

Media Release

The Hon Wade Noonan MP

Minister for Industry and Employment

Minister for Resources



Wednesday, 3 May, 2017

THE NEW ERA OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE IN VICTORIA

More funding for Victoria's nation-leading social enterprise sector will help jobseekers of all backgrounds get the employment opportunities they deserve.

Visiting the YMCA Bridge Project today, Minister for Industