

**BUSINESS  
SYDNEY**



# **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

**Unlocking Life Changing Economic Power**



APRIL 2026

Photo: Kabul Social - Plate it Forward



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# **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

## **MESSAGE FROM THE NSW MINISTER**



### **The Hon. Courtney Houssos MLC**

#### **Minister for Finance Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources**

**Social Enterprises are good for people and good for New South Wales.**

The Minns Labor Government is embarking on a series of procurement reforms to better deliver for businesses and workers across NSW.

This includes establishing a Local Jobs First Commission to support local industries, and an 'If not, why not' mandate for NSW Government agencies to engage with local NSW suppliers before going to tender for projects worth more than \$7.5 million.

The NSW Government recognises the valuable contribution social enterprises make to our economy. Social enterprises deliver genuine benefits for communities across NSW. Social enterprises contribute to inclusive economic development, and create employment opportunities, where they may otherwise not exist for disadvantaged groups. They also help communities address complex social issues, including mental health concerns, transitional justice and homelessness. These organisations often emerge from local initiatives and community priorities, strengthening resilience and social cohesion, and boosting opportunities for local workers. A typical social enterprise bridges the gap where traditional business models and charities may not fully meet community needs.

Businesses can support this work by engaging with social enterprises, including by making them part of their own procurement policies.

Importantly, many social enterprises reinvest their profits back into their operations, helping expand services and employment opportunities, and delivering ongoing benefits for individuals seeking pathways into work and more secure futures.

I'm delighted to join with Business Sydney to launch this important report. The case studies provide valuable insight into the impact these organisations have in our local communities and celebrate their innovation.

# **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

## **DELIVERING COMMERCIAL RESULTS**



**Paul Nicolaou**  
**Executive Director**  
**Business Sydney**

**Business Sydney is the voice of the business community in our city with a proud history of more than 200 years. We represent many businesses drawn from numerous sectors.**

We have a special respect for the social enterprise movement. Their work is inspiring and shines a light on how business and entrepreneurship can have a life-changing impact on people and how they can make their way in the world.

Social enterprises build our society in such a positive way whether it is opening job opportunities for the disabled or a way forward for people who have come to our country seeking refuge and a new life. They are making a strong and measurable contribution to the NSW economy. There are more than 4,400 social enterprises in NSW — a third of the national total. They contributed over \$9 billion to the state economy in the year to June 2025. But with tangible encouragement they could do so much more. This paper includes recommendations that can drive the sector further. This includes government and the private sector setting procurement targets.

Importantly, these wonderful enterprises need a champion within government with the appointment of a special advocate. Establishing a “parliamentary friends of social enterprises” group would also be a great step forward.

Business Sydney congratulates everyone involved in the social enterprise movement. Know this: you are making a difference to people’s lives each and every day.

# **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

## **A FORCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE**

### **Unlocking Public Value: A Case for Investment in Social Enterprises**



#### **Keith Rovers** **Partner & Lead, Pro Bono & Community Investment Program** **MinterEllison**

**Social enterprises combine commercial discipline with a social mission to address entrenched societal, cultural, and environmental challenges. Operating in areas underserved by traditional public and private sectors, they provide essential goods and services to vulnerable populations, tackle wicked problems, and advance circular economy principles.**

Despite their measurable contributions to society and the economy, contributing more than \$21 billion annually, social enterprises often absorb the full cost of delivering impact, as “impact costs,” without capturing a proportional share of the economic value they generate. In work integration social enterprises (WISEs) which create pathways to employment for those experiencing barriers, these costs include wraparound support, training, and community engagement, which are vital to outcomes but are not reflected in conventional metrics like profit margins or shareholder returns.

Nonetheless, there is a strong case for investment. Governments and corporates increasingly recognise the value of social enterprise models in building a stable and inclusive economy.

Social procurement policies help level the playing field with traditional businesses that lack a dual focus on impact and commercial viability. Stable, long-term contracts enable social enterprises to scale, invest in workforce development, and build financial resilience. Australian states are evolving procurement frameworks to embed social value. NSW’s Jobs First Policy includes a 30 per cent weighting for local jobs and ethical supply chains. Social procurement is not just a policy lever — it’s a strategic investment in inclusive growth. Embedding social value into procurement decisions allows governments and investors to unlock enterprise potential, reduce public expenditure, and catalyse systemic change.

In 2023, the Department of Social Services partnered with White Box Enterprises and 18 social enterprises to pilot a payment-by-outcomes trial in the disability employment sector. This model funds wraparound support by linking payments to employment outcomes, sharing economic value such as reduced welfare dependency and improved health with government agencies. A study found that WISEs could save the government 20 per cent in costs, or \$220 million over five years.

Recognising and monetising these avoided costs unlocks private and institutional capital. The Federal Government's \$100 million Outcomes Fund and its contribution to White Box's Social Enterprise Loan Fund — supported by Westpac, Macquarie, and others — signal growing confidence in the sector.

