

# PUBLIC



Petition No 90: Opposition to the closure of the ACTIV service centre in Busselton

The above petition was tabled in the Legislative Council on 11 August 2010 and this letter is to explain our position on this matter.

We were dumbfounded when on 3 June this year 26 workers in the Busselton ACTIV Workshop were given notice in writing of its closure and the intention that they would be transfer to Bunbury workshop. We found this incredibly and inexcusably offensive. Some of the workers, due to disability, are illiterate. All were very distressed and felt their world had been turned upside down.

As a result, a local support group was joined by many members of the local community many of whom have supported the ACTIV Service Centre for as long as 25 years. Six days later, a public meeting was held and attended by over 100 people. At that meeting, Vincent Long, the State General Manager of ACTIV, told us that ACTIV had been contemplating the closure for 6 months because the workshop had been running at a loss for several years. We were further outraged when, in answer to questions from the floor as to why locals and parents had known nothing about this and had not been consulted, he replied that it was "not thought to be necessary". Mr. Long later apologised on behalf of ACTIV and said the matter had been badly handled. But, I am sure that you can understand why the people at the meeting were angry for the inappropriate manner in which ACTIV acted.

That led the ACTIV support group to write to Tony Vis, CEO. of ACTIV W.A. deploring the way ACTIV was handling this affair ( COPY enclosed) His reply was unhelpful and merely defended the proposal to transfer the workers to the ACTIV workshop in Bunbury. This is a most unsatisfactory solution and is most distressing for the workers, their carers and families> A round trip of 1.5 to 2 hours to two hours on top of their working time is too long a day and is unacceptable. This is because routine is critical for many disabled who find it incredibly distressing to adjust to changes like this. In fact, a number of them are physically incapable of travelling regularly to Bunbury and may be forced to surrender their jobs. If this happens, their lives will be shattered because some have been working for over 20 years in the Busselton workshop.

Since the announcement, the local Busselton community has shown overwhelming support for the ACTIV Business Centre and the petition that we put before you is clear evidence of that. 1500 signatures represents almost 10% of the total Busselton population. There have also been many articles in the press that show that these handicapped people are warmly welcomed and supported in the community. The Shire is funding two property management crews with 4 ACTIV employees in each and a supervisor to work in the parks and gardens. Local businesses are also working on opportunities for long term work contracts that could keep employees in meaningful work.

At a meeting on 27 July Mr Long stated that income for the 2 months of June and July had increased to \$19,000 per month. This level of support suggests that it is possible to contemplate long term viability if the organisation is run in a more business-like way and this should be a priority for the future. But, the

immediate need is for the workshop to remain open and we have, to this time, no guarantee of that.

So you have before you a petition imploring the State Government to do everything in its power to work with the ACTIV Foundation to ensure that the ACTIV Busselton remain open.

Instruct Government Departments and Agencies in the Capes region to identify jobs and tasks with which the ACTIV Busselton can be involved

Inform and work with State and Federal Governments to make sure that the ACTIV Foundation is reorganised on a business basis with possible strategic subsidisation to maintain its vital role in providing for the disadvantaged, but nonetheless important people in our community.

IAN BARKER.

pp. 

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WEST BUSSELTON WA 6280

Busselton Support Group for Activ Foundation

Unit 12

324 Marine Terrace,

Busselton. 6280

June 11 2010

PERSONAL

Mr. Tony Vis, C.E.O.

Activ Foundation

41, Bishop Street

Jolimont

W.A. 6014

Dear Sir,

Re: Busselton Activ Workshop Proposed Closure after 25 years.

We the undersigned wish to bring to your attention for serious consideration the following:-

- The deplorable manner in which you made a decision about the closure without consultation at the local level, with participating Parents and Carers.
- Vincent Long advised a meeting on Wednesday June 9 in Busselton of discussions within your Management for the previous six months.
- The 26 employees were given written notice of the proposed move to Bunbury at 4pm on June 3. Many of them were understandably most upset. We understand there would be 4 places available in Busselton 4 days a week, 5<sup>th</sup> day in Bunbury.
- These people already suffer great disabilities and find it difficult to adjust to changes in routine
- Should the proposed closure eventuate, it would have the following effects on already disadvantaged people
  - Increased Stress on each individual and an already escalating bad behaviour problem.
  - Increased Stress on Parents, Carers etc.
  - An increased working day from 8 – 10 hours to in excess of 14 hours including travel etc. in both cases.
  - Parents can be flexible but Residential Aids work only from 4pm – 8pm.- Who does the early shift at 5am.?
  - Routine is most important. In Busselton currently –  
Wednesday 4pm Leeuwin Links plus Art & Theatre Group  
Thursday - Banking and Shopping for food

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Friday - 6pm Social Night

Doctors, Dentists and other necessary needs can be done after 4pm in BUSSELTON ONLY.

- There will be many extra expenses incurred for collection to a central point, bus travel maintenance and running costs to name a few.
- Some of the 26 will not have the skills or ability to work in a more industrial environment or cope with a much longer day
- The Support Group feel very strongly that yourself and the management group in Perth have shown poor financial skills. Mr Long admitted to the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup>, "things had been going downhill for the past 3 years." WHY no action to address this situation much earlier? "Fiddling while Rome burned?"
- We feel strongly it is most unfair to interview these Disabled People in the absence of a Parent or Carer

We would be pleased to meet in Busselton at your earliest convenience to discuss the matter further.

Yours faithfully,

*L. Farmer*

For Busselton Support Group for Activ Foundation

✓ Liz Niasmith <sup>(Liz)</sup> President. (Absent)

✓ Corrairie Farmer Secretary Treasurer

✓ Ian & Lottie C. Barker Co-opted members ✓

✓ Sue Hastie Senior Vice-President (F)

✓ Tony Upton Junior Vice-President.

cc. Judy Moylan MP ✓

Nola Marino MP ✓

Troy Buswell MLA & Adele Farina MLA ✓

GWN ✓

PRESS & MEDIA

Meeting - Busselton of interested parties - opposite Activ Workshop - Monday June 14 2.30pm - arranged by Troy Buswell.

NB. Vincent Long. Gen. Manager for Bus Services.  
 "ACTIV MAY NOT BE AROUND IN 5 YRS".