

## HUNDREDS SUPPORT THE BELMONT SBC IN FACE OF FUNDING CUTS

A petition containing hundreds of signatures of support for the Belmont Small Business Centre was handed to Mr Eric Ripper MLA on the steps of parliament today, together with over 80 letters of support for the Small Business Centre.

The petition and letters of support were the latest chapter in the campaign to restore State Government funding that was suddenly cut from the vibrant and successful small business centre.

“The support has been amazing” said Belmont Small Business Centre Executive Carol Hanlon. “People from all over the country and from both sides of the political fence have taken the time to write or sign a petition in support of the Belmont SBC. But we do not intend to stop here. This is just the beginning.”

The petition and letters of support for the Belmont SBC come after a shock decision from the State Government to withdraw almost \$100,000 funding for the one year remaining in their 3 year contract.

Discussions with Minister Buswell’s office – who are responsible for the funding cut - have not shed any light as to why the decision was made to cut the funding from the Belmont SBC. “There is no doubt in my mind this decision is politically motivated” said Tim Hammond, Management Committee member of the Belmont SBC. “There are dozens of other business centres around the State, but not one other centre has had their funding taken away. The Belmont SBC has been successful for 15 years and has serviced over 17,000 clients. It is clear from discussions with the Ministers’ office that the money has been taken away because the Government has its facts wrong about what the centre actually does. We have asked the Minister to reconsider the decision but he does not seem interested”

“Protecting small business is supposed to be the liberal party mantra - here they are stripping away dollars from a centre that has done nothing wrong - except for being located in a safe labor seat, run by a CEO who is an outstanding Western Australian and is being penalised for her success” Mr Hammond said.

**For further information please contact:**

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