As highlighted in the five-point plan, access to low-interest capital is key to further catalyse growth. The UK's Big Society Capital offers a proven model, acting as a wholesale social investment bank that channels capital into intermediaries supporting frontline social enterprises. The Social Enterprise Loan Fund emulates this for the Australian market, albeit at a smaller scale.

Social enterprises demonstrate how business can be a force for inclusive economic growth and sustainable change. By recognising and investing in the public value they create, these ventures can scale, thrive, and deliver lasting impact.

Photo: White Box Enterprises - Beacon Laundry



# WHITE BOX ENTERPRISES THE ENGINE ROOM OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES



**Luke Terry**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**White Box Enterprises**

**In the years since its inception in 2019, White Box Enterprises has focused on creating jobs for people who have been shut out from mainstream work.**

Some of its “moonshot ideas” have landed successfully, some haven’t, but the organisation has always been devoted to innovation and imagination to make a difference and to achieve positive change.

CEO Luke Terry established White Box Enterprises to systematically address the constraints that he routinely faced when launching social enterprises.

These constraints included gaining access to affordable space, capital, and partnerships that would help bring social enterprise into the mainstream fabric of employment in Australia. In its six years, White Box has:

- Helped to create more than 1200 jobs for people with complex barriers to work
- Incubated five social enterprises
- Attracted more than \$59 million in capital for job creation projects
- Supported 50-plus social enterprises

Prior to launching White Box Enterprises and with more than 15 years’ experience in the social enterprise and not-for-profit field, Luke founded Vanguard Laundry.

He had previously been integral in the start-up of several large-scale employment-focused social enterprise projects that created meaningful work pathways for people facing barriers to employment here and in the UK.

White Box Enterprises’ achievements have been made possible thanks to the support of valued partners and supporters.

“We’re incredibly proud of what we have achieved together but, true-to-form, our aspirations and goals are only getting bigger,” Luke Terry says.

“As jobs-focused social enterprise becomes more visible and better understood in government and corporate sector circles, we’re optimistic about supercharging this movement around people-centred employment.”

<https://whiteboxenterprises.com.au>

# SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IS BUSINESS AT ITS BEST

## Tara Anderson Chief Executive Officer Social Traders



**Social enterprises combine commercial acumen and impact acumen. They blend commercial business with a deep commitment to people and the planet. And across Australia, this movement is thriving.**

The social enterprise sector is as diverse as it is dynamic. Social enterprises operate under varied legal structures, range from sole traders to large-scale businesses, and supply everything from construction, cleaning, and hospitality to engineering, technology, training, logistics, and design. Their diversity proves that in any industry, business can be a force for good.

Social enterprises harness the power of the market to deliver impact. Our RISE report analysed 636 certified social enterprises and found that, each year, they deliver:

- 15.8 million hours of paid employment for beneficiary employees
- 13,000 employment pathway outcomes
- 906,000 hours of employability training
- \$230.9 million in community goods and services
- \$33.7 million in charitable donations
- 1.2 million tonnes of waste diverted from landfill

They invest 27% of their revenue into impact, with 43% of jobs going to people facing the greatest barriers to employment. Applied to Australia's estimated 12,000 social enterprises, that's \$5.7 billion spent on impact each year and 89,000 jobs for people who need them most.

For 18 years, Social Traders has been a leading social enterprise industry body. For the past eight years we've been Australia's certifier of social enterprises, connecting them to buyers ready to embed purpose into procurement.

Our vision? A future where social enterprise principles are standard in every business. Where we don't need to talk about a "wellbeing economy" — because it's simply the economy.

Let's make social enterprise business as usual.

# DEFINING SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

## BY TYPE AND ACTIVITY

A social enterprise is a business that puts people and the planet first. They trade like any other business but exist specifically to make the world a better place.

Social enterprise peak bodies across Australia agree that the following five global standards set by the Social Enterprise World Forum are relevant and useful for Australia too and are collectively embracing them:

- 1: Purpose: Exists to solve a social and/or environmental problem**
- 2: Operations: Prioritises purpose, people, and planet over profit in operational decisions**
- 3: Revenue: Has a self-sustaining revenue model**
- 4: Use of Surplus: Reinvests the majority of any surplus towards its purpose**
- 5: Structure: Chooses legal structures and financing that protect and lock-in purpose long term.**

Generally, there are three types of social enterprises:

- Work Integrated Social Enterprises (WISEs), which train, support and employ people who might be locked out of the labour market.
- Organisations that sell goods and services that fundamentally make the world a better place.
- Profit-distributing companies that donate a significant amount of their profits to charities or operate a buy-one-give-one model.

# SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

## MAKING AN ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION

**Social enterprises are an important — but often undervalued — engine of our economy. They not only directly contribute to the NSW economy through billions of dollars in output annually but also by creating significant positive outcomes for the broader community.**

These are the social and economic benefits that are not captured through the conventional reporting of company financial profits. In particular, social enterprises have been instrumental in growing and strengthening the workforce.

Jobs created and supported by social enterprises can be life-changing for many individuals and their families, as illustrated by the case studies in this report.

### REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT

Many social enterprises have a common goal to provide inclusive and meaningful employment for individuals who have difficulty finding work in the mainstream market.

By providing jobless individuals with employment opportunities, social enterprises deliver an immediate impact in terms of reducing unemployment.

More notably, the mission of jobs-focused social enterprises typically includes supporting people in building skills and gaining relevant experience so that they can eventually transition into sustainable employment.

This helps avoid a pattern of intermittent unemployment (or ongoing job insecurity) as is often the case without the intervention of social enterprises.



## **INCREASING WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION**

Social enterprises play a vital role in unlocking the potential of a segment of the population classified as the 'hidden unemployed'.

These are people without jobs but not officially counted as unemployed (and also not seen as being part of the workforce) because they are not actively looking for work.

However, hidden unemployment is often the result of people having given up looking for work after a prolonged period of rejection even though they would re-enter the workforce when suitable opportunities appear.

Through creating career pathways, social enterprises help to build job confidence and increase workforce participation, a core driver of economic growth.

## **LIFTING PRODUCTIVITY**

Social enterprises also contribute to economic growth by improving the productivity of workers whose full potential can only be unlocked through wraparound approaches.

This includes recognising the challenges experienced by these individuals in the workplace, adopting a strength-based approach, and providing tailored support to remove obstacles and achieve sustained employment outcomes.

The focus is beyond job placement alone, as it involves placing people in roles where they can fully apply their strengths and therefore be at their most productive at work.

By trading like a commercial business but serving a social purpose, social enterprises are a valuable mechanism of income redistribution as earnings are reinvested for good causes that ultimately benefit the broader society.

