



# Understanding Social Enterprise

Creating an enabling environment to develop entrepreneurial learning, skills & culture for rural Victoria

## Final report - Rural Councils Victoria

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## OVERVIEW & CONTEXT

The Australian Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship (ACRE) is a social enterprise that champions and embeds entrepreneurship to reverse the decline of rural communities.

Since 2017, ACRE has been working in partnership with Rural Councils Victoria (RCV) to deliver cross-sector learning workshops across the 38 RCV member councils. These facilitated workshops deliberately bring together leaders from government, community, education and business to learn about social enterprise.

Social Enterprise is used as a proven methodology for learning, as it engages all sector leaders (regardless of background) in activities that are designed to build social and economic capital simultaneously. Social enterprise is an international movement that is supporting communities to transition from a reliance on government funding and donations to providing a sustainable vehicle for community rejuvenation.

As social enterprise is in its infancy in Australia, ACRE is focused on working with governments wanting to strategically invest in and grow social enterprise in their communities. Through developing a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem across rural Victoria, ACRE aims to bring resources to people with ideas and energy and support them to strengthen their communities.

Rural entrepreneurship often surfaces in the form of social enterprise in many communities where, businesses are created or maintained to provide services and products in a response to social or economic needs in the community that are not being met by the market. It is important to ignite entrepreneurship and create an entrepreneurial ecosystem in order to encourage and harness the untapped potential that exists within our rural communities.

## UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE LEARNING PROGRAM

The 'Understanding Social Enterprise' learning program is a practical and thought provoking 2-day experience that introduces learners to the values and purpose of social enterprise, organisational and legal structures, and finance and support.

**Between September 2017 and December 2019, 24 Understanding Social Enterprise learning programs were delivered across rural Victoria, from Swan Hill in the North West to Bairnsdale in the South East, Tallangatta in the North East to Hamilton in the South West.**

Local leaders and influencers from all sectors of rural communities learnt about the role that they can play in creating an enabling environment for valuing ideas and local entrepreneurship.

Participants explored the role social enterprise business models are playing in rejuvenating rural communities through building economic and social capital simultaneously.

The opportunity to host an Understanding Social Enterprise learning program was provided to all 38 rural councils, of which 24 councils did access the program.

## Key Achievements

No. of workshops			No. of participants			No. of learning days			No. of social enterprise visits		
24			287			576			53		
Y1	Y2	Y3	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y1	Y2	Y3
4	6	14	59	78	150	118	156	302	9	15	29

*"Before these two days I thought I was going to leave the valley to try and make new things happen in a bigger city, but now I feel like I want to stay and use these new ideas to make things happen here."*  
**Angela, Alpine Guest House, Bright**

## Learning outcomes for participants

Participants who took part in the Understanding Social Enterprise learning program:

- Defined the values and purpose of a social enterprise to better understand where it sits in relation to the commercial and voluntary sector
- Explored the opportunities and drivers such as managing a triple bottom line to understand what issues might be faced in developing and managing a social enterprise
- Used tools and resources to help plan for and assess the potential of social enterprise ideas
- Examined the range of organisational and legal structures available to social enterprises to comprehend the variety of types of social enterprise models
- Identified business models and support available to social enterprise to enable access to further information for their own needs
- Discussed real life examples of social enterprise to deepen their understanding of the realities of setting up and running a social enterprise
- Planned for the development of their role in the sector to enable follow on from the learning program

### Key highlights from participant evaluations include:

- **100%** of learners said it had **improved their understanding** of social enterprise
- **92%** of learners said that the **content of the program was great to excellent**
- **87%** of learners said that the program **fully met or exceeded their expectations**
- **96%** of learners said the **delivery style of the program was great to excellent**
- **98%** of learners said that the **facilitators were great to excellent**
- **95%** learners said that their **overall experience** of the program was **great to excellent**
- **99%** of learners **would recommend** the program to others

### Use of learning

In total, **78% of participants** said they would use the learning from their program often or every day, with the remainder (22%) stating occasionally.



