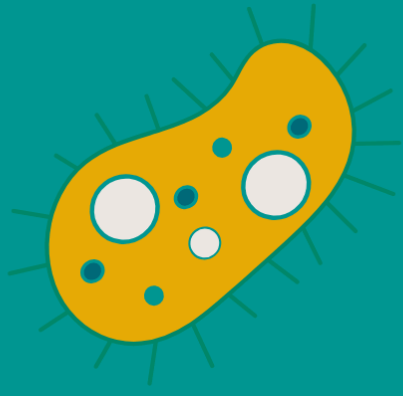


Overview



SOUTH COAST SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Peer learning &
support community

WHAT'S POSSIBLE WHEN WE CONNECT, LEARN AND
UPLIFT EACH OTHER AS ENTERPRISES FOR GOOD?

[Session 1: 26 September 2025](#)

[Session 2: 14 November 2025](#)

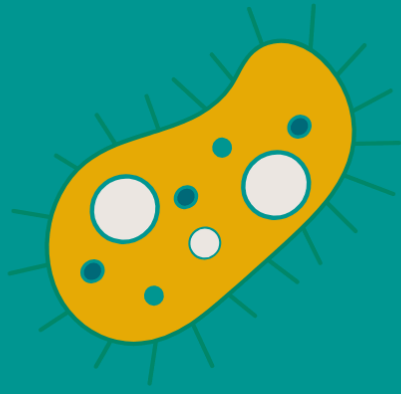
[Session 3: 5 December 2025](#)

[Session 4: 6 February 2026](#)

[Session 5: 6 March 2026](#)

[Session 6: 22 May 2026](#)

Session 1



SOUTH COAST SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Peer learning &
support community

SESSION 1

Friday 26 September 2025

Who?

We had 24 people register so far, some couldn't join today.

Present: Mel Geltch, David Newell (hosts), Michelle Lin; Matt Dell, Monique Carson, Pam and Peter Skelton, Sarah Lambert, Michael Collins, Angela Bennett, Sarah Anderson, Carina Severs

Apologies: Paris Brooke, Roxy Lancaster, Lynne Wright, Sophie Linehan, Sharon Wellard, Sandra Makdessi, Louise Croker, Kate Fitzgerald, James Bristow, Sarah Gorst

We began with acknowledgement of Country from the land of the Dharawal people down to Thaua Country on the NSW / VIC border, including the shires of Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley and beyond.

We offered some principles for working together and an introduction to two different world views, with us at the centre, and all of the complexity it brings and the care we need.

Working with shared power, transparency, clear decision making, circle practice and a whole range of horizontal practices and processes helps us to work on an equal footing. Through them, underlying assumptions or mindsets that need to shift are revealed and provoked.

Participatory, or shared leadership helps to reframe expertise, especially when working with marginalised communities. When we idealise experts, it can lead to waiting for others to provide solutions, rather than being in our own personal leadership and agency to co-create solutions.

Check in

Why are you here?

- Volunteer led solutions are the glue – support those volunteers anywhere I can
- As a NFP cooperative, for a long time we didn't realise we were a social enterprise. Years later we are going through certification. Business can be a force for good in the world. I

champion the idea of a social enterprise, for us to get away from the individual notion of gathering resources for myself – and moving towards gathering together for the greater good.

- Supporting others
- We have nearly got to the state of running a social enterprise, exploring and comparing different organisational structures
- I've been in community space/young people for a very long time. My passion is storytelling – using audio storytelling to grow people and communities – and want to do it more. I see it fitting into a Social enterprise model. I also work with another social enterprise.
- We need engagement with Country with students – with gardens as the connector. How do we move forward on that one?
- Learn from the wisdom of the group. Beginner and learner.
- To support and learn more. real interest in collaboration, community based work
- People want to learn more about social enterprises. I want to build my understanding about them and how to support others in developing initiatives. Sharing wonderful stories
- I'm interested in circular economy and a non-heirarchical view of social enterprise – people having a voice. Do we meet the guidelines of a social enterprise, and what are the advantages?
- Our group has done many projects since the fires, and passionate about the community. Is a social enterprise our future?

Our purpose

Use Purpose as a compass that unlocks coordinated action and enlivening collaborations.

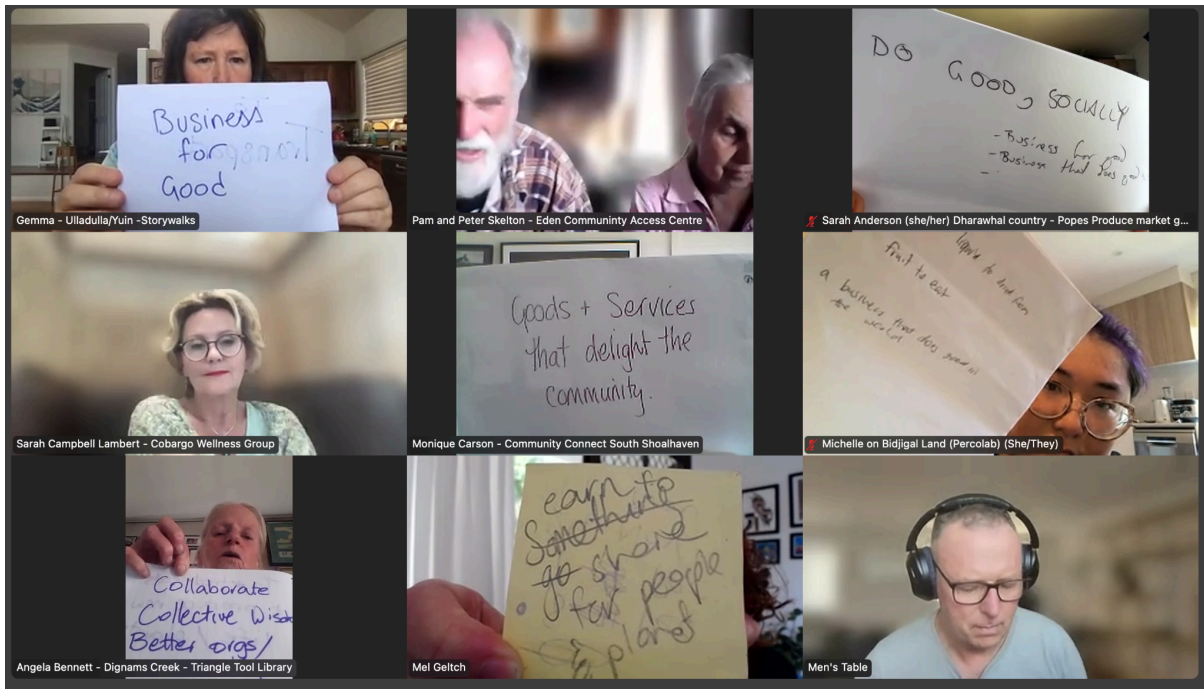
We played the Purpose Game (**see Collaborative practices tab**), starting with two warm up rounds:

What is the purpose of Sarah's glass?

What is the purpose of Mel's kiwi fruit?