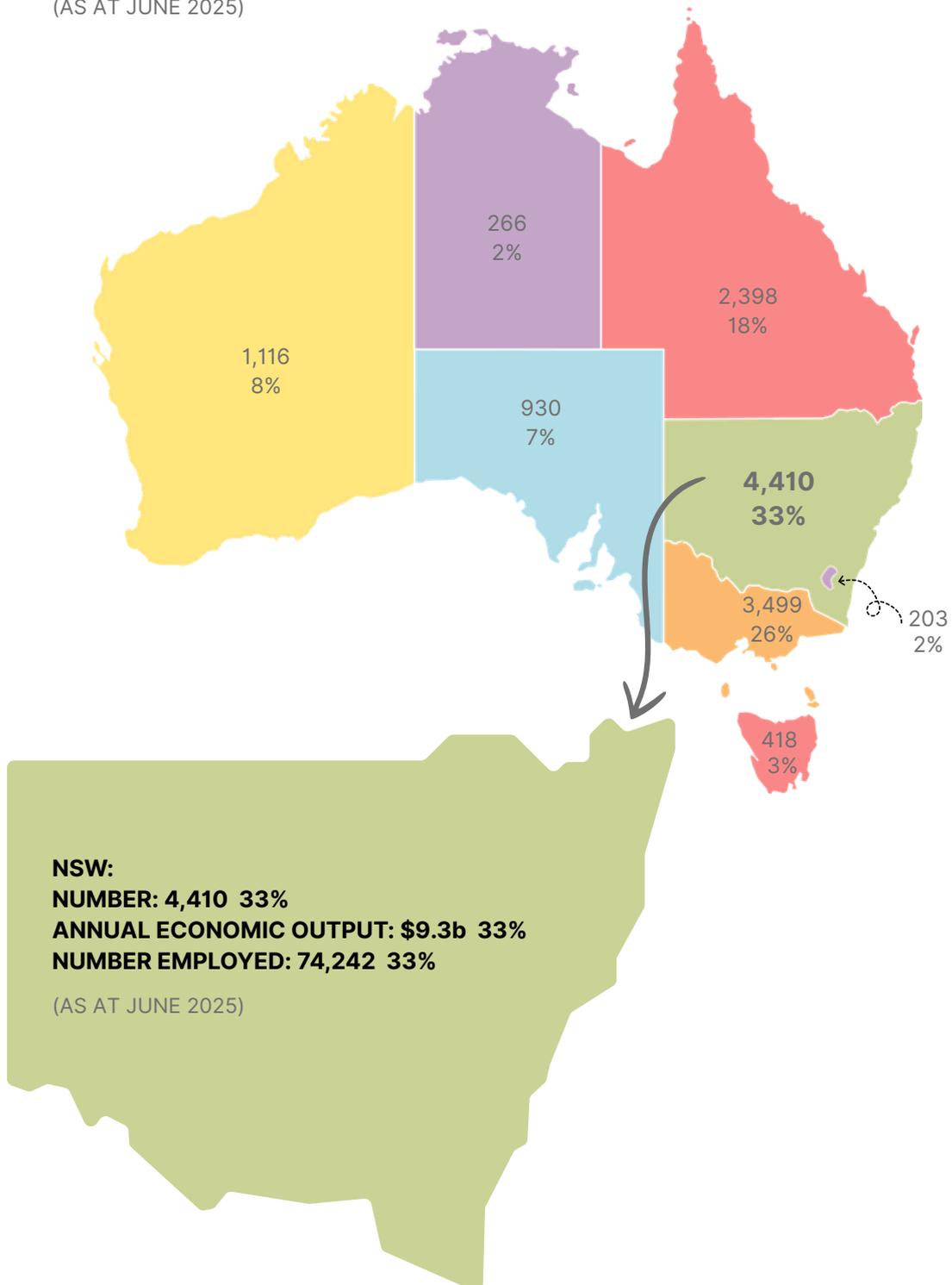


# SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

## THE DATA\*\*

**AUSTRALIA:**  
**NUMBER: 13,240**  
**ANNUAL ECONOMIC OUTPUT: \$27.9b**  
**NUMBER EMPLOYED: 226,969**

(AS AT JUNE 2025)

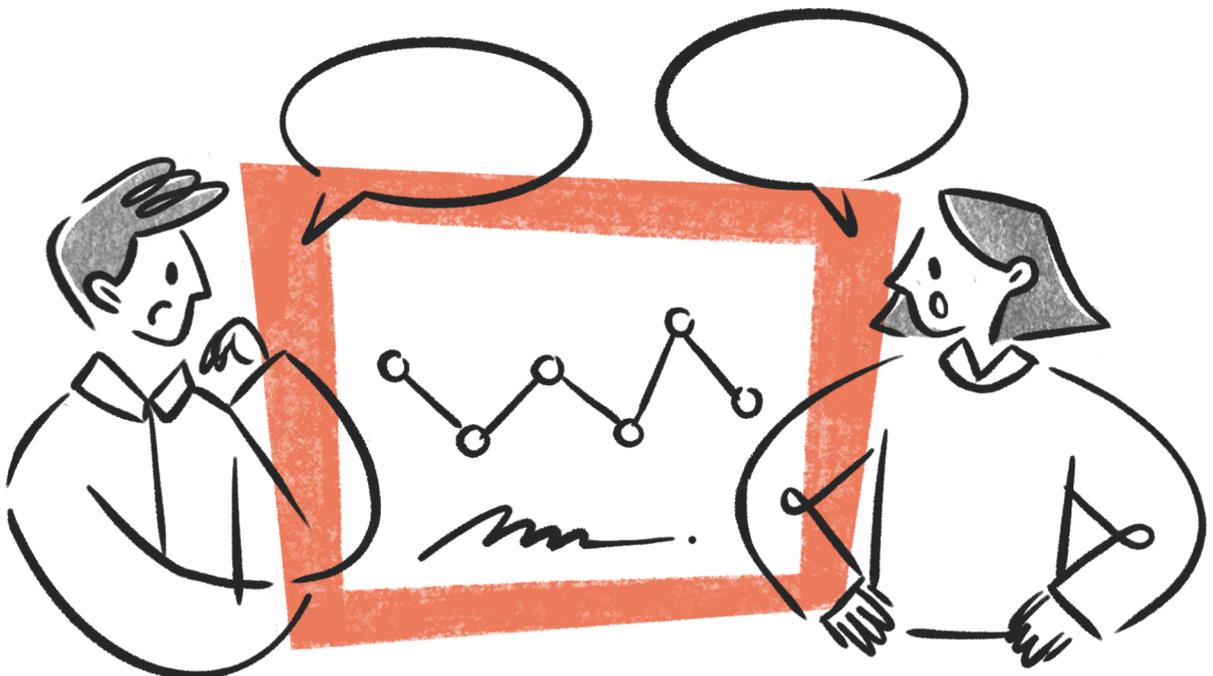


\*\*These estimates were derived using findings from the 'Business for good: the size and economic contribution of social enterprises in Australia' report (Social Enterprise Australia, 2022) as the basis and updated to the end of financial year 2024-25.

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## POINT PLAN TO PROMOTE **SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**

- 1 ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE PROCUREMENT SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES**
- 2 APPOINT A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ADVOCATE IN GOVERNMENT**
- 3 BUILD THE ECONOMIC AND HUMAN VALUE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AS A KEY GOVERNMENT STRATEGY**
- 4 ESTABLISH A 'PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE' GROUP TO ENABLE SECTOR EXPANSION**
- 5 PROVIDE LOW INTEREST CAPITAL TO FACILITATE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH**



# SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CASE STUDIES

## THE BREAD & BUTTER PROJECT

The Bread & Butter Project invests 100 per cent of its profits into providing training and employment pathways for people seeking refuge in Australia and who aspire to become bakers on their journey to successful resettlement in our community. Since 2013, it has been creating a lasting intergenerational impact by boosting our trainees' prospects of successful resettlement and employment, while building a strong sense of belonging in the Australian community. The Bread & Butter Project operates from a humble bakery in Marrickville in Sydney's inner-west but the results are truly inspiring.

