



A•S•U

**AUSTRALIAN SERVICES  
UNION**

**NEWSLETTER**

**City of Belmont**



LOCAL GOVT

18<sup>th</sup> October 2011

## **CITY OF BELMONT PAYS A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT TO YOUTH WORKERS AT UNFAIR DISMISSAL CONFERENCE IN FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA**

Many City of Belmont Staff would recall that on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011 seven City of Belmont Youth Worker employees were called to a meeting with CEO Stuart Cole and senior management and told their positions were being made redundant effective immediately. Work keys and proximity cards removed from their possession and they were ordered to remove their belongings from the centre whilst shadowed by security guards. This left only the Youth and Family Services Coordinator of two weeks working at the centre.

These employees were invited to apply for vacant positions within the City for which they did not have the necessary qualifications or skill sets for. These staff members were left questioning whether this was a genuine redundancy or an over reaction by the City arising out of complaints made re senior management at the centre.

This was done in Mental Health Week and midway through the school holiday program. Parents were not even contacted about the major change to the centre's entire staffing compliment nor were the youth of the community that had formed close and trusted relationships with these devoted City of Belmont employees, some that had worked at the youth centre for up to 5 years.

Joint funding and care bodies such as Belmont City College and Lotteries House were unaware of the changes to staff and service delivery at the centre. Community members and clients were unable to contact anyone at the centre the following day to arrange placement of children into programs or to speak with their designated youth worker.

### **SETTLEMENT**

At the Conciliation Conference held Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011 in Fair Work Australia, the seven City of Belmont Youth and Family Services workers were

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Authorised by Wayne Wood, Branch Secretary

Western Australian Branch  
102 East Parade, EAST PERTH, 6004

Telephone: (08) 9427 7777

Facsimile: (08) 9427 7700

Email address: [branch.secretary@asuwa.org](mailto:branch.secretary@asuwa.org)

collectively offered a satisfactory amount of money by the City of Belmont to bring full and final settlement to the matter surrounding their loss of employment.

The City of Belmont represented by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry maintained the termination of these seven workers with half an hour notice was a 'genuine redundancy' however, chose to settle the matter, opting not to test the evidence at hearing.

Although the youth workers and the city were able to reach agreement for the amount to bring the matter of the unfair dismissal to a conclusion, they reluctantly accepted the offer as it was shrouded by a clause of personal confidentiality and disparagement. They feel the community and the young people connected to the youth centre are the true victims in this whole mismanaged debacle. It is the rate payers of the community that have to foot the bill for the significant amount of money to bring fair closure to these redundancies.

It is understood that there are still issues in the youth centre that relate to honouring of contracts through external funding bodies and the relationships between the City of Belmont senior management and PCYC.

The community remain frustrated and let down by the City of Belmont with their handling of the abrupt and ill-thought change to the Family and Youth Centre. Large numbers of the community are expected to attend the Ordinary Council meeting Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 to demand answers to the questions that CEO Stuart Cole refused to answer last Council meeting where he sighted that the Fair Work Australia matter prevented him from commenting. A statement that angered the community as the questions related to the change in service provider and the manner it was executed not about individual staff members.

## **ACTIVE + STRONG + UNITED = ASU**

These seven young youth workers should be commended for their strength and unity to stand up for their employment rights in the face of adversity. They remarked, "All employees at the City of Belmont should be members of the ASU, without the ASU we would have been left with nothing and feeling like we had done something wrong."

Please contact ASU Organiser Jai Allen [Jai.Allen@asuwa.org](mailto:Jai.Allen@asuwa.org) 0429 106 090 for information about joining the ASU or assistance with a workplace issue.

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