Purpose of a social enterprise

- Build abundance in the community
- Organise people to deliver products and services to build a better world that serves the people
- To support a social or environmental purpose
- Business for good
- Goods & services that delight the community
- Do good, socially
- Collaborative, collective wisdom, better organisations
- Earn to share with people and planet



Purpose of this peer learning community

- To offer mutual support to learn and grow capacity
- Grow clarity and confidence
- Learn from each other, and learn how to use this clarity and wisdom to support social enterprises and better communities
- Support & learn collectively & grow new connections.
- To learn from each other
- Inspire, connect & share possibilities
- Share and connect, build knowledge
- To offer mutual support to learn and grow capacity
- To promote best practice and enable new growth in capacity to launch social enterprises
- Share inspiration and support each other when we can.
- Draw people together to decide and enact what is best for all
- To explore options

Needs market

What are your needs and hopes for this learning community?

We used a zoom poll to collect everyone's individual needs and hopes:

- To find some friends (in this work)
- To highlight social enterprises so I know where to spend my money & help others make choices
- Expand my understanding of social enterprises and not have to do all of the research myself!

- Support others to see they are an enterprise and be out and proud about it
- Alternatives – from formal social enterprise status to casual
- Benefits of being a social enterprise
- Benefits of communicating you're a social enterprise
- To know what social enterprise is, how it works in practice and need to know benefits for info community services
- To add to what we already know about social enterprises.
- Consider options for alternate income streams.
- Partner with like minded orgs to strengthen economy & social aspects of Bega Valley NFP's
- Promote local social enterprise procurement for govt and larger corporates
- To be inspired by collective will and knowledge of what it takes to launch a social enterprise and how it differs from a charity or business.
- Hope to promote best practice, incubate and support new ideas and find collaborators who might bring different skills and perspectives.
- Find synergies of working and spending time together and leverage our impact and ways of working in the world for the benefit of all peoples in the South coast
- speak to the subject with enthusiasm and confidence to others in our social circle. More knowledge about where social enterprise fits in communities in general and be able to share that with others.
- to hear peoples stories and examples of what they are doing and dreaming
- to connect with others who have a similar world-view
- to explore how and where these conversations can be taken into the wider community to benefit all
- to build possible collaborations
- to learn about how to best use/be a social enterprise
- To learn more about social enterprises, explore if it is the right fit, and explore how to pursue this direction effectively
- *knowledge (greater understanding of the parameters of a social enterprise
- support (tricky doing things on your own)
- basic mud map to move forward with a new initiative (a foundation which can be filled out during the journey ;)
- Different forms of social enterprises
- Clarity on what a social enterprise is
- Clarity when becoming a social enterprise is possible
- Is becoming a social enterprise applicable for individual groups represented
- First steps to registering a social enterprise
- Hope to promote best practice, incubate and support new ideas and find collaborators who might bring different skills and perspectives.
- Find synergies of working and spending time together and leverage our impact and ways of working in the world for the benefit of all peoples in the South coast
- speak to the subject with enthusiasm and confidence to others in our social circle.
- More knowledge about where social enterprises fits in communities in general and be able to share that with others.
- A hope: Transform and orientate all government and local business toward all operating for social wellbeing as well as being sustainable... and measuring how to improve community wellbeing togetheras a regional objective

- Would social enterprises be more empowering for young people or other groups?
- What are the advantages?
- How do we get certification as a social enterprise?
- For this group, some may learn the collaborative methods that would be applied to a social enterprise

Conversation

What else could this learning community be?

In groups of 4, we spent a little time exploring this question further...

Group 1 – Sarah Anderson, David Newell, Michelle Lin

Invitation and practice of vulnerability:

- Space to move into imperfection and not knowing – experimentation
- Exploring our stories about social good and making money as a business
- How can we hold social impact and business success at the same time? Ethical ways?
- A place for relearning old ways of being – re-learning
- Creating a more resilient ecosystem – the language of mycelium

Group 2 – Angela, Matt, Sarah

- I'm hoping we can support each other when needed.
- Understand we're better in numbers than individually.
- Work together when appropriate and initiatives compliment each other.
- Support the community where wanted and needed

Group 3 – Carina, Michael, Monique

- Case studies of what is relatable to this forum – to learn and inspire and educate
- How could we champion the concept – for new and existing businesses in our region with clear explanation of what a Social Enterprise is and is not?
- How do we bring a charity toward a social enterprise model – compare and contrast and what is the benefit?
- Review local successes and challenges in our area
- Local and Government business to prioritise local procurement
- Measure wellbeing of community based on social metrics ..and feed into our impact measurement

Group 4 – Gemma, Peter, Pam

- To hear peoples stories and examples of what they are doing and dreaming
- to connect with others who have a similar world-view
- To explore how and where these conversations can be taken into the wider community to benefit all
- To build possible collaborations
- To learn about how to best use/be a social enterprise
- To learn more about social enterprises, explore if it is the right fit, and explore how to pursue this direction effectively

- Knowledge (greater understanding of the parameters of a social enterprise)
- Support (tricky doing things on your own)

This harvest will help inform our design for the next sessions.

Our rhythms

What meeting rhythm and communication tools could best serve our group?

Proposal of date and rhythm based on data from the shared registration form

Using Generative Decision Making – a consent based decision making process (**see Collaborative Practices tab**). Not everyone has to agree, just not object. Good enough for now, safe enough to try.

Proposal

That we meet on Fridays from 1–3pm for the next 5 sessions – with a rhythm of every 5 weeks, with time off for holidays and some flexibility over Easter next year.

Session 2 – Friday October 31

Session 3 – Friday December 5

Session 4 – Friday February 5 TBC

Session 5 – Friday April 10 TBC

session 6 – Friday May 15 TBC

That we communicate using both a WhatsApp group and a Google email group inbetween.

Clarifying Q No

Reactions – Michael – ok – agreements around communication channels needed

V2? no

Objections: none

Visual confirmation yes

Adopted

Celebration!

Next steps

<https://understorey.org.au/>

- Send calendar invites
- Photo
- Share results with those others who registered
- Okay to share details?
- Invite others

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NUf16-KR8XeCl68FqCp8-Hb9xqWqL2Ox0ypPbpSLMOE/edit?usp=sharing>

Check out

What are you taking with you from today?

- Im taking a sense of "power" from a group of people with a similar opportunity
 - Taking community that can potentially create great initiatives.
 - Good connections and interest in next steps
 - The nature of the group so we can refer this to others
 - a positive inclination to want to continue
 - Grateful for your grace as we begin together 😊
 - Gratitude for everyone showing up!
 - More clarity connection and joy
 - That shared collective wisdom advances a community
 - THANKYOU
 - That was great ..sorry I was late.. Thank you all. Checking out very chuffed
 - Lovely to see you both again, Mel and Dave. xx
-

Identifying needs

Knowledge & understanding

- To know what social enterprise is, how it works in practice
- Expand my understanding of social enterprises and not have to do all of the research myself!
- To learn more about social enterprises,
- *knowledge (greater understanding of the parameters of a social enterprise)
- Clarity on what a social enterprise is
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- Benefits of being a social enterprise
- need to know benefits for info community services
- How do we bring a charity toward a social enterprise model – compare and contrast and what is the benefit?

- What are the advantages?