"The Bread & Butter Project is a public company with a voluntary board of directors. As a social enterprise, we operate as a commercial business, but at the same time we are also a registered charity with DGR status. All of our profits are channelled into creating opportunity and alleviating poverty. Currently, bread and pastry sales fund 90 per cent of our training and operation costs and donations fund the remaining 10 per cent. We also rely on volunteers and pro bono assistance to help us to achieve our goals."

**Eva Rabanal**

**Chief Executive Officer  
The Bread & Butter Project**

<https://thebreadandbutterproject.com>



# PLATE IT FORWARD

**The generosity of the community provides life-changing meals to those who need them through the Plate it Forward movement. Each week, Plate it Forward prepares up to 3,000 restaurant-quality meals that are delivered to under-serviced areas to feed people who deserve society’s love, compassion and care — through food. With every two dollars donated, Plate it Forward provides a much-needed meal. More than 670,000 meals have been donated since April 2020.**

“I’ve always seen the power of food as a connector: a way to bring people together with quality, dignity and a sense of curiosity about how similar we all are. Food is the ‘universal love’ language that can bridge cultures, foster understanding and build communities. Plate it Forward was a way I could create a conduit for cultural exchange, respect and genuine human connection. Our initiative started with Colombo Social and soon grew to include Kabul Social, Kyiv Social and other ventures. Each is a testament to our commitment to addressing food insecurity and creating meaningful employment opportunities. We’ve been able to donate more than half a million meals using our kitchens to provide employment for more than 270 individuals from marginalised backgrounds.



## **Shaun Christie-David**

**Founder  
Plate it Forward**

**“I looked for a job and my financial situation was bad because we did not receive aid from the government. After four years I found Plate it Forward and I agreed to work with them. Here my whole life changed.”**

**Nehad Mohamed Jerada  
Chef  
Plate it Forward**

<https://plateitforward.org.au>

# HOTEL ETICO AT MT VICTORIA MANOR

Australia's first Social Enterprise Hotel

Hotel Etico provides a fantastic holiday experience to guests, with many of them Sydneysiders enjoying a short break from city life. The hotel is in the welcoming heritage-listed village of Mount Victoria in the Blue Mountains. It powers a program that provides employment and independent living opportunities to young people with disability and to help them achieve their independent goals. The hotel is steeped in history. It was built in 1876 for John Fairfax and is now writing its own contemporary history with a project that is changing lives.

“Hotel Etico is very proud of its innovative approach to inclusion of people with disability. During the first 12 months of the program, young people with disability learn essential hospitality and independent living skills that set them up for success while earning a full award wage. After graduating from the program, our graduates secure ongoing open employment with a large range of industry partners across the city in many of the most well-known hotels in Sydney, all showing incredible appetite and leadership in making the industry more inclusive.”

**Andrea Comastri**

**Founder and CEO  
Hotel Etico Australia**

<https://hoteletico.com.au>



# THE FREEDOM HUB

**The Freedom Hub has the distinction of being one of Australia’s first social enterprises and is a pathfinder in this role. It is dedicated to ending the scourge of modern slavery which it identifies as a global crisis that affects an estimated 49.6 million people worldwide with 29.3 million people in the Asia-Pacific region including Australia among those affected.**

Modern slavery is more common in Australia than people might think. According to the 2021 global slavery index, approximately 41,000 people were experiencing modern slavery in Australia. The common indicators of slavery are deception, coercion, force, threat and abuse. All of these are human rights issues and in many cases can also involve child protection and gender inequality.

The Freedom Hub’s multifaceted approach to addressing the crime of modern slavery includes:

- Running a Survivor School dedicated to the recovery of victims.
- Operating a café and event venue in Sydney’s Waterloo to help fund the school.
- Providing an ethical retail and wholesale range of products.
- Collaborating with partners to help end the crime of modern slavery.
- Working with corporates and businesses to assess and manage their risk of being exposed to modern slavery.

All of The Freedom Hub’s profits are devoted to its Survivor School and its vital work of recovery support for those who have escaped exploitation. Importantly, its business advisory service helps companies to assess risks, implement ethical practices and ensure their supply chains are free from the blight of modern slavery.

“We should all be angry that human trafficking and modern slavery happens in Australia and join with The Freedom Hub in working to eradicate it. Modern slavery can take many forms including forced marriage, forced labour, debt bondage, false job recruitment, child labour abuse and human trafficking.

