

BELMONT SMALL BUSINESS CENTRE FUNDING CUT – THOUSANDS TO BE DENIED SERVICE AND SUPPORT BUT STILL NO ANSWERS

The Belmont Small Business Centre is still no closer to being provided with answers as to why their funding was suddenly revoked, leaving the future of the centre in jeopardy. On 28 April 2009, Mr Steve Moir, the Managing Director of the WA Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) announced it was withdrawing all further funding to the Centre without any further notice.

“An analysis of our client statistics confirms what we knew all along - the decision of the WA Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) is completely unjustified” said Belmont Small Business Centre Executive Carol Hanlon.

“Mr Moir has tried to explain away the funding cut on the basis that 19 regional centres require additional monies to serve their clientele. A review of our client database reveals that we service about 1,000 clients per year and have done so since 1994. I am not at all being critical of my colleagues in the regional centres, but I would be astounded if any other Small Business Centre came close to meeting the volume of enquiry that we do”.

On that analysis, Ms Hanlon remained mystified as to what benefit a top up of under \$5,000 would achieve for each centre. “It is like running a sprinkler in a desert – it makes absolutely no sense on any level”.

Small Business Centre Belmont is the only SBC centre in WA that has provided business workshops and online business mentoring in regional & remote Western Australia over a long period of time in areas such as Geraldton, Carnarvon, Tom Price, Port Hedland, Wickham, Karratha, Broome, Lombadina, Margaret River, Donnellybrook, Pinjilly, Merriden, Bussellton to assist WA regional and remote women in business to grow and develop their business skills.

The BSBC statistics also revealed that many clients not only live and work in Belmont, they also come from all over the entire Perth metropolitan area. “The reality is we do what we do extremely well, so well in fact that many thousands of our clients have come to us from areas outside Belmont” said Ms Hanlon. “To cut a centre off at the knees because of our success is not economic rationalism; it looks more like a case of tall poppy syndrome”.

Ms Hanlon also expressed disbelief in relation to Mr Moir’s comments that there was no longer room in the current business model for an industry specific small business centre. “This attitude is another example of how Mr Moir has made a decision based on misinformation” said Ms Hanlon. “it is true we offer specialised support and services in the area of Textiles and Fashion related small businesses, but our statistics confirm that a great majority of our clients over the years have come to us for advice and support in other areas of small business”.

Whilst the offices of the SBDC and Troy Buswell, Minister for Commerce have been inundated with letters and emails of support by people who have expressed disbelief that the funding was withdrawn to the Belmont SBC, Mr Buswell has not made contact with the Belmont SBC, nor has his office issued a statement.

“People by the hundreds are beginning to understand that the SBDC have thrown the baby out with the bathwater by pulling this funding. We will not stop until we have the opportunity to put our case to the Minister and explain just how deeply flawed the reasoning behind this decision in the hope he instructs the SBDC to come to its sense and restore our funding.

For further information please contact:

Carol Hanlon

CEO

Belmont Business Enterprise Centre (BEC)

P| 08 9479 3777 M| 0417963231

E| carol.hanlon@belmontbec.com

W| www.belmontbec.com + www.tcfwa.com + www.designedge.net.au

Jasmyn Mumme

Chair

Belmont Business Enterprise Centre (BEC)

P| 08 9479 3777 M| 0414750729

W| www.belmontbec.com + www.tcfwa.com + www.designedge.net.au

About Belmont BEC:

Since its inception, the Belmont BEC has established an extensive range of community projects and programs. These include the Textile Clothing Footwear Resource Centre Inc. (TCFWA), Belmont Small Business Awards, WA Racing Industry Development Project, Designedge Innovation Festival, Multicultural Business Support Services, Designedge Fashion Incubator, Belmont Clothes Library, and Business Workshops for Youth. Other centre activities include the establishment of a range of specialist business workshops, many with a focus on creative industry business development programs with indigenous and culturally diverse groups.