Explore

- Explore if it is the right fit, and explore how to pursue this direction effectively
- Would social enterprises be more empowering for young people or other groups?
- To explore how and where these conversations can be taken into the wider community to benefit all
- Consider options for alternate income streams.
- Exploring our stories about social good and making money as a business

Shine a light

- To highlight social enterprises so I know where to spend my money & help others make choices
- Support others to see they are an enterprise and be out and proud about it
- Promote local social enterprise procurement for govt and larger corporates
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- Transform and orientate all government and local business toward all operating for social wellbeing as well as being sustainable... and measuring how to improve community wellbeing togetheras a regional objective
- Benefits of communicating you're a social enterprise

Share stories

- to hear peoples stories and examples of what they are doing and dreaming
- Case studies of what is relatable to this forum – to learn and inspire and educate
- Review local successes and challenges in our area

Work together, support and inspire each other

- to build possible collaborations
- Partner with like minded orgs to strengthen economy & social aspects of Bega Valley NFP's
- To be inspired by collective will
- support (tricky doing things on your own)
- Hope to promote best practice, incubate and support new ideas
- find collaborators who might bring different skills and perspectives.
- Find synergies of working and spending time together and leverage our impact and ways of working in the world for the benefit of all peoples in the South coast
- To find some friends (in this work)
- Work together when appropriate and initiatives compliment each other.
- Support the community where wanted and needed

- I'm hoping we can support each other when needed.
- to connect with others who have a similar world-view
- Creating a more resilient ecosystem – the language of mycelium
- Understand we're better in numbers than individually.

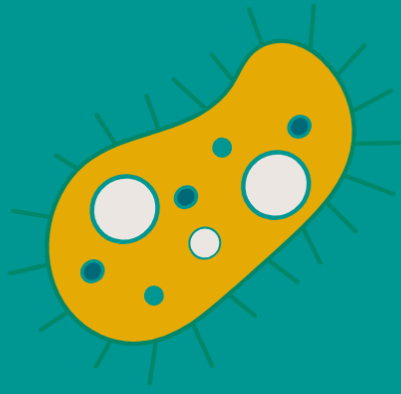
Ways of being and doing

- Space to move into imperfection and not knowing – experimentation
- How can we hold social impact and business success at the same time? Ethical ways?
- A place for relearning old ways of being – re-learning
- For this group, some may learn the collaborative methods that would be applied to a social enterprise
- Measure wellbeing of community based on social metrics ..and feed into our impact measurement

Practical tools

- basic mud map to move forward with a new initiative (a foundation which can be filled out during the journey ;)

Session 2



SOUTH COAST SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Peer learning &
support community

SESSION 2

Friday 14 November 2025

Who?

Present: Mel Geltch, David Newell, Liz McKrystal, Kate Fitzgerald

Apologies: Matt Dell, Angela Bennett, Sophie Linehan, Sharon Wellard, Sarah Anderson (no longer joining)

We were surprised that there were 4 of us, and decided to be in conversation together. It ended up being an inspiring conversation. Whoever shows up are the right people!

Check in

What's a question that's really sitting with you for yourself in relation to social enterprises?

- Kate: social work, teaching. Elemental Aim – increase access to education. Innovative schools OS, funded through programs with Australian schools. Intersection between registered NFP and social enterprise. Where is the overlap? Feels unattainable at the moment, and hopefully we'll get there.
- Liz: Narooma School of Arts building a new facility, helping them set up. Interested in social enterprise, a lot of models to borrow. Community Shed eg: sovereignty around our arts, not beholden to philanthropy or grants. A bit of a cultural mountain. How does social enterprise in general fit in? Something we're going to try – symbolic owners of art space. Seasonal subscriptions... 100 shares at 300 each. What are others doing in this space?
- Mel: Akolele. Percolab Coop collaboration practitioners, supporting socio-ecological shifts. It's taken us years to consider if we are a SE. passion to connect and lift up this movement as a force for good. Shift the global mindset to sharing and caring. Also Green Mountain Community School – transforming the way we work and educate. How do we connect and

elevate social enterprises on the south coast?

- Dave: Cobargo. Collaborator in community, connecting, supporting projects and initiatives and conflict. Environmental education and Landcare. Supporting community. What else needs to be done to step into what a social enterprise could be, increasing impact and good in the world.

Recap

We recapped session 1, and sought agreement – ‘good enough for now, safe enough to try’ – on the themes from the rich information / data.

IDENTIFYING OUR COLLECTIVE NEEDS

Knowledge & understanding

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- Benefits of being a social enterprise
- need to know benefits for info community services
- How do we bring a charity toward a social enterprise model – compare and contrast and what is the benefit?
- What are the advantages?

Explore

- Explore if it is the right fit, and explore how to pursue this direction effectively
- Would social enterprises be more empowering for young people or other groups?
- To explore how and where these conversations can be taken into the wider community to benefit all
- Consider options for alternate income streams.
- Exploring our stories about social good and making money as a business

Shine a light

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Share stories

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- To find some friends (in this work)
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- I'm hoping we can support each other when needed.
- to connect with others who have a similar world-view
- Creating a more resilient ecosystem – the language of mycelium
- Understand we're better in numbers than individually.

Ways of being and doing

- Space to move into imperfection and not knowing – experimentation
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- A place for relearning old ways of being – re-learning

- For this group, some may learn the collaborative methods that would be applied to a social enterprise
- Measure wellbeing of community based on social metrics ..and feed into our impact measurement

Practical tools

- basic mud map to move forward with a new initiative (a foundation which can be filled out during the journey ;)

Stories and conversation

We shared stories and had a great conversation, hearing about Kate's organisation, [elemental aim](#), and Liz's work with Narooma School of Arts, and the Fishbowl in Moruya

Next steps

- Kate and / or Liz to share a story next session
- Kate to share link for app feedback
- Dave - to share with Landcare, GMCS, home schooling
- Mel - to share Kate's link with GMCS & with others
- [Add to WhatsApp and Google group](#)

Check out

What are you taking away into your day?

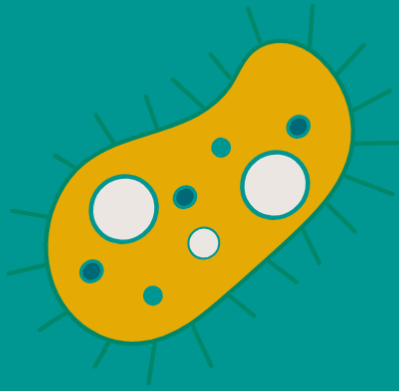
Liz - I'm going to use this energy from this conversation to finish this grant! I really appreciate you listening and learning from each of you. Look forward to learning more about your story Kate.

Dave - energy coming through the screen, taking it into my day and weekend. Gratitude to meet interesting people, in different contexts - buzzing from connections.

Kate - to meet like minded people from a slightly different region. I admire the process of this group. Very genuine process, Nice to meet you

Mel - Serendipity, whoever turns up are the right people. Taking that feeling into the next call. Appreciate the connection.

Session 3



SOUTH COAST SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Peer learning &
support community

SESSION 3

Friday 6 December 2025

Who?

Present: Mel Geltch, David Newell, Kate Fitzgerald, Monique Carsons, Debra Summer, Carina Severs, Peter Skelton, Pam Skelton, Michael Collins

Apologies: Paris Brooke, Sarah Lambert, James Bristow, Matt Dell, Sophie Linehan, Louise Croker

Check in

How is entrepreneurship showing up in you?

Mel, Akolele – found a place to stay – thinking about creative ways to stay there. House swapping! Relational and sharing. Glad to be here.

