

**CoSBA**



Combined Small Business Alliance of WA (Inc)



Date: 19 November 2011

Hon Peter Collier MLC  
Minister for Training  
Parliament House  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC  
Minister for Small Business  
Parliament House  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Ministers

Re: BUSINESS GROWTH CENTRE

We understand that Minister Collier is in receipt of the report and recommendations for the review conducted into the Business Growth Centre (BGC) by Professor Tim Mazzarol.

We wish to convey to you the total support of the Combined Small Business Alliance of Western Australia Inc. (CoSBA) for the role and function of the BGC, and that which are, in our judgement, the excellent outcomes it is producing on behalf of small business.

The BGC was established as the result of ten years of intensive lobbying by CoSBA supported by the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC), resulting in the establishment of a State Training Board (STB) sub-committee, the Small Business Advisory Committee (SBAC), that was comprised of representatives from small business organisations, the SBDC, Small Business Centres (SBCs), academia, the Department of Education and Training and small businesses, was charged with undertaking a 12 month study as to the need for a small business training institute.

The outcome of which was that in 2007 all the recommendations, but one, were adopted by the STB, the one exception was that the Institute be set up under the SBDC, resulting a decision by the then Minister for Education & Training to establish the Small Business Training Institute (SBTI) (now the BGC) under the West Coast College of TAFE. The decision of STB and the Minister, we would suggest, operates to endorse CoSBA's long held contention of the need for such an institute.

Given that the report has not been released, we are therefore in contact with you unable to make comment as to the veracity of the recommendations relative to the operation of the BGC in conformance with the "SBAC 2007 recommendations".

CoSBA's promotion of a small business training institute was due to the perceived absence of a "one stop shop" for business management and administrative training for small business owner/operators. Whilst there was and is formal tertiary (University and TAFE) training of that genre available for those small businesses that have that need, the greater need was/is not for formal tertiary training, but instead the provision of "off the shelf" flexible training and development that meets the many and varied needs of small business owners and operators, as determined by them.

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Also, whilst various training was and continues to be provided by the SBDC, SBCs and by private providers, supported by the Government's **Small Business Smart Business Training Vouchers**, there was no coordinated approach to the provision of training, mentoring and advice for small business owner/operators, such as that now provided by the BGC.

In CoSBA's judgment, the operation of the BGC has and continues to successfully fulfill an important need in the training and development of WA's small businesses and fits comfortably with and is complimentary to the Government's 'Skilling WA' policy.

We are mindful of the Government's stated desire to provide relief for small business with payroll tax and other taxes and the need to find savings in order to do so, thereby facilitating decisions being made as a prelude to the forthcoming State election.

However, we would suggest that the savings ought not be made in any areas of Government support for small business, and in particular funding that in anyway affects the current operation of the BGC.

We look forward to receiving a copy of Professor Mazzarol's report so that we, and other concerned parties, are able to make objective comment as to his recommendations before any decision on the BGC is taken.

Yours faithfully

**Combined Small Business Alliance  
of Western Australia Inc. (CoSBA)**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Oliver Moon', is placed over a light grey rectangular background.

**OLIVER MOON**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

CC: Hon Colin Barnett, Premier; Hon Liza Harvey, Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business.