***"Just wanted to reiterate how enjoyable the last few days were. I would rank it the most beneficial time I have spent on self/org development in my time at HHS which goes beyond 10 years."** Shane, Hepburn Health Service, Daylesford*

## GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF WORKSHOPS DELIVERED ACROSS VICTORIA



***"As Community Development Officer for the shire, it will certainly be a lens that I will apply when considering community challenges, potential projects and when talking to community members about their visions." Inglewood, Nov 17***



## PROGRAM DETAIL

### Year 1

Location	Partner	Attending	Date	Study Visits
Bairnsdale	East Gippsland Shire Council	20	Sept 2017	The Foundry Bairnsdale Recycling Enterprise Cells Cafe
Inglewood	Loddon Shire Council	12	Oct 2017	Pepper Green Farm Catering Make a Change Australia / Jumpleads Game Traffic Control
Rochester	Campaspe Shire Council	11	Nov 2017	Elmore Field Days Event Centre, Game Traffic Control Murray River Tea Rooms Recyclability
Cobden	Corangamite Shire Council	16	Dec 2017	Terang Co-op Coinda Terang Inc.



## Year 2

Location	Partner	Attending	Date	Study Visits
Wycheproof	Buloke Shire Council	20	Feb 2018	Birchip Cropping Group Culgoa Community Store Charlton Rex Theatre Charlton Traffic Education Centre
Sale	Wellington Shire Council	12	Mar 2018	George Gray Centre 123 Café
Hamilton	Southern Grampians Shire Council	13	May 2018	Hamilton Institute for Rural Living Hamilton Farmers Market Nigretta Furniture
Goroke	West Wimmera Shire Council	11	June 2018	The Purple Starfish Kaniva Community Roadhouse The Border Inn
Rainbow	Hindmarsh Shire Council	11	Oct 2018	Oasis Big Sky Festival Paw Po
Korumburra	South Gippsland Shire Council	11	Oct 2018	Grow Lightly The Station



### Year 3

Location	Partner	Attending	Date	Study Visits
Benalla	Benalla Rural City	10	May 2019	Ed Space GAME Traffic & Control
Mansfield	Mansfield Shire Council	13	May 2019	Armchair Cinema Vintage Emporium
Tallangatta	Towong Shire Council	7	June 2019	GAME – The Work Group ACRE – Old Beechworth Gaol
Cohuna	Gannawarra Shire Council	12	Aug 2019	Murray River Tea Rooms Recyclability
Chiltern	Indigo Shire Council	12	Aug 2019	GAME ACRE – Old Beechworth Gaol Indigo Power
Mount Beauty	Mount Beauty Neighbourhood Centre	10	Aug 2019	YCDCo Mount Beauty Neighbourhood Centre
Daylesford	Hepburn Shire Council	12	Sept 2019	Social Foundry
Nandaly	Nandaly Community Hotel	8	Sept 2019	Nandaly Community Hotel
Maryborough	Central Goldfields Shire Council	11	Oct 2019	Asteria GLEC
St Arnaud	Northern Grampians Shire Council	10	Oct 2019	McCallum Disability Services Bendigo Community Bank
Yea	Murrindindi Shire Council	19	Nov 2019	Y Water Discovery Centre Common Ground
Horsham	Horsham Rural City Council	10	Nov 2019	AXIS Employment Laneway Café Centre for Participation
Bannockburn	Golden Plains Shire Council	7	Dec 2019	Good Cycles Diversitat – My Maintenance Crew
Swan Hill	Mallee Rising	12	Dec 2019	Nandaly Community Hotel Mallee Rising Murray River Tea Rooms



## PROGRAM OUTCOMES

### **Communities value it**

- Inviting cross sector leaders to come together over 2 days to learn together and respectfully listen to each other led to authentic collaboration between communities and council staff
- There is a growing interest and demand in communities to explore how they can utilise non-traditional funding models to access capital to fund start-up social enterprises
- Understanding how social enterprise can be used as a vehicle to stimulate economic and community development through real life examples is very useful for the community
- There is a recognition that communities need to find new ways to support young people to be more entrepreneurial as a pathway to achieving positive change in their communities
- There is a collective agreement around the importance of valuing ideas from people with energy in their communities by exploring ways of supporting them by creating an enabling environment.

### **Councils have a role to play**

- Where the program was particularly powerful was where Council participated in the program and actively collaborated with the community to find enterprising solutions to local issues important to them
- There is high potential for councils to engage with social enterprises through their procurement policies in their region to deliver greater impacts in their communities.