Deb, Cobargo – More busy with my volunteer projects than my paid work, a little imbalance – Vice president Cobargo Bushfire Recovery Fund. Cobargo main street rebuild organisation. Also a founder of CADET – renewable Cobargo. Seeing the light in these big projects – bringing our community back to life. Still working on Community Microgrid project. My business, a birth – death celebrant, need to refocus on this.

Carina, Eden – Eden Tech centre is our social enterprise – tech help, maintenance, all of that stuff. Working really well. Branching out to support a person with disability, home visits. Would like to develop the concept a little further. Now always considering what we could make into a social enterprise. We took the risk with our first one, now investigating part of the Learner Driver Program as a SE.

Monique – Ulladulla, Community Connect South Shoalhaven, also FRRR. Deep conversations with grant recipients. Not directly mine to own, but diving into their needs etc. Beauty of a multiple year granting program. Community Connect is looking to grow up and become a Community Foundation. Hopefully early next year to launch the Foundation for Community Connection.

Pam – Eden, Yuin Country. Eden Community Pantry – all volunteers tired, need a rest, and aware Christmas, NY a stressful time for home economics. Holding those dynamics.

Looking at social enterprises for Sculpture Eden auspiced by ECAC. Creatives meet in the Eden Lab, have been working to support artists, sculptors who were severely impacted by bushfires. Support group has evolved MOU with Eden LALC.

Been given a large space of land at Eden Cove for displaying Sculptures. Seek funding to sufficiently support artists to generate income through exposure to general markets. Exhausted and excited at the same time.

Peter – Social Justice Advocates of South Coast, working on project for short term transitional housing. A grant and then pays for itself. They end up with a reference and supported to do that. Fundraisers too. Have looked at a Mountain Bike SE, a partnership with Club that fell through, and did scope it – cafe, repairs to bikes, track. SE for good fo the town, not just those who use the tracks. No community centre, big hall at the moment. Lots of things that aren't here.. Looking at a proposal that might support itself.

Dave, Djiringanj country, Cobargo. Work of Rites of Passage for teenaged boys, trying to resurrect down here. A year long program, those boys and their families. Lacking energy I would like to have. There are people around me, they'll come on board when the car is rolling.

Kate – Bulli, feel like an imposter. Love to hear what's happening. Will share a little later.

Michael – I like to imagine how community social innovation could be the thing rather than businesses and govts being the custodians of all of the good ideas. Community is the place of creativity, passion, resources – how do we take it into things we all need to flourish?

Recap

Since our community comes and goes, we spent a brief time recapping where we've been and the format we had landed on for these conversations going forward

Story harvesting

Kate Fitzgerald, Elemental Aim was to share a story today, and unfortunately internet access (and a very hot day!) made that too difficult, so we postponed, and got into conversations instead.

Open Space

We introduced Open Space Technology as a space to bring our burning issues, and have the conversations we want or need to have, with these people at this time. [Find out more here](#)

The Open Space Marketplace

	Topic / question	Host	Harvest
Room 1	Social aspects of social enterprise: getting it up and running, gaining enthusiasm, energy for maintenance.	Pam	See below
Room 2	How can we help individuals recognise their potential in the social enterprise space?	Mon	See below
Room 3	Social procurement	Michael	Michael left before collective share back :)
Room 4	How do we handle competition with other social enterprises and for-profits without losing relationships?	Carina	
Lounge	Not sure, and want to take a break and hang out with others? Get comfy in the main lounge :)	Self hosted	

Social aspects of social enterprises

- *getting it up and running, gaining enthusiasm, energy for maintenance.*
Hosted by Pam

WHO CAME? Pam, Peter, Dave

GOLD NUGGETS

- Early adopters, etc
- Morphing something into something else
- Build trust - structures that are collaborative
- Good co-design at the start
- Simple and connecting ways
- Have a "Yes" mentality - positive

WHAT ARE WE CLEARER ABOUT?

- Invite people well
- Host self well
- Be clear with others

- Need and Purpose is vital – revisit yearly

WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE STILL HOLD?

- Why are we invested in things?
- What do we let go of?
- How do we invite “new” players?

ANY NEXT STEPS?

- Practice winding end of year things up well
- Celebrate what has been achieved?

SHARE BACK

- Clear sense of purpose
- Be willing to re-examine that purpose
- Asking people at the end of the year – do we still share the purpose, do we need to change in the new year?
- Then, natural progress of orgs. How do we compost well? Regenerate and fertilise another group. How do we grieve well?
- How do we host ourselves in clarity of what I’m up for – my energy commitment. Hosting self, surrender and letting go?
- How do we create enough structure to attract and support relationship, energy and creativity – build trust and transparency.
- Inviting well into the group – who is outside our existing circle?

How do we help others recognise their potential in the social enterprise space?

Hosted by Mon

WHO CAME? Deb, Kate, Mel

GOLD NUGGETS

- Is it a money conversation? (Barrier to talking about money, what can the business hold. Limiting beliefs holding them back.)
- Storytelling around examples could unleash thoughts & ideas
- Social Enterprise is not transactional. More about Reciprocity – based in First Nations ways of working.
- Even when orgs don’t start as a Social Enterprise, they can transition. This requires a deep cultural shift from, people need to give me money to an entrepreneurial state/way of thinking. How do we get the entrepreneurial people in the room to chat?

DISCUSSION

- How we shine a light on services.
- Unleashing the inner cause & purpose of what is happening
- Connection (cross pollination)
- Inviting people in to talk about their stories
- Contact SEA & SECNA see if there are events or resources to bring people together.
- Simultaneous benefit (eg. Use/hire the space & also give support to the cause)
- There are official & unofficial Social Enterprises
- Bec

EXAMPLES OF NOT-SO-OBVIOUS SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

- **Growing together** – Milton
- **Lions Club** – do you bring some business thinking into your markets. What can the market can hold?
- **Tool Library Cobargo**
- **South Coast Book Club**
Collect \$400 membership fees – a group of individuals 4–10. Buy books – they get 11 of them. Books stay with the group.
250 before covid, now 70 individuals / 7 groups.
When you want to expand, you have sets to get new groups started. Helps it grow

INSIGHTS

- A self sustaining enterprise
- A mindset shift towards social enterprise needed, not either / or... business or NFP
- Money stories – how do we shift them?

WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE STILL HOLD?

- What are the benefits of branding yourself as a Social Enterprise?

ANY NEXT STEPS?

- Decision Tree, using Mel's thinking (Where/how do you source funding, what do you do with it & other questions that..).

SHARE BACK

- We all come with different experiences to this conversation
- Can come from 2 perspectives – business or community perspectives. Can be hard for others to see what's possible, what it is.
- Storytelling around examples can unleash thoughts and ideas
- This is partly a money conversation – to expand the beautiful work you are doing in our communities
- Remembering that SE is not transactional – First Nations wisdom is embedded in that – things flow to where they are needed.
- Things don't start as a SE – may be fully funded – so people don't see themselves as a SE – and it transforms towards a SE to become self-sustaining. How do we gather the Social entrepreneurs to explore that?
- Next steps: A decision tree. Questioning that lets people go through their own situation, and self identify

Next steps

- Feb 6 – Session 4
- Mel – draft invitation with link that people can share on socials
- Mel – to set up Google and Whats App group

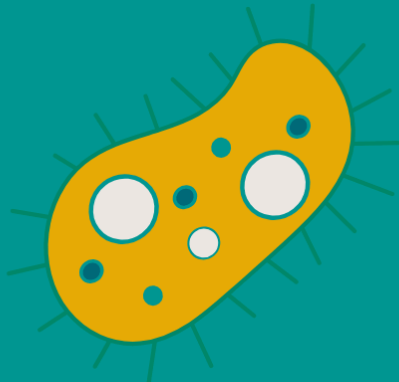
Check out

In one breath.... What will you carry with you?

