

**Media Release – 19 March 2020**

## **NATIONAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORKS ALLIANCE**

### **Social Enterprises to miss out on COVID-19 support**

The impacts of the coronavirus (C-19) are being felt across the globe by individuals, organisations and businesses. Social enterprises are not only preparing their businesses for the anticipated additional pressures on staffing and operations due to the virus but preparing the communities in which they operate.

Social enterprises by nature are deeply connected to their communities as they exist to tackle social problems or create an environmentally sustainable society, and many work side by side with some of the nation's most vulnerable and isolated people.

The social enterprise community understands the importance of reducing the spread of C-19, but the government must recognise the value of sustaining a thriving social enterprise community.

“There are 20,000 social enterprises across Australia, but we still fall into the gap between business and charity” said Cinnamon Evans, Chair of the Social Enterprise Network Victoria (SENVIC).

“Social enterprises are uniting to call on the Federal and State Governments to not let social enterprises fall through the gap between support for small business and the charity sectors”, she said.

### **#thegoodnessgap - social enterprise may not qualify for traditional assistance**

Emma-Kate Rose, Chair of the Queensland Social Enterprise Council (QSEC) said “While we welcome the recent Federal Government's \$17.5 billion stimulus designed to assist businesses to keep staff, there is concern that many social enterprises will miss out on many of the cash relief initiatives. The measures to keep small businesses going will not reach all social enterprises because we are neither a standard business nor a charity and existing definitions might exclude us unintentionally.”

“While the additional \$1 billion dollars for regional assistance currently targets tourism, agriculture and education, we need more funds to address food scarcity, support for vulnerable and isolated people and social and community cohesion initiatives run by social enterprises” she said.

SENVIC and QSEC have joined with the Social Enterprise Council for NSW and ACT (SECNA) and the South Australia Social Enterprise Council (SASEC) to advocate for federal and state government initiatives to address the needs of all businesses suffering at this time.

We call on the government to urgently release an emergency support package to deal with the imminent loss of thousands of jobs, business closures and loss of positive social and environmental benefits created by the social enterprise sector.

The alliance is calling on social enterprises to join #thegoodnessgap, to record the collective impact C-19 at [www.thegoodnessgap.org](http://www.thegoodnessgap.org) and build public awareness of the good created by social enterprise.

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