

# New boost will target businesses

GREG ELLIS

A NEW business growth program was launched in Wollongong this week at an event attended by 40 professionals.

WEA Illawarra chief executive Greg Fisher said the free Biz Booster program had been developed by a committee of motivated people who wanted the best for the region.

Mr Fisher said it was designed to help small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) grow their organisations, and business leaders were encouraged to help get the message out to their clients.

He said supporting SMEs in their next stage of growth was important to the Illawarra because they made up 96 per cent of all business in the region.

The program, funded by the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, is also supported by WEA Illawarra, the Illawarra Business Chamber, Wollongong City Council, and RDA Illawarra.

Jo Kubota and Taka Kubota, of Global Solutions Strategies, said the program was designed for businesses already on the growth path and would be conducted in a way that gave them the essential knowledge and skills they needed to move their businesses to the next growth level.

Mrs Kubota said it was also designed to give them a broader focus than just doing business in the Illawarra.

The program will run over a series of five workshops run by a specialist on each topic.

There will be a different workshop every three weeks, each lasting about three hours.

Each workshop will be followed by one-on-one coaching.

Illawarra Priority Employment Area local employment coordinator Jane Robinson said a Building Australia's Future Workforce committee had written a regional employment plan



Trainers: WEA's Tony Elshof talks to Jo Kubota and Taka Kubota of Global Solutions Strategies about the new free business training program being developed in the Illawarra.

Picture: ROBERT PEET

and saw developing SMEs as important because they were the key to job generation in the region.

Ms Robinson said the free government-funded program was about providing real assistance to entrepreneurial endeavours.

She said people such as Garry Pinch, of Accounting Professionals, had done considerable work in the area and he was one of many who had helped develop the project.

Enterprise Connect coordinator John Grace said a small committee of highly com-

mitted people was formed after funding was secured and consultants were appointed to deliver the program.

Mr Grace said the program came at a good time because the local economy was being reshaped.

He said it was important to achieve the best outcome for the community by supporting people who were able to develop innovative businesses with export potential.

Further information on the program can be found at [www.weaillawarra.com.au](http://www.weaillawarra.com.au).