- Appreciating the collective wisdom
- Encouraged by everyone's presence, feeling much better
- My favourite word of the week is entrepreneur

- Inspired connection can lead to so much
 - Joy having connected with folks, what else might emerge
 - Being with with other social entrepreneurs is joyful - I see you
-

Session 4



SOUTH COAST SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Peer learning &
support community

SESSION 4

Friday 6 February 2026

Who?

Present: Mel Geltch, David Newell, Kate Fitzgerald, Monique Carsons, Carina Severs, Peter Skelton, Pam Skelton, Marina Ely, James Bristow

Apologies: Paris Brooke, Michael Collins, Kate Derzanaulds



Check in

How is the social entrepreneur in you showing up this year?

Kate – showing up with fun and energy, within the timeframes

Marina – Tanja, excited to invest more time in the programs I have started on my property – residencies for artists. Going back to high school teaching. Need to invest in myself as well.

Peter – people and task both have to work – to be fulfilled and a functioning group.

Pam – checking in with people about how they are feeling about their role and state of mind – to be aware of how people are travelling.

Monique – some exciting stars – planting seeds and ideas about how groups and organisations can operate well. Strengths based funding – has led to me working that way more.

James – a determination to get my application to be registered as a SE – getting my committee together. Targeted business – reduce the burden on myself. Having conversations.

Mel – i can't solve things on my own – and i am showing up not embracing that. Only giving 80% of what I can, not 160%! Responding to need and only need.

Carina – I'm part of a team – feels good. Professional driving school SE is happening – Freedom Wheels. Working on the coordination and governance – making it happen.

Dave – Asking for help around my health issues. Due for open heart surgery the next few months. What help do I ask for, clearly, cleanly and invitationally? Doing less, but enough. Can I just take better notice of what is needed and respond to a small piece. Naming my role as an Elder role.

Story harvesting

Kate Fitzgerald graciously shared her story.

As co-founder of [Elemental Aim](#), an education charity, she shared their path and focus on shifting to a social enterprise.

We used [Listen For..](#) to help us 'harvest' and learn from her story, beyond the nuts and bolts of Elemental Aim. Each of us chose a 'listener' card, each with a different 'listening lens'. We shared back to Kate what we heard through that lens.

1. Hope: openness to potential and opportunity / Mel

It was everywhere!

What if the decision makers were the children in the schools?

2. Differences coexisting / Pam

A little picture of Kate being the source of big energy – along the cord the students who add energy – the dimmer switch. The potential to shine even more brightly – also to be toned down at times.

Picture here

3. Invitation / Peter

One laptop per child – one for everyone

What can we learn from there

4. Gratitude and appreciation / Marina

Two hands holding a nest – working together in love

(Marina could you share the picture with us?)

5. Equitable and Fair / Monique

The contrast can be substantial

A sense of injustice – can feel heavy

Little stepping stones to take into students lives

6. No theme / Dave

Passion and drive – thankful for the energetic that makes these things happen. Acknowledge the mothering of this initiative

7. Asking for Help / James

Schools and challenges that they face – the huge scope – taking on the issues

Can see that you are asking for help – a reminder to continue

A bigger whale might come to support

8 invitation / Carina

The world is our oyster! A taste of what we can be

Inspirational to hear what is going on

At the end, Kate got to reflect back

I got misty! Thank you to everyone – so powerful. It means a lot

The process was very fulfilling

Thanks everyone for your encouragement and reflections.

Open Space

Time for [Open Space](#), inviting others to host conversations about their burning issues.

Our marketplace

	Topic / question	Host

Room 1	Setting up and operating a social enterprise: blockages, important connections, learnings	Pete
Room 2	How can we maximize customers choosing a SE over other established businesses? How do we recognise and promote our value?	Carina
Room 3	Are we willing to have the hard conversations around money, in order to make some?	Mel
Lounge	Not sure, and want to take a break and hang out with others? Get comfy in the main lounge :)	Self hosted

Setting up and operating a social enterprise: blockages, important connections, learnings

- *getting it up and running, gaining enthusiasm, energy for maintenance. Learnings, blockages and advice from people who are ahead in the SE process. Hosted by Peter*

WHO CAME? Pam, Peter, Kate

NOTES

From Kate

- Getting legal structures correct and a good match with your project from the start as it is too hard to change later
- Tried with not paying out for as long as possible to benefit schools as much as possible
- Tapped into pro- lo- flo-bono advice from lawyers
- Universities – doing courses, exploring scholarships, engaging students in projects
- Carly – CEO of Social Enterprise NSW ACT – she is based in Wollongong very helpful. Opportunities for women.
- Collaboration and connections eg with local Red Cross to build trusted connections, and could get you out of your habits.

From Pam and Peter

- Shared about projects that were running or had run in Eden and district

NEXT STEPS

Sharing links with Kate and contact details

How do we recognise and promote our value?

How can we maximize customers choosing a SE over other established businesses?

Hosted by Carina

WHO CAME? Carina, Marina

NOTES

- **Branding**

- Recognise collaborators
- Recognise competition
- Wise marketers
- Communication appropriate
- Who Benefits and How
- The specific problem we are solving
- The business model sustains the Mission of your Org
- Why this solution is best or better than alternatives
- What will the measurable outcomes be eg \$, equality
- The proof we can deliver

Are we willing to have the hard conversations around money, in order to make some?

Hosted by Mel

WHO CAME? Mel, Mon, Dave, Marina

IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION

- We just need to have them – we'll never be ready!
- Lets bring all of our limiting beliefs, lack of clarity
- Sometimes bigger than it has to be
- Awkward always feels better on the other side
- Could start small

THEMES

- It's not as simple as mixing business and not for profits to come up with social enterprises – they come from two different value systems, mindsets. That difference shows up. Sometimes people are on different planets – grassroots community connectors or business people
- From the grassroots perspective – what are the things we need to shift?
- "I cant ask for money"
- What is it worth?
- So many elements – what it takes
- Do you want really meaningful sustainable jobs for people in your community?
- People do want to help..
- Pay what it takes – articulate that.
- Volunteer contribution value
- Power structures – unless you are a corporate person.. Us and them story
- Triangle – How do we shift from I to we?
- Unravelling a whole paradigm
- Collectively lift people up
- People want to do good and contribute, don't know how to help. The way they are helping is not helpful.
- Our strong why
- Storytelling – the Mega wealthy (philanthropists) love the little stories. Mixed with data. And its the everyday people who we need to hear the stories, so they use the social enterprise.
- Shift from doing good for no \$ to ask for \$
- People buy stories

- We are entitled to ask for \$ -

WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE STILL HOLD?

- How are we honoured for what we bring?
- What gets in our way? What stops us?
- How do we ask for help?

Next session

- March 6 - Session 5
- Mel - draft invitation with link that people can share on socials
- Mel - to set up Google and Whats App group

Check out

#Hashtag it What's one thing you'll take with you from today?

