

APEC Intellectual Property Rights PE&A SME Workshop

1 – 3 APRIL 2009, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA



The importance of SMEs in Australia

- Australian population – 21.7 million (March 2009)*
- Total number of SMEs in Australia: 834 062 representing 99% of all employing businesses in Australia (July 2007)*

* Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (www.abs.gov.au)

Why do SMEs under-use IP?

Market research indicates that SMEs are:

- too busy managing other areas of the business to consider IP;
- lacking basic understanding of IP identification, protection and commercialisation (they don't know what they don't know);
- lacking awareness of where to go for assistance;

Why do SMEs under-use IP? (*cont*)

- fearful that IP can be infringed;
- lacking knowledge on enforcement;
- nervous of perceived costs of protecting IP; and only considering IP when in trouble.

Long term nature – benefits of investing in IP

- **for growth:** encourages investment, can be sold/licensed to finance new opportunities
- **for security:** limits copycats, protects market share, maintains competitive advantage
- **for value:** an intangible asset that has real value when business is sold

Short term measures required

PE&A efforts targeting the SME sector which:

- work in conjunction with other organisations already communicating with SMEs;
- ‘package’ IP information into other business communication; and
- Promote SME and IP success stories that are strategic, well researched and evaluated.