

Chief Minister launches first ACT Social Enterprise Hub

EMBARGOED UNTIL: Tuesday 30 June 2009

The ACT's first Social Enterprise Hub was officially launched this morning by Chief Minister Jon Stanhope. By providing business support services to social enterprises, the Hub is set to boost employment opportunities for ACT residents who are otherwise disadvantaged in the job market.

The ACT Social Enterprise Hub, a partnership between Social Ventures Australia (SVA), PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), The Snow Foundation, Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC), ACT Health and the Department of Housing and Community Services ACT, is designed to accelerate the growth of social enterprises within the ACT.

The Hub will offer business support services that are otherwise inaccessible and unaffordable to social enterprises including tailored advice in business planning, assistance in exploring and developing new market opportunities and access to professional resources in areas such as legal, accounting, marketing, HR or IT support.

Many of the services will be provided on a pro bono basis by businesses and individuals from the local community who are willing to offer their professional skills to promote community and economic development.

SVA, together with various partners, launched the first Social Enterprise Hub in Queensland in 2006. To date this Hub has delivered impressive results to the community, assisting over 40 social enterprises. In the previous financial year the Queensland Hub provided intensive support to 12 enterprises, resulting in 72 new jobs. Three-quarters of these were for people who had previously been long term unemployed. A Social Enterprise Hub in Parramatta was launched in 2007.

Speaking at the launch, Jan Owen AM, executive director of SVA, commented:

'We are delighted to be launching the first ACT Social Enterprise Hub. It will provide much needed support and resources to social enterprises which in turn will have a direct impact on employing more of the ACT's most marginalised people. Because social enterprises use the business model to deliver their social aims they can bring real benefits to the local community both in terms of economic participation and social inclusion.'

Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister ACT, also commented:

[might like to include....The stronger and more stable the social enterprise is, the better prepared the enterprise is to employ marginalized people and keep them in employment for longer.]

Richard Pedvin, CEO of Paperworks, a social enterprise supported by the ACT Hub commented:

'We are delighted to be part of the ACT Hub's first group of supported social enterprises. Having access to the resources and support provided by the Hub will be invaluable in our development as a viable, sustainable business that can provide real employment to people with disabilities.'

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For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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Notes to editors

Social Enterprise Hubs

Social Enterprise Hubs are based on partnerships between the government, philanthropists, business and the non-profit sector to develop social enterprises in Australia.

Social Enterprise Hubs are location based gateways of practical business support, expertise, advice and networks that assist social enterprises to grow and scale resulting in employment opportunities for those in disadvantaged labour markets.

A *social enterprise* is a business that operates for the primary purpose of creating employment opportunities for those with a disadvantage i.e. disability, mental illness, refugees or those that experience homelessness.

The Hubs supports a specific model of social enterprise which has a supportive and integrated workforce and environment that:

- aims to employ at least 25% of staff who are from a disadvantaged background or have a disability
- has modifications built into the design and culture of the workplace
- is based on the premise that every worker is paid the award rate or productivity rate
- provides the same work opportunities to all employees
- provides skills enhancement and training programs
- provides all employees with the same employment rights and obligations.

Social Ventures Australia

SVA is an Australian-based, non-profit organisation that was established in 2002. It was created by, and has the ongoing support of, some of Australia's most well-known non-profit and philanthropic organisations.

SVA works with innovative non-profit organisations to increase their growth and impact to drive transformational social change. SVA's activities are focused on three areas:

1. It provides multi-year funding and tailored support to a limited and carefully selected portfolio of non-profit organisations led by outstanding social entrepreneurs. This tailored support includes assistance with strategic planning, financial sustainability, governance and performance measurement and evaluation. SVA also leverages its significant networks to help these organisations meet their growth, infrastructure or communication demands.
2. SVA Consulting works with a range of non-profit organisations on customised, results-driven solutions which improve organisational performance and social impact. The consulting team also supports funders, including foundations, philanthropists and governments, to make informed decisions about their social investments. Its services are offered on a cost-recovery basis.
3. It works in partnerships to assist the non-profit sector to find new ways of addressing deep-rooted community challenges. This includes working with Indigenous communities towards increased social inclusion, developing social enterprises to create employment for those disadvantaged in the labour market and fostering best practice.

