

MEDIA RELEASE

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CONCERNS OVER PROPOSED SALE OF PORTSIDE BUILDING IN BURNIE

Murchison MLC, Ruth Forrest, has raised concerns in regard to the proposed sale of Portside by the Burnie City Council.

Portside was developed as a 'Small Business Incubator' by Burnie City Council to encourage and support the start-up and growth of small businesses in Burnie.

Portside is currently home to 18 businesses employing in excess of 25 staff and 25 volunteers. Many community groups also utilise the Portside and adjacent buildings.

"Whilst consultation is not necessarily required prior to selling a building such as Portside, many of the tenants will potentially be displaced by the sale of this building", said Ms Forrest.

"This would have been a prudent step by the Burnie City Council prior to the decision being made public, as it is widely acknowledged that there is very little affordable or suitable office space available in the Burnie CBD to meet the needs of the current tenants", said Ms Forrest.

"Is it reasonable that small and new business should be encouraged to come to Burnie when times aren't so good and business is difficult to attract, only to be shunted out of the only affordable office space when the economy improves?" asked Ms Forrest.

The Burnie On-line Access Centre is one of those community based organisations housed at Portside. Portside provides ease of access, parking and security, with a majority of volunteer workers.

"Where will this facility be relocated to that will provide the 'access' required, particularly for people with disabilities?" asked the Member for Murchison.

The State headquarters of the Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and many volunteer and not for profit organisations are located in, or use the facility for training and other purposes.

"It is a concern that we may lose one of the few state offices that is located in Burnie to another region", said Ms Forrest.

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For further information, please phone 0419 879 524.