

Belmont centre faces closure as funds axed

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A Belmont small business centre may have to close its doors after the sudden loss of its State funding.

The Belmont Small Business Centre was notified on Tuesday night that its \$93,000 in annual State funding would not be renewed on June 30.

The 15-year-old centre is part of the State-owned Small Business Development Corporation's (SBDC) network, which offers advice and support to small business.

The SBDC intends to divert the money from Belmont to its regional centres, citing the proximity of Belmont to the corporation's CBD centre, which it said provided similar services, as the reason for the cut.

Belmont chairwoman Jasmyn Mumme said the funding loss threatened the centre's survival because its \$250,000 in Federal funding was dependent on the State not withdrawing support.

"They are taking funding away from one of the most productive and well-known support centres in WA," Ms Mumme said.

The centre ran 329 workshops in the December quarter and says it created 41 full and part-time jobs.

Ms Mumme said 80 per cent of the centre's clients were women, most of them linked to Belmont's fashion focus and its multicultural programs.

SBDC managing director Stephen Moir said the funding cut would ensure a more efficient service was offered across all areas of small business.

"Every dollar that has been taken back from the centre will be redistributed across regional Western Australia to regional small business centres," he said.

"The money is not lost, it will just not be focused in that one area."

The City of Belmont said it was too early to tell what the impact would be.

A spokeswoman said the council would work to ensure Belmont businesses were not disadvantaged.

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