

MEDIA RELEASE

Page 1

TCFWA & Belmont BEC - Small Business Centre Manager Awarded

Carol Hanlon, Manager of the Textile Clothing Footwear Resource Centre of WA (TCFWA) and Belmont BEC - Small Business Centre (Belmont BEC/SBC) has won the coveted City of Perth Convention Scholarship for 2008/2009 which is worth \$10,000.

The City of Perth Convention Scholarship is designed to assist the winner, from a not-for-profit organization, in their personal and professional development, either through attendance at a relevant international conference or undertaking further study in their field of chosen study or endeavor.

The award has been somewhat tarnished by news this week that the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) has withdrawn vital funding for the Belmont SBC. With little more than 60 days notice, the SBDC Board has made a decision to severely negatively impact the service delivery and viability of one of the most successful and award winning business support centres in WA.

Ms Hanlon said, "I am so excited to have been selected as the winner of the City of Perth Convention Scholarship, however am saddened to think that our efforts for small businesses going forward have been dismissed by the SBDC."

Carol Hanlon will still travel to the 2nd International Fashion Incubator in Atlanta in the USA later in the year as part of her prize, and her dream remains to bring the 3rd International Fashion Incubator Conference to Perth in 2011!

Carol Hanlon is the founding Manager, Belmont Business Enterprise Centre Inc (est. 1994), and also Founder & Manager of Textile Clothing, Footwear Resource Centre Inc (1998), which both directly facilitate WA small business development and growth. Carol's past projects include convening national conferences, leading delegations / group exhibitions at national / international fashion events, establishing the designedge fashion incubator, staging a trade expo, and project managing annual innovation festivals.

The withdrawal of the state funding support will now place federal funding support of the Belmont BEC/SBC in jeopardy according to the federal contract terms and conditions, and the centre could be forced to cut services or be in jeopardy of possible close.

"The withdrawal of \$93,000 in funding will leave thousands of small business clients locally and nationally with limited or no access to similar services. Given our results and our recognition by others, I cannot understand the decision made by the SBDC and we are seeking public support", Ms Hanlon said.

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About Belmont BEC/SBC:

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.