The Freedom Hub is determined to fight this crime in our country. Australia is known as the ‘lucky country’ so how can we allow modern slavery to continue here? The Freedom Hub exists to help people in our country who have experienced this crime and we are also a partner in the fight to end modern slavery on a global scale.”



**Sally Irwin**  
**Founder and**  
**Managing Director**  
**The Freedom Hub**

<https://thefreedomhub.org>

# JIGSAW AUSTRALIA

**Jigsaw is an Australian social enterprise that trains and transitions people with disability into mainstream employment.**

Its team specialises in scanning physical records and then managing the newly digitised material. Jigsaw also provides flexible short-term labour-for-hire services across a range that includes:

- Administration (such as data entry and document verification)
- Back-office processing
- Insurance claims processing
- Front-of-house roles in the hospitality and education sectors

Jigsaw matches each business need with the right person or team and provides support to ensure successful delivery of the work whether it's completed onsite or offsite. These short-term contracts can also serve as a trial period for a permanent employment opportunity. It allows the team and the candidate to connect, collaborate and determine if the role is the right fit without the pressure of an immediate commitment.

When the timing is right, Jigsaw can support a smooth transition to permanent employment ensuring long-term success for both the candidate and the business. All Jigsaw candidates have graduated from Jigsaw's proven 'prepare for work, through work' model enabling them to bring transferable work skills and real-world experience with the confidence and professionalism needed to be truly job-ready.

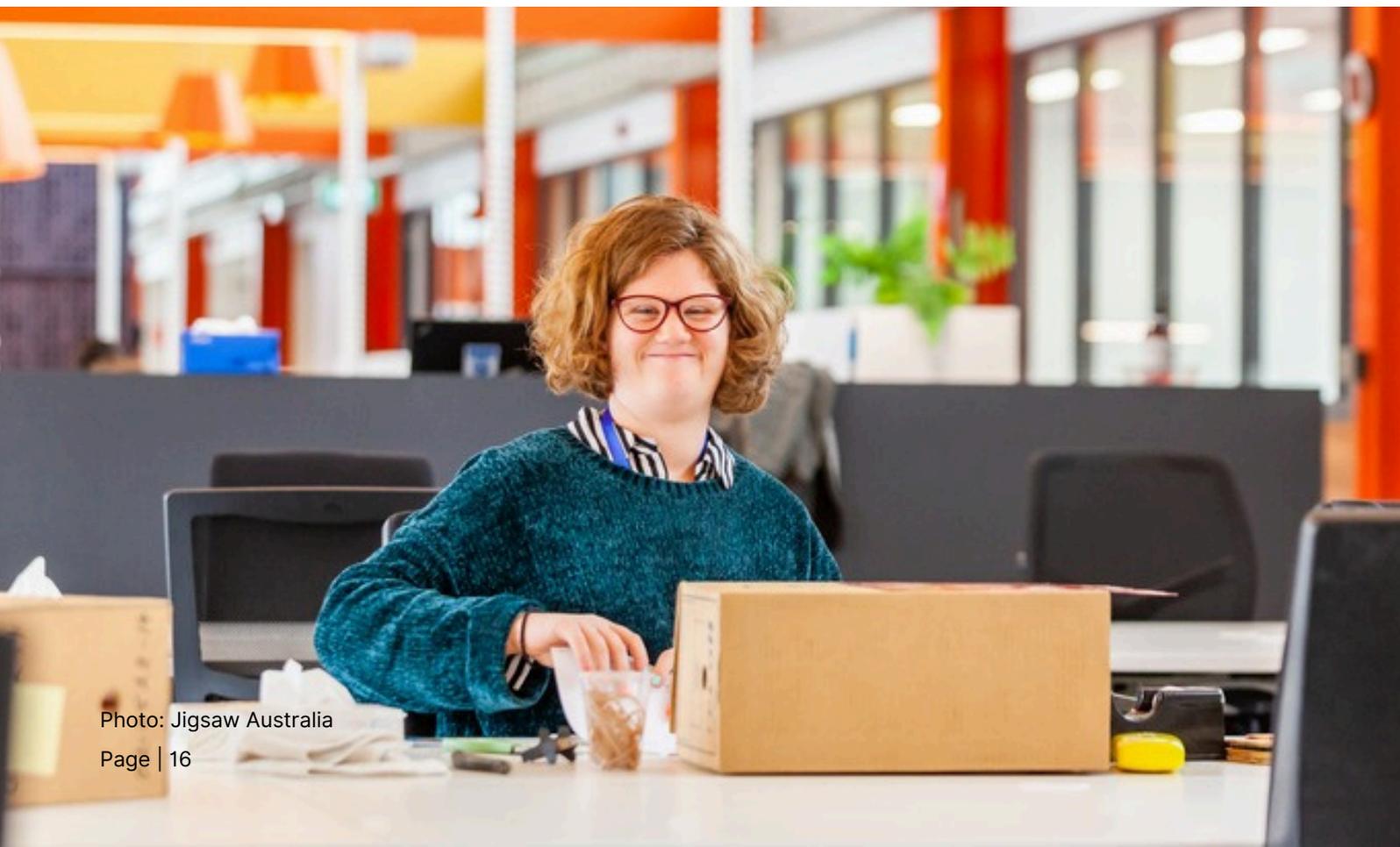




Photo: Jigsaw Australia

Their quality of work is equal to and often exceeds that of large-scale commercial organisations due to the exceptional attention to detail and dedication of Jigsaw trainees.

