

# ‘What role can social enterprise play in the new economy?’ SENVIC Conversation Circles 25 June 2020 **Summary of Key Themes**

Panel Speakers:

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## **Proud of the strong foundations the social enterprise sector has built**

- Important to recognise the progress that has already been made and leadership in Victoria (from government and business) has been essential.
- Victoria's Social Enterprise Strategy 2017 and Social Procurement Framework and the positive engagement and setting of targets in business and industry have shown great leadership.
- Strong calibre of leadership in Victoria has made us a national and global leader.
- There is strong alignment between government, researchers and business on the importance of social enterprises.

## **There is more work to be done to educate customers and businesses**

- Customer preference for social businesses, has only grown during the covid-19 crisis.
- Buying local is paramount. People and governments are reconsidering what they mean by 'value for money'.
- There is more work to be done in helping customers (individuals and businesses) to understand what a social enterprise is.
- We can learn more about what motivates buyers to shift to social enterprises for products and services, and the incentives and requirements that impact that behaviour.
- Social enterprises value the practical tools to advocate for themselves and the sector in all their dealings.

## **Social Enterprises working together can seize the opportunities**

- Social enterprises can be doing more to pull each other up, partnering together on social procurement and also doing business with each other.
- We can explore the areas of the economy where social enterprises are active and where they are not.
- In economic recovery there will likely be many gaps that society (and government) will look to social enterprises and the not for profit sector to fill.
- We can build upon the foundation laid by the procurement framework and Social Traders and work through the implementation challenges and broaden the opportunities for social enterprises.

## **Sector-wide advocacy focus**

- We can have a stronger discipline and capability around telling the story of social enterprises in every possible forum
- We need to be ambitious as a sector and focus on what we need to do to maintain Victoria's leading position, nationally and internationally.
- Embedding social procurement in Victorian law can preserve what we have achieved and embeds social enterprise as a preferred supplier in all levels of government.
- More direct government funding for social enterprises, not for intermediaries.
- A national advocacy agenda and a national social enterprise strategy.