### **Community and Economic impact**

- Social enterprise is being seen as a serious business model that has the capacity to significantly contribute to local economies
- There is merit in exploring how social enterprise can support the retention of services in rural areas and help solve issues facing communities who experience an ageing and declining population
- Communities are eager to learn more about 'Community Asset Ownership' and how it can be used as a catalyst for community and economic stimulation across rural Victoria
- There is a desire from participants and Councils for more 'how to' workshops to implement next steps and to provide similar learning opportunities to their broader communities.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

As a result of the Understanding Social Enterprise learning programs delivered across the state, the following projects have been developed and received support from ACRE and have delivered significant social and economic impacts for the respective rural communities:

### **Buloke Shire**

- Nandaly Community Hotel

### **Campaspe Shire**

- Rochester Caravan Park
- Botanic Gardens, Girgarre
- Rochester Silo art project

### **Wellington Shire**

- Port of Sale coworking space

### **Mansfield Shire**

- Startup Shakeup entrepreneurship program

### **East Gippsland Shire**

- The Forge Creative Collective
- Youth entrepreneurship strategy & Ecosystem Measurement Tool development
- Development of the Cann Valley and Errinundra to Snowy Valley District Community Plans

### **Benalla Council**

- Startup Shakeup entrepreneurship program

### **Alpine Shire**

- Australian Pumpkin Seed Business
- Dumu Café

### **Indigo Shire**

- Beehive Café
- Centre for Rare Arts and Forgotten Trades
- Typo Station
- Indigo Power
- Silver Creek Sourdough Bakery
- Beechworth Railway Precinct
- Beechworth Chain Gang
- Beechworth Festival of Change

### **Towong Shire**

- Think Start Grow – driving startups and rural entrepreneurship across Towong Shire

### **Rural City of Wangaratta**

- Understanding Social Enterprise workshop delivered for council staff, councillors and community group leaders

## CASE STUDY: NANDALY COMMUNITY HOTEL (BULOKE SHIRE)



In 2018, Joseph Brady and Terry Kiley from the Nandaly Community Hotel Committee attended the Understanding Social Enterprise program that was hosted by the Buloke Shire in Wycheproof.

They were keen to explore a potential new business model for their local pub and meeting point, the Nandaly Hotel, which had been closed for 6 months due to very difficult and unforeseen circumstances.

After 2 days learning about social enterprise with ACRE and exploring how it can be used as a vehicle for economic and social growth in rural communities, Joseph and Terry began their journey to bringing the 'Nanny' pub back to life. They used their newfound knowledge and connections with the Economic Development team of Buloke Shire Council to generate interest from and galvanise the community who, in a town of just 45 people, raised the funds needed and set up a social enterprise to run the pub as a non-profit distributing co-operative where all profits are returned straight to the operational costs of the hotel.

The Nandaly Community Hotel now benefits from a willing and motivated group of people with real interest in ensuring this community hub is a thriving and vibrant place for locals and tourists alike.

### LINK TO VIDEO CASE STUDY CREATED BY ACRE

- [Nandaly Community Hotel - case study](#)

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

### Videos

Click on the video links below for feedback from participants:

[Kate Nelson: Director Community and Strategic Development - East Gippsland Shire Council](#)

[Jess John: Social Entrepreneur - The Foundry](#)

[Karren McLennon: Manager Community Wellbeing – Wellington Shire Council](#)

[Crystal Stubbs: Director East Gippsland Art Gallery](#)

[Julie Lanham: Social Entrepreneur - 123 Cafe](#)

[Geoff Hay: Economic Development Manager - Wellington Shire Council](#)

### Testimonials:

“Extremely high standard program. Excellent delivery and presentation for all demographics” **Rochester, Nov 17**

“As Community Development Officer for the shire, it will certainly be a lens that I will apply when considering community challenges, potential projects and when talking to community members about their visions.” **Inglewood, Nov 17**

“Arrived at the course with little knowledge of social enterprise. I now have a sound knowledge of the concept and how it works” **Wycheproof, Feb 18**

“The different people and roles in the room allowed for new conversations and connections”  
**Sale, March 18**

“I believe I can now contribute, not only to my organisation but to my community” **Hamilton, May 18**

“Creating a ‘like-minded’ network of people who can design ideas, goals and operations to achieve in their rural town” **Goroke, June 18**

“Broadened my ability to look at other larger scale options” **Korrumburra, Oct 18**

“Great theory to practice approach” **Rainbow, Oct 18**

“Thank you for igniting/inspiring many ideas and possibilities” **Benalla, May 19**

“All participants ‘bought in’ which was great” **Mansfield, May 19**

"Everyone needs to do this workshop" **Tallangatta, June 19**

"It has shown me that some of my 'aspirational' ideas may be possible" **Cohuna, Aug 19**