“In Australia, more than one million people of working age with disability are unemployed. And astoundingly, more than 50 per cent of managers have never hired or even worked with a person with a disability and 71 per cent have faced too many barriers when trying to do so. Jigsaw offers businesses opportunities to improve workplace inclusion by enabling them to engage people with disability by outsourcing business processes to Jigsaw or receiving support from Jigsaw to employ individuals with disability directly.”

## **Paul Brown**

**CEO & Co-founder  
Jigsaw Australia**

<https://jigsawaustralia.com.au>

# THE RECONNECT PROJECT

**The Reconnect Project’s mission is to give pre-owned mobile devices a new life by providing them to people in need. There are an estimated 23 million mobile phones sitting unused in drawers and garages in Australia plus tablets and laptops that are broken or have been put aside in favour of a newer model.**

With a simple repair, secure erasure of data and an overall clean, these devices are ready to reconnect people to family, friends and essential services, and help close the digital divide in Australia. A clean untracked mobile phone is essential for a woman fleeing family violence. A person in transitional housing needs a way to be contacted by support services. For a refugee, a mobile phone provides connection to the world. A young person without access to a computer can use a tablet or a laptop for completing studies or applying for work. As part of its social contribution, The Reconnect Project also provides training in device repair to neurodivergent young people as a pathway to further study and employment.

“The Reconnect Project aims to close a digital divide and provide a solution to the e-waste of mobile devices. Individual groups and businesses benefit knowing that their pre-loved devices will be securely erased, repaired and go to a good home alleviating them of the concern about how to dispose of unwanted technology. Recipients of the refurbished devices benefit as they are provided with access to technology that they otherwise could not obtain giving them the means to connect with people, friends, family and essential services.”

**Annette Brodie**  
**Founder & CEO**  
**The Reconnect Project**

<https://thereconnectproject.com.au>



# COMMUNITY CONSTRUCTION

Community Construction is one of Australia's pioneer social enterprise construction companies. It was founded by Hedayat (Nick) Osyan, a former refugee whose goal is to give back to the community that welcomed him with opportunities. It aims to empower people who have sought refugee status and asylum in Australia to build new lives and to make Australia their homes.

On the best available evidence, 17 per cent of humanitarian migrants are in paid work after being in Australia for 18 months. While employment rates improved with time, getting more refugees into jobs more quickly would be a triple win: it would benefit vulnerable people, boost the budget and improve social cohesion.

"Nick is a social entrepreneur who has exceeded all expectations. His background and journey to community construction is both astonishing and inspiring. Having been an ex-refugee, Nick is aware of the disadvantage that refugees and asylum seekers face in the workforce due to a variety of reasons including a lack of fluency in English. Appreciating his renewed life here in Australia, Nick sought to become a social entrepreneur to give back to the community that has given him so much and, at the same time, to aid the refugee and asylum seekers.

With assistance from various parties, Nick established himself and his business and is currently successfully employing refugees, asylum seekers and even offering apprenticeships. It is his mission to change lives and empower the minority to lead a better life. His passion and drive in life makes his business thrive and the vision he has for the future."

## Hedayat (Nick) Osyan

Founder

Community Construction

<https://communityconstruction.com.au>



Photo: Community Construction

# REVOLVE ReCYCLING

**Based in inner-city Alexandria in Sydney, Revolve ReCYCLING's aim is to recover, recycle and redeploy unwanted bikes, e-bikes, scooters and other personal transport vehicles.**

In the past three and a half years, this social enterprise has recycled or refurbished more than 13,500 bikes that could otherwise have ended up in landfill. More than 500 refurbished bikes have been distributed to disadvantaged children including Indigenous children in inner city Sydney and in the Northern Territory. Some have also gone to Ukrainian refugee children and, along the way, jobs have been created for disabled workers.

Revolve ReCYCLING has benefited from much valued support from the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) and from the City of Sydney as it pursues its goals of collecting 'old rides', recycling or professionally refurbishing bikes, selling high-quality redeployed bikes, offering community training on bike maintenance and repairs, creating 'bike industry circularity' and donating bikes to children in need to achieve 'bike equity'. In doing so, 190,000kg of metal has been diverted from landfill, nearly 4,000 bikes have been redeployed and nearly 450,000kg of CO2 avoided by reusing bikes and parts.

