

MEDIA RELEASE

New National Voice from the future – Launch of the Alliance of Social Enterprise Networks Australia (ASENA)

May 26th 2020

2020 has seen disruption to ‘business-as-usual’ in a way that most of us haven’t experienced in our lifetimes. At this time of unprecedented social and economic change, social enterprise networks in each State and Territory have united to build a common vision for a better future and form a new national voice for the social enterprise sector – the *Alliance of Social Enterprise Networks Australia (ASENA)*.

Social enterprises have the capacity to address both social and economic change at the same time through the power of the market.

ASENA’s first action is to call for the creation of a National Social Enterprise Strategy, following the approach of enabling governments in the United Kingdom, Canada and many others. Today, ASENA publishes its submission to the Prime Minister’s Social Impact Investing Taskforce calling for a 10 year plan to create a thriving social enterprise community in Australia.

Emma-Kate Rose, Chair of Queensland Social Enterprise Council said “The social enterprise sector has come together at this critical juncture to form new collaborations and support resilience, jobs, and impact investment into the areas most needed in our communities now.”

Cinnamon Evans, Chair of the Social Enterprise Network Victoria said “The Australian Government has an opportunity to take a fundamentally different market-based approach to addressing our social and economic priorities by directly investing in and supporting social enterprise as a new economic reality emerges from this COVID crisis.”

Mikey Leung, Executive Coordinator of the Social Enterprise Council of NSW and ACT said that “Australia has seen two major disasters in 2020 that have highlighted the importance of building an economic system that builds resilience and creates opportunities for all of our diverse regions and populations, without harming our environment or our people. This is what social enterprises are already doing.”

Dr Sharon Zivkovic from the South Australia Social Enterprise Council said that “With an enabling approach from government creating the right support, social enterprises can play a significant role in addressing Australia’s most complex wicked problems.”

Sven Stenvers, Western Australia Social Enterprise Council said “These could range from employment-based social enterprises which can support people suffering disadvantage while re-localising manufacturing industries, through to technology designed to build community connection and foster positive change, and regenerative agriculture businesses which have the capacity to transform our food system and support resilience across supply chains. All of this will have significant positive environmental impact to match.”

Alexis Seller from the Northern Territory’s Impact North said. “Today’s launch of the Alliance of Social Enterprise Networks Australia sees a high leverage point for positive action towards creating a

new economy for a fair and inclusive Australia that is ecologically and economically sustainable. This alliance brings renewed focus on national collaboration to drive this action.”

In addition to calling for a National Social Enterprise Strategy, ASENA’s inaugural submission to the Australian Government’s Social Impact Investing Taskforce recommends action on three priority areas:

- A unified and streamlined impact measurement framework.
- A national census of the social enterprise sector to build transparency and recognition of its impact and economic contribution.
- A national economic regeneration fund to support the growth and development of social enterprises, particularly in the context of COVID economic recovery.

The founding members of ASENA are: QSEC (Queensland Social Enterprise Council), SENVIC (Social Enterprise Network Victoria), SECNA (Social Enterprise Council of NSW & ACT), Impact North (NT), SASEC (South Australian Social Enterprise Council), and WASEC (WA Social Enterprise Council).

More information

For media enquiries please contact hello@asena.org.au. To download ASENA’s submission to the Prime Minister’s Social Impact Investment Taskforce, visit www.asena.org.au.

Definitions

A **Social Enterprise** is a unique entity that is impact-mission driven, and uses a financially sound business model to create actively-measured social, cultural and environmental impact. It derives most of its income from trade of goods or services (i.e. 50% or less of its income is from grants) and it reinvests a significant proportion of its profit in furthering its mission.

Impact Investment sees investors actively seek out funding opportunities that are focused on generating actively measured social, cultural and environmental impacts, alongside a sustainable financial return. The result allows investors to sustainably contribute to their communities while meeting their investment objectives. Types of impact investment include early or late stage funding for social enterprises, or equity/debt investment into investable impact projects in areas as diverse as housing, clean energy, regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, hospitality, tourism and more. It can also be supported through instruments such as social procurement (mandating a target for purchasing through social enterprises), or pay for performance contracts such as social impact bonds.