"Theory first and then seeing it in practice" **Chiltern, Aug 19**

"I now understand how beneficial 'social enterprise' is in helping me communicate the vision, objective and purpose of my future business" **Mount Beauty, Aug 19**

"Invaluable to have the conversations in a rural (rather than metro) context" **Daylesford, Sept 19**

"Easier than I thought to make a difference in your community with passion and direction"

**Nandaly, Sept 19**

"We are now more aware of the direction we need here" **Maryborough, Oct 19**

"A can of worms have been released and there's no containing where this work will end up"

**St Arnaud, Oct 19**

"We have several projects in our pipeline which would benefit from this type of model" **Yea, Oct 19**

"Due to the people who attended, I feel an impact has possibility" **Horsham, Nov 19**

"Terrific to be offered an exciting path towards having our youth stay locally" **Bannockburn, Dec 19**

"Will help me and the community understand and seize the opportunities open to social enterprises" **Swan Hill, Dec 19**



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon completing this Understanding Social Enterprise program in partnership with Rural Councils Victoria over the last 3 years and reviewing the feedback from the 287 participants, it is clear that there is appetite for more learning opportunities and subject matter expertise to accelerate social enterprise development in rural Victoria., particularly related to the next steps of social enterprise development, now that a basic understanding of social enterprise in practice has been achieved.

The outcomes of this program demonstrate that the partnership approach between Rural Councils Victoria and ACRE has been highly effective delivering both social and economic benefits to communities across rural Victoria.

ACRE would like to discuss further partnership opportunities with Rural Councils Victoria and explore how we can provide broader learning and development support for RCV member councils and enhance the capacity of their communities and build on our work from over the last three years.

Outlined below is the suite of learning programs that ACRE can deliver and that can be tailored to meet the needs of participants.

## LEARNING PROGRAMMES

Our Programmes are available at introductory through to advanced level, supporting you and your organisation through each stage of growth.

<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>Exploring my Leadership</b> Half or 1 day Improve your leadership skills and focus your mind on the managerial issues you face in the third sector.	<b>Award in Leadership</b> 4 or 6 days   ILM Level 3/7 Ideal for aspiring and operational leaders. Enhance your leadership skills, helping you to improve your confidence and performance.	<b>Certificate in Leadership</b> 10 or 12 days   ILM Level 3/7 For senior and strategic leaders. Become a confident, motivational leader with insight and clarity.	<b>Enterprising Leadership</b> 2 or 6 days Draws on entrepreneurial theory and approaches to support leaders to develop growth mindsets and become more deliberately enterprising, enabling organisations to become more self-sustaining and self-reliant
<b>ENTERPRISE</b>	<b>Understanding Social Enterprise</b> 1 or 2 days   ILM Level 5 Award Discover the values, purpose and varied structures of social enterprise and the opportunities it provides. Modules: • Introducing Social Enterprise • Exploring Social Enterprise	<b>Start or Develop Your Social Enterprise</b> 6 - 12 days   ILM Endorsed Award Develop the confidence to create and manage a social enterprise. Modules: • Planning for Start Ups • Sales & Marketing • Finance and Income	<b>Journey to Social Enterprise</b> 6 -12 days Combine a selection of modules that can support your organisation in its move to become sustainable and less reliant on grant funding.	<b>Advanced Social Enterprise</b> 2 to 6 days An advanced exploration of enterprise for organisations at key growth stages. Modules: • Partnerships & Consortia • Procurement & Contracts • Investment for Social Enterprise
<b>LEARNING</b>	<b>Action Learning</b> 2 or 4 days Learn how to use action learning techniques to help people manage problems, find solutions and use the experience of their peers.	<b>Coaching</b> 2 - 4 days Learn the tools and skills for effective directive and non-directive coaching. Explore how to support a coaching culture in your organisation.	<b>Facilitation</b> 2 or 4 days Discover the theory, tools and techniques of facilitating peer learning within your role or organisation.	<b>Courageous Communication Skills</b> 2 days Gain confidence in managing successful courageous conversations in the workplace to bring about change.
<b>SOCIAL IMPACT</b>	<b>Introduction to Measuring Social Impact</b> 1 day Explore how to best demonstrate your organisations impact and gain confidence in the tools used to measure impact.	<b>Measuring Social Impact</b> 2 days Explore ways to demonstrate and measure social impact, develop creative ways to articulate it and identify how to embed a culture of measurement in your organisation.	 	

\* All modules and sessions are available separately

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