

**BEN WYATT, MLA**

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The Hon Troy Buswell MLA
Minister for Commerce
21st Floor, Governor Stirling Tower
197 St Georges Terrace
PERTH WA 6000

5 May 2009

Dear Minister

As the member for Victoria Park and Co-Patron of the Belmont Small Business Centre (BSBC) I am astonished and appalled to learn that the Small Business Development Corporation of Western Australia Board has withdrawn funding to the BSBC, despite one year of its three year contract remaining.

I was the Chair of the BSBC Management Committee for a number of years. In my roles as a Member of Parliament representing the people of Victoria Park and Chair of the management committee of the BSBC I have witnessed first hand the good work done by the Centre for clients who have the desire and ambition to start their own small business but need low cost, local and professional assistance to get their businesses up and running, and keep them running efficiently.

The range of services offered by Carol Hanlon and her team is staggering. The fact that they are able to do so in such a prompt, effective and professional manner is a tribute to both Ms Hanlon, her staff and the efforts of countless volunteers, including all of those on the Management Committee. The extent to which Ms Hanlon has been recognised through countless awards and nominations (such as a nominee for WA citizen of the year and twice awarded National Business Enterprise Centre Manager of the Year) speaks for itself. Before responding to my letter I encourage you to visit Ms Hanlon and her team at the BSBC, located at 7 Fairbrother Street, Belmont, to see for yourself what an outstanding service they provide.

Having reviewed the correspondence from Mr Moir to the current Chair of the BSBC, Ms Jasmyn Mumme of 28 April 2009, I am deeply disturbed by the absence of reasons provided as to why the decision to cease funding the BSBC was made. For an organisation of 15 years standing that has gone from strength to strength, to be

cut off at the knees so that 'the resultant savings will be re-distributed across the SBC programme' makes no commercial sense, especially when Federal funding has been provided to the BBEC that is contingent upon the existence of State funding.

I am advised by Ms Hanlon that the impact of the closure of the BSBC on the local area will be disastrous for their clients and potential clients (many of whom are from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds) for no net gain. In these times of economic hardship, people who have the drive to enter the world of small business need all the assistance they can get. This decision deprives them of that opportunity.

I understand that unless this decision is reviewed, the funding to the BSBC will cease within 60 days. Please provide me with an urgent response in relation to my letter to confirm that funding will be reinstated to this successful and thriving not-for-profit enterprise.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ben Wyatt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

BEN WYATT, MLA
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