

Media Release – 23 March 2020

NATIONAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORKS ALLIANCE

Social Enterprises are pivoting but need support now

As impacts of coronavirus (C-19) deepen, social enterprises across the nation are currently preparing to pivot their activities to address the emerging needs of the community and comply with the rolling shut down of businesses. Social enterprises, who exist to tackle social problems or create an environmentally sustainable society, are at the fore-front of innovation, looking for ways to address market failures and the needs of the communities they serve.

Social Enterprise Network of Victoria (SENVIC), the Queensland Social Enterprise Council (QSEC), Social Enterprise Council for NSW and ACT (SECNA) and the South Australia Social Enterprise Council (SASEC) have welcomed news of the second tranche of C-19 relief packages this weekend from the Australian Government.

“Many of the 20,000 social enterprises across Australia will find several elements of the new packages which includes income support from 27 April 2020 helpful. We particularly welcome the inclusion of support for sole traders and not-for-profits however these funds are urgently required now. Our members have told us that this support is extremely important in addition to the broader welfare support offered to many marginalised communities across Australia.” said Emma-Kate Rose, President of the Queensland Social Enterprise Council (QSEC).

“While we welcome the way in which state and federal governments are working together in this dynamically changing environment, we are concerned that the delay of the funds will put social enterprises at risk. Each of our representative groups will be working with our respective state governments to ensure that the needs of social enterprises in all their diverse forms are addressed,” Ms. Rose continued.

The state-based peak bodies also urged all levels of government to continue to develop initiatives which support the necessary activity of social enterprises to scaffold the physical, social and mental welfare of the most needy at this critical time.

Cinnamon Evans, Chair of SENVIC, said “Social enterprises work best when they’re empowered to create positive impacts which benefit all Australians. As the urgency of this crisis progresses, we need to ensure that all social enterprises are able to meet the needs of their communities. The exponential cost to our society and ultimately the government is too great to risk.”

“This will require that balance of the relief packages and incentives provided are equitable to ensure a diverse range of support services can meet increasing demand,” she said.

The alliance partners will continue to work with federal, state and local governments to develop a range of incentives which may include innovative social procurement contracts and vouchers, establishment of blended public/private finance funds, and re-direction of existing support to provide business advice and resources, among others.

#thegoodnessgap – measuring the impact on social enterprises

To help measure the impact on social enterprises, the national alliance has urged social enterprises to join #thegoodnessgap, to record the collective impact C-19 at www.thegoodnessgap.org and build public awareness of the good created by social enterprise.

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