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Creating Spaces for Social Innovation

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Defining Social Innovation (SI)

- The creation of new products or processes that meet a social need.
- Social innovations
 - leverage **resources**
 - to create **value**.



Examples:

- Intermediate Labor Market Organisations
- Open Universities Australia
- Microenterprise Finance

Creating Value... for Rural LGAs

- Social innovation can be used to address the issues facing rural regions globally:
 - Thin markets
 - Service gaps
 - Livelihood transitions
 - Institutional thinness
 - Tyranny of/ at distance
 - Social issues/ pockets of high need
 - Limited rate base
 - Community expectations of Council





Social Innovation (SI)

In the Context of Rural LGAs

- The creation of new products or processes to meet local community needs, e.g.:
 - More access to services
 - More cost-effective services
 - Livelihood opportunities
 - Stronger local institutions
 - Locally appropriate solutions
 - Reduction of 'social problems'
 - Improved social cohesion
 - Reduced demands on Council





Rural Social Innovation... Some Examples

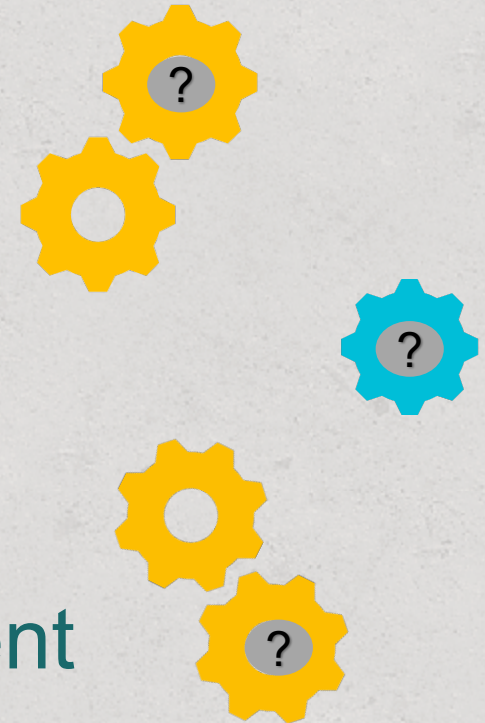
- Community-owned enterprises
 - Petrol Station, Pub, Bank...
 - Gardens, cultural and recreational venues (Liveability+Tourism)
- Other social enterprises
 - Training cafes, makers' markets...
- Resource-leveraging initiatives
 - Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs)
 - Community asset registers
- New markets and quasi markets
 - Farmers' Markets, Box Schemes
 - Community Currencies





Why DON'T We Innovate?

- Worldviews
- Institutional silos
- Path dependence
- Social stereotypes
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of knowledge
- Structural disempowerment



How to DO Social Innovation

Remember: Social innovations

- leverage **resources**
- to create **value**.

1) **Understand Needs/ Gaps**

- Don't assume you know!

2) **Identify Resources**

- Work across boundaries

3) **Collaborate for Outcomes**





Promising Pathways to Social Innovation

- 1) Cross-boundary knowledge production
 - Cross-sector + Understand
 - Cross-institutional + Identify
 - Cross-discipline Resources
- 2) Strategic Questioning
 - Why? How? How come? What if?
- 3) 'Flipping' the Narrative
 - Problem = opportunity
 - Reframing issues
- 4) Embedding Diversity Collaborate
 - Cultural, gender, ability...



The Power of Local Government

- Local knowledge
- Local + extra-local networks
- ‘Convening power’ across sectors
- Structural legitimacy

Local government is well positioned to **enable** and **catalyse** (rather than necessarily to **directly create**) **people-centred solutions** for rural regions.



How Are we Doing It Already?

- **Examples** of Social Innovation from your LGAs?
- **Opportunities** to share:
 - Ideas?
 - Experiences?
 - Successes?
 - Lessons learned?



with other Councils and communities?

Final question: ***How can we do more to encourage people-centred solutions in rural communities?***



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Catalysing Social Change for a Better World

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