

MEDIA RELEASE

Small Business Set to Miss Out in Federal Election – No Matter Which Party is Elected

Small businesses make up about 96% of all business in Australia and of those about 86% are micro small businesses who employ on average 3.3 employees and one in every 10 houses across Australia has a home based business running, making this innovative sector a vital component of a healthy local, state and national business economy.

To assist this crucial sector of the economy, the Belmont Business Enterprise Centre (Belmont BEC) in Western Australia provides services such as workshops, webinars and mentoring to small business owners, many free of charge. The Belmont BEC 'One Stop Shop' also provides telephone and 'online' helpline services for small businesses registered in their current programs such as:

- Free practical business assistance
- Help through the maze of government departments and regulations
- Business Webinars covering over 40 topics ONLINE from your home or office location
- Business information, global supply chain networks
- Problem solving and support with marketing, ecommerce, energy efficiency

With the 2013 Federal Election imminent, Carol Hanlon, Founder and CEO of the Belmont BEC is concerned that small businesses do not appear to be on the minds of any of the major political parties.

Carol Hanlon said, "My wish list is to see a much bigger focus on support for small business which seems to have gone off the radar in this election. We need policies to cut paperwork, create industry support programs, assist business to find new niche global markets, access to start-up finance and increased support for Business Enterprise Centres to be able to further develop the business owners skill and opportunities of their clients and businesses."

"Small business is the sector who kept Australia employed during the GFC, they kept on their staff, owners' worked longer hours, went into more debt to keep the business going and are now suffering the consequences of a changing world market, both in the way of doing business and their changing consumer. Small businesses are doing it tough, they are over worked, stressed out, cash poor and time poor in keeping up with all they need to do to keep the business running with the demands on them and their business and they need support now."

"Currently 2.5million small businesses employ over 5million people and if each of these small businesses was further empowered, supported and assisted to grow and employed just one more person each then the increased benefit to the economy would be massive.", Carol said.

Small business owners especially entrepreneurs provide the community with positive role models, innovations and creativity which in turn supports vibrant and confident local economic activity and employment opportunities. However these determined, and gutsy small business risk takers need support and their issues need addressing and acknowledgment.

The Belmont BEC which is a non-profit small business support organisation currently struggles to keep up with demand for our services from new start-ups and existing small businesses. Most clients and organisations do not actually realise how little funding our BEC centre receives to provide small business advisory support. No state government support is received at all, and part funding support that is received from the Australian Government is not enough to deliver all the services that clients require.

Carol Hanlon said, "Going forward, I would like all political parties to consider their support of the small business sector. In particular women are the growth small business sector and I have been advocating for nearly 20 years when I started the Belmont BEC, that business services for women be increased. As a result of my passion in that area, I have recently been invited as an Australian Government delegate to attend APEC Women in Economy Forum in Bali Sept 6-8, 2013 where once again I will be advocating for increase support for women in business across the whole APEC region."

For further information please contact:

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About Belmont BEC

Belmont BEC is a non-profit community based organisation established, in 1994, to assist in the growth and development of small business. Over the years has originated a large range of well-known projects and programs for the benefit of its small business clients that have included Belmont Small Business Awards, Designedge Innovation Festival, Multicultural Business Support Services, WA Racing Industry Project and the Belmont BEC is also an industry specialist on creative industry, fashion and TCFL industries.

The services provided by Belmont BEC are partly funded by the Australian Government.