#starttheconversation

#askforhelpcositsthere

#newunderstanding

#puregratitude

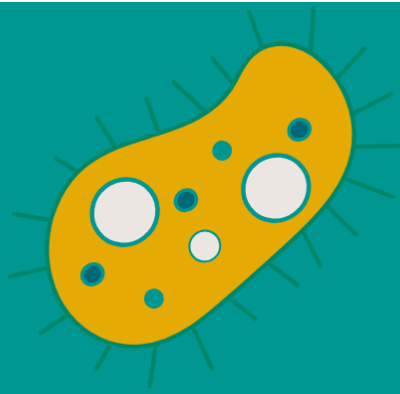
#starttheconversation

#cracktheegg

#branding

#lotsofideas

Session 5



SOUTH COAST SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Peer learning &
support community

SESSION 5

Friday 6 March 2026

Who?

Present: Mel Geltch, Paris Brooke, Peter Skelton, Kate Fitzgerald, Pam Skelton, Carina Severs
Apologies: David Newell, Monique Carsons, James Bristow, Michael Collins, Marina Ely

Check in

Round 1

From 1-10 (1 being terrible, 10 being awesome), how are you showing up today? And what colour are you?

- 6, yellow
- 5 beige... haha!
- 8 purple
- 6 and gumleaf green

Round 2

What are you still curious about? What are you curious about now?

- What geographical limitations are there for our gathering? What collaboration opportunities
- Very curious about different models and revenue streams. And how we get businesses for good, in this region, to connect and support each other
- What are our sources when we start, how do we construct financials, structures etc?

Story harvesting

Paris Brooke: The Wilderness Collective, Mallacoota

[Video](#)



Listening reflections

We listened to Paris' story through different lenses, using Listen For... cards

1. Vulnerability and trust – Genesis of where you are at. Amazing things can come through vulnerability that existed and made apparent through the fires, a catalyst for amazing opportunities. Thriving through trust you've established.
(concentric circles) – you never know where your impact ends..

2. Invitation – you know Mallacoota well. Your sphere of influence is quite local? There would be many places who haven't thought of this. How could your experience help others? Connections with Access Centre in Eden / Corryong. My invitation is to find other places like Corryong and further your impact.

3. Care and wellbeing – In between the lines, the volunteer and personal investment of a group of people. Care and wellbeing for the community, and learning over time – what would care and wellbeing look like for us?

Storyteller's reflection

I really like that process.

5 of us have done it voluntarily. Mostly whole of malacoota runs on volunteerism. Exhaustion. It comes at personal cost. With small towns there is almost an expectation there will be volunteerism. They would never ask for city people to volunteer to do a professional job, and yet ask us a lot to do that. We try not to ask for volunteers for community.

Community were lucky with a lot of bushfire funding, created an expectation of freebies and hand outs. We have had free access to art things, sports things, exercise classes, amazing and great at getting people together, but the point that people assume they will get it for free. Down to printing costs. Every dollar we make we earn, through hard work, maybe not appreciated. There are people who will happy pay it otherwise.. An interesting outcome.

Conversation

We didn't record, and here are some notes:

An unusual circumstance that the main st held so tightly. If we continued to rent, that could sell and we could get kicked out at any time .

More and more communities are starting to develop their own assets. To take futures into their own hands.

How do you organise, what is your governance model?

Work integrated social enterprise.. ACNC. Inc association. We didn't want to formalise, but needed structure to enter a lease on temp space. Easiest, most

We didn't have time on our side.

2 new board members. Because now in a paid role, they can volunteer with passion. More specific board members. Has eased things in that dynamic,

Collective leadership type model.. Haven't had much disagreement

We're all very different and bring complementary skills.

Community, a lot of groups were meeting collectively, continues in an adhoc way. Helped us understand each other, means we look out for each other now. Really great for the community.

Where did you get the bulk of the money from?

Very fortunate to meet someone, being a private donor, giving us a quarter of that amount. A kickstart, helped us applying, already raised,

Did a major raffle in summer season. A lot of hard work, got prizes donated, but it meant wheeling a barrow, in 30 degree heat. We raised about \$7K don't know if would do that again,

A lot of targeted approaches. A reasonable chunk fro a philanthropic body, only because building a relationship for several they could see how close we were to

Selling bricks to locals, it took everything out of the coffers to do it. Its like we're starting again.

What have we started? Looking at every which way we could grow..

Tenants income is stable but not yet covering overheads. Still reliant on grants, it is a constant frustrating game. Energy of sources. We want to get away from it, and not going to for some time.

What now?

My role finishes at the end of October, no guarantees of ways of trying to get extended. How are we going to fund a position to keep things rolling? The rural kicker, insurance and costs behind the

scenes.

Rumours and assumptions – small towns run on them. Fear. Concern from original businesses. CHanged now, good support. I'd love for them to reach out for more support and learning. Focussed at new enterprises, women to find flexible solutions. Lack of childcare and more.

Cost stops access for micro businesses. To support desks for hire, for having to pay. Push / pull. We don't want to exclude people, and we also need to stay So many community organisations struggle with.

Empowerment – confidence

Social enterprise movement

Very quickly you find out who the key club is. A very large difference between a large work integrated social enterprise. Still churning govt contracts. Impacts , evaluation monitoring, totally understand its important. How can you achieve that in a on 2 man band?... A lot of advisories, intermediaries, got great knowledge. Not a lot of 'I'm going to draw from something different'. Don't see a lot of small out of the way people and being invited in..

Regionally, a lot of similar challenges, good will, people wanting to connect and collaborate. Great groundswell, and shifts. We're all time poor and energy depleted.

Other co-working spaces. John – Bega coworking space. Cobargo. Fish tank in Narooma, Batemans Bay, and Worklife social enterprise Berry and north. Could connect you all? John Watkin Bega Co Work Space John@begachamber.com.au

Working with Community

Mallacoota seemed to be very organised early on. The night of the day after, people already gathering for the start of what would become this recovery association. Everyone who knew someone who was a chair or committee person – for a list on the thinking group. A tackle... we couldnt wait around for govt to make it happen.

44 candidates for 12 reps. 780 community members voted. We're a community of 1100–1200 people. Almost even male / female all spread of community. 4th committee now, down to 5 people. Where are we at? Houses have been rebuilt. Key items have been ticked off. MADRA as an association had a very clear mandate and rules around recovery. Rejuvenation, not necessarily recovery.

Close relationship with them. They don't have pots of money anymore. They managed to get DGR and benevolent status. Not in interest to let that go. Remain in holding pattern, refreshing volunteers, keeping basics happening.

Some merging of organisations / community groups. Could go a lot further.. How could fund a town administrator?

Collaboration

Wisdom council, a council of community. How could we come together to share overheads – umbrella organisation to address needs and remain independent. Who takes the lead in how that would work? Collaboration on shared challenges and projects

Start in community, or like organisations.

Several orgs – same volunteers. I have insurance 4 times, doesn't make sense.

Overarching community org

Body corporate? Community corporate?

Need some planning and quite an investment, level of trust.

How do you maintain equitable access.

More communities in desperate need

Volunteers, dollars – they see the burn out, they cant financially give that time

Things have to change. New structures to keep communities alive and thriving.

Conversation summary

Wilderness Collective Journey and Growth

Paris shared the journey of the Wilderness Collective, which began after the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires devastated Malacoota. The community formed MADRA (Malacoota and District Recovery Association) to address immediate recovery needs, but five local women identified a longer-term challenge: the lack of digital infrastructure and internet connectivity needed for remote work and business operations. The Wilderness Collective was established in 2022 as an incorporated association, focusing on three key pillars: co-working space, knowledge development, and enterprise building. In 2023, they actively engaged with the community by running 34 workshops and building trust through consistent delivery of promised activities.

Digital Hub Space Acquisition

Paris described the organisation's search for a suitable space to replace their previous part-time digital hub, which was inconvenient for users with varying schedules. After exploring multiple options including sheds and land conversions, they identified an opportunity to rent a property in Main Street Malacoota with an option to purchase within 12 months. The organisation successfully raised funds through various means including grants, philanthropy, and community efforts, allowing them to purchase the property outright by March of the previous year.

Community Space Transformation Initiative

Paris discussed the transformation of a community space in Malacoota, which has been renovated into a hub for local businesses, co-working, and students. They highlighted the importance of philanthropic support, local embedding, and flexibility in programming to address the diverse needs of the community. Challenges include managing mission creep, working with partners, logistics in remote areas, and securing consistent funding. Paris outlined efforts to build multiple revenue streams, including tenant leases and potential backyard pods, to sustain operations and support staff.

Remote Micro Enterprises Australia Program

Paris discussed their organisation's initiative called Remote Micro Enterprises Australia, which aims to support women in remote and rural communities to build and grow their micro-businesses through a 90-day program including masterclasses and peer coaching. The program had a successful taster series in Far East Gippsland with 16 participants, and plans to run one or two full programs starting late May, initially focusing on East Gippsland. Paris expressed interest in exploring partnerships and collaborations, particularly with organisations on the South Coast of NSW, as their organisation is closer to the border than the rest of Victoria.

Next session

- Session 6: Friday 22 May 2026 1-3pm

Check out

What has shifted for you as a result of this / these conversations?

- Carina – a renewed interest in our organisation becoming more independent, such as the Wilderness Collective has done. Finding our own premises, reigniting that need we have in the community. Thank you Paris.
 - Paris – Friends over the border, and more of a network of like minded supporters.
 - Peter – between the lines. Whether a social enterprise, NFP, volunteer group. If you want to get support, your story is so important. Monitoring of your impact, whether metrics, individual tales of success. Prove your point. Both are needed
 - Pam – encouragement of what can be achieved with a relatively small number of dedicated people with shared values and ambition, grit to get up again. To be encouraged by those stories, reflect and reiterate stories of success and encouragement.
 - Mel – seeing more of the complexity, more of the living system that is the social enterprise ecosystem on the South Coast. Overwhelmed and also feel a stirring of something collaborative. Really hearing the needs
 - Kate – Don't know what exists to meet others, the inspiration, the what as well. I had a hunch these stories were out there. Lovely hearing them here
-

Session 6



SOUTH COAST SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Peer learning &
support community

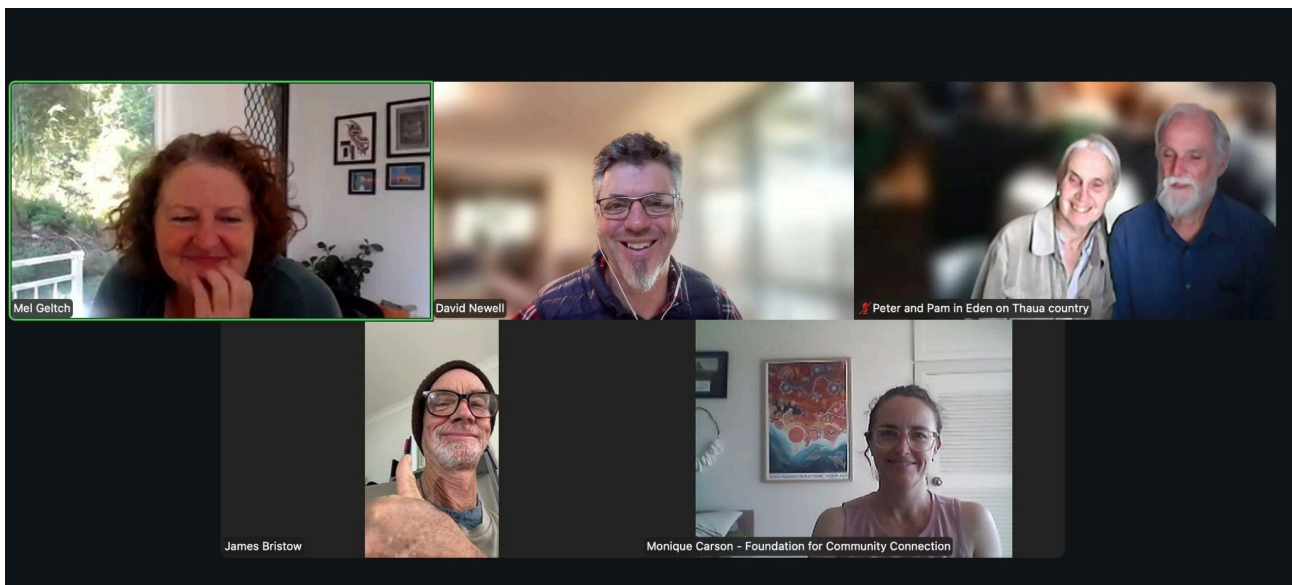
SESSION 6

Friday 29 May 2026

Who?

Present: Mel Geltch, Dave Newell, Peter Skelton, Kate Fitzgerald, Pam Skelton, Monique Carsons, James Bristow

Apologies: Michael Collins, Marina Ely, Paris Brooke, Carina Severs, Kate Derzarnaulds



Check in

From 1-10 (1 being terrible, 10 being awesome), how are you showing up today?

- About a 7 - I'm split, 3 is with my daughter. I really enjoy these groups.
- 8 or a 9.
- 10 out of 10 today. Really happy to reconnect with you all.
- 7 - hoping for higher by the end of the day, ticking off some things before the weekend
- 7 today. Bit weary. Finding it hard to make decisions!

- 6 – been sick following surgery.

Highs and lows

What's one thing that's going really well in social entrepreneur land for you?

Share a microstory

Kate: A really successful pilot with 2 schools – so far so good. I never thought.. A 17 year old boy said the platform is cool. A win I'm going to hold onto for a while!

Peter: What's always good, the community pantry going so well. All volunteers, lots of behind the scenes organising. Look at it working, people donating and it's meeting needs.

James: I've been carrying the Valiant Coffee in Cobargo. We are progressing well to changing towards a social enterprise. Now to hold our first meeting with a group of supporters. We have 5 of us, to show everyone what a social enterprise is. Nothing will change much, people will come in. 2 staff. My conviction is strengthening, that as a sole trader, this is a good thing to do. It's what it already is. Community connection, venue for bands groups, and for training. Just hired 3rd trainee. Hope to get some funding to have another. Looking forward to handing it over to a group to free me up. That's where I'm – we are at.

Monique: Definitely in a curious state of observation where things take us. A Community Foundation running. Lovely gateway for what will emerge in future. Capacity building. High school relationships, and youth readiness. I was at a forum in Melbourne last week, lovely tour of QV markets, purpose precinct social enterprise guide with routes to take trips in Victoria. Each region has 3 maps, suggests all of these social enterprises to visit. They're happy to support others in other places.

Dave: Something is emerging for me now. Been working recently in suicide prevention and mental health space. Seeing what's needed in that space. How does my social entrepreneurship show up in these areas in my community, as I get older?

Mel: Just back from Canada and deep learning – AoH training with strong indigenous presence. How do we bring in both ways – black and white? Growing in confidence and capacity in this space. How do we work with all the perspectives? Have been in spaces where I was stretched – connecting – lifted my spirits.

What's one challenge that you are facing right now?

Share a microstory

Monique – still believe the challenge is around language and awareness. Some people don't even know, or don't see the value of the language. I'd love to explore some ways to overcome that. Activate that in our community expo each September? There are opportunities for the community

to see all of these enterprises in a different light and support them in different and encouraging ways.

James – I feel a need to pass my business on to a SE. A challenge to prioritise that. Even calling a first meeting, choosing a time during the week that suits everyone (knowing everyone is a volunteer). Just my own reluctance, also countered with some urgency I feel. I got help with the bureaucratic challenge of registering, and tech, so far. Once we're a group there'll be someone more expert to take on that!

Kate – challenge is connecting with as many educators as we can, to validate, improve and optimise the platform itself. Anyone associated with schools.

Peter – like many orgs at early stage. Not in a professional org with huge policies procedures, culture of behaviour. Working with volunteers who expect things to be casual and meet their needs. Adding on admin on the top of everything. Have to treat volunteers as if they were employees. Job descriptions, who do I go to? A lot of overheads, don't want to tighten things down and needing to. Balancing all of those things – especially as we grow.

Dave – Knowing what to pick, do, when there are so many things. Such big needs everywhere. A focus thing.. If it could focus I could be even more impactful.

Mel – as a Coop we need 5 active members – we have 2 and 1 going on holiday. Explorers take a lot of energy. Recent experiences have been draining. Paused searching for now. Trying to model new ways of working – still not widely embraced in Australia. What would I do if there wasn't a Percolab in Aus? I'm in the right place. Still working on social enterprise certification – a block – the bureaucracy and admin burden.

Asking for and offering help

Asks and offers round

James – ASK: help with a timeline and planning for the realising of the Valiant coffee SE – making concrete my plan and timeline.

OFFER: listening for those who are ready to start but are lacking confidence or bravery

Mel – ASK: need to write 2 articles for this learning community – would love a co-writer, kick up the butt, some feedback – done in the next 2-3 weeks.

OFFER collect, curate and share a library of resources, links etc to support SEs. to receive others ideas, links and share. Open to all asks and in practice to saying no if needed.

Peter– ASK: had a conflict situation with parking and paths, two divergent views. Could have asked the two people to help to create a policy.

OFFER Community pantry in cobargo – resources, documentation etc to share.

Monique – ASK: Someone to think creatively with me regarding Social enterprises in Ulladulla at the Community Expo: how to highlight awareness and encourage active communication & pride in our local social enterprise offerings.

OFFER Motivation & Feedback on Social enterprise Article/Story

OFFER: To share some Social Enterprise stories & resources within the CCSS (Community Connect South Shoalhaven) Resource Hub & Newsletter.

Kate – ASK: needing feedback on our idea.

OFFER: happy to help out with any. And Idea generation, attention, and giving feedback (I know how crucial it is!

Dave

ASK: broader world for some coaching – re focusing. Where do I focus my energies?

OFFER: Would offer most things and practice saying no. Enriching: giving feedback on ideas and listening, to hold space.

QUICK RESPONSES

Mel: offer a Flow Game as a coach to support you Dave – In June

Reflection circle

As this experiment wraps up – what is needed and feels more possible now?

Mel – awareness of this work – the SE trail. How do we grow the list? Some kind of space – network/partnership collective – meet 4 times a year – just want to hang out with people who care about this. More and more needed in the world – don't want to lose this. I want to stay connected.

Kate – thanks for coordinating. I want to stay in touch. One part, these asks could be incorporated in to a group session. Working together to support and design together. Lovely to have met you all, and really hope we can stay connected.

Dave – continued conversations – connection frame. Quite strong, come together to support a particular enterprise. Peer coaching. Someone brings something to work on, decent time to work on something. My own draw to supporting people's asks, issues, support, get past a block. I feel connection formed with this group.. Something about normalising of social enterprise or entrepreneurship might mean, just doing it and being each other's back ups. A little structured, maybe not as often? It something is planned, something to work towards.

Pam – offer to write something for feedback, conclusion. Would be so very positive. So very reassuring up;ifting, redirecting in a positive way. Resurrecting what we've learned in past gatherings, i find so helpful in keeping us focussed and willing to persevere transitioning from more hierarchical modes, what I find is very gentle, structured, gentle and generous. I have appreciated that so much. Wonderful, thank you all and happy to put something in writing.

Peter – anytime someone mentions any of your organisations, I get ideas of how things could be that I would never have thought about. It opened up for me alternative ways of operating, ways of thinking about what is needed at the time.

Mon – need for resources. Advantage of people connecting as social enterprise. While I like stories, a checklist.. Get to the point. Advantages check list. Need: Resources to link people to.... Maybe even a 1 page of the advantages of communicating your Social Enterprise operations Inspiring and supporting people to understand. A momentum thing.. We're close. A lot of people right on the cusp of being interested, unlock those. Build these momentum. We could build it.. A caution too – so broad and diverse and what's possible. Wondering if zone into more specific things to engage others.

James – thanks for all asking for help – I need to shift out of sole trader mindset into group mindset. Quite revolutionary. Take that and become part of the team. What's possible.. To better discuss what we're doing.

Second Round

Mel – a place to work on things together – in-person or on-line. Doing some shared work builds momentum. The value of regional SEs sticking together. Expanding the work.

Monique – Where is the meeting in the middle between different use of language around SEs? – city and Country differences. Is the language around SE more important to use, or the work?

Peter – A trust or relationship that is built – first thing to look at.

Mel – what other words and expressions are you hearing for Social Enterprise?

Business for good, alternative enterprise, transitioning to a different/better way of thinking, regenerative business, being more human together, more community focused business model, financial sustainability, community enterprise, purposeful

Next steps

- Mel to wrap up the project – reporting and sharing our learnings and harvest with Social Enterprise Australia
- Mel (with support from Kate and Mon) draft 2 articles of our learnings
- Mel to set up google email list and whatsapp group to stay in touch

Check out

What are you grateful for, as you leave today?

- Pam – For you people and the relationship that we have and are striving to maintain
- Peter – For being able to do it online – attendance is easier and more often
- Monique – Little opportunities to ponder thoughts and ideas, doing it on-line

- James – Grateful for seeing myself as part of a group not just an individual acting as. Thank you for continuing to invite me.
 - Dave – for the little project that emerged that allowed us. For your work Mel, for everyone who came in whatever capacity. For the sense of core members... for the folks who want to go into the groan zone, uncertainty, working in complex uncertain spaces, willingness to go there. Look for the gems of clarity, and feed forward. Doing community building work
 - Mel – to see your faces today, the acceptance and learning, to hear the value of the work and our relationships, and mostly, the friendships.
-