"At Revolve ReCYCLING, we believe that a bike can be more than a great and fun way to get around. It can be, literally, a vehicle for social and environmental good. By keeping bikes out of landfill and recycling or refurbishing them for affordable sale or donation to disadvantaged kids, we're taking something that was waste and we're turning it into value for our community. It's been awesome since we started three years ago to have so much support from the Sydney community, including 13,000 donated bikes."

**Peter Shmigel**  
**Founder**  
**Revolve Recycling**

<https://www.revolverecycling.net/>



# THE SOCIAL OUTFIT

**The Social Outfit is a social enterprise charity demonstrating how the fashion industry can be a powerful engine for both social and environmental good. The organisation addresses two critical issues simultaneously: creating meaningful work for refugees and migrants and pioneering an Australian fashion future. Its operational model is built on ethical local manufacturing, industry-led training, and a commitment to circular solutions.**

Since 2014, The Social Outfit has employed 125 refugees and migrants—84 per cent of whom have moved on to further work—and paid over \$2 million in wages. More than 1,200 people have developed skills through its training programs. By transforming deadstock fabrics into small-batch garments, The Social Outfit proves that an innovative business model can drive opportunity, representation, and sustainability in a modern Australia. The organisation's vision is for an Australia where refugees and new migrants are warmly welcomed, valued, and able to thrive, celebrating its collective skills and strengths.

"A start with us is about more than just a job. It's a reassuring step towards confidence, independence, and belonging. We offer first Australian jobs for refugee and migrant women. This is an opportunity to gain skills, earn an income, and build community connections.

The refugee women we work with bring remarkable creativity and resilience. In our supportive environment, this becomes evident in the quality and craftsmanship of our products. A great example of this is when one of our sewers, in a new undertaking, took on a commission to make a suit to be worn by Her Excellency the Hon. Sam Mostyn AC, at her swearing-in ceremony for Governor-General of Australia.

We all share in the pride when our beautiful, well-made clothes are worn by incredible women in our community. I believe that fashion is more than clothes — it's a powerful expression of people and culture. The Social Outfit's clothes empower both the maker and the wearer."

**Amy Low**  
**CEO**  
**The Social Outfit**





Photo: Ann Sherry AO & The Social Outfit team

## WHY I SUPPORT SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

**Inside every business community are the businesses, often small at first, that begin with social purpose at their heart. These businesses combine entrepreneurial activity with a broader outcome. The Social Outfit is one such business.**

The Social Outfit has blossomed. It begins with the intent of providing training and pathways to employment for women from refugee and newly arrived migrant communities by recycling the end rolls of fabric used by many local designers and clothing manufacturers.

With so little clothing manufacturing done locally, the importance of maintaining the skills base and producing more sustainable fashion grows. The chance for companies looking for more sustainable items in their uniform catalogues represents a great opportunity.

And then comes the personal experience of offering support by buying. I am excited to have many of the designs in my own wardrobe and wear them proudly with the story of the enterprise to add even more colour.



**Ann Sherry AO**  
**Chancellor QUT and**  
**business leader**

# SOCIAL ENTERPRISE COUNCIL FOR NSW AND ACT (SECNA)

**The Social Enterprise Council for NSW and ACT was formed in 2020 from the passion and determination of its members to build a community and advocate for and represent the social enterprise sector.**

SECNA is a sector-led peak body that represents the interests of social entrepreneurs and social enterprises across NSW and ACT and exists to:

- Engage and connect the social enterprise sector in NSW and ACT
- Secure investment and policy change for the sector
- Be an organisation that can sustain and grow our impact

There are an estimated 12,000 social enterprises in Australia operating in a wide range of industries making an important contribution to creating a more diverse and inclusive economy, including providing employment and access to services for disadvantaged Australians. To support this growth, sustainably, and the development of a more diverse and inclusive economy overall, a range of support mechanisms are required including, but not limited to, national and State based strategies for social enterprise, appropriate legal structure and access to finance and markets. To build the support mechanisms, several State based Councils and Networks have formed.

<https://www.secna.org.au/>



# A CALL TO ACTION

**The social enterprise sector deserves support. It fills a unique position in our society with businesses that provide job and life opportunities for vulnerable and marginalised people.**

These are people who might otherwise not find their place in society. We want to see champions in the public and private sectors that can be incubators for these remarkable enterprises.

There has already been some government support such as the payment-by-outcome project supported by the Department of Social Services. And a \$1.2 million Federal Budget allocation to the Social Enterprise Loan Fund.

But more support is needed. It is not a one-way street. There are benefits for government as well. A White Box Enterprises-commissioned study found that the government benefits from cost savings. Supporting social enterprises and the innovations they bring to the table is a classic win-win situation for Australia, our state and our wonderful city.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MinterEllison.



**THE  
SOCIAL  
OUTFIT**





# **BUSINESS SYDNEY**