Australia, be developed and commercialised overseas at further serious deleterious impact on the Australian TCFL industry.

For further information please contact the writers.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit to the PC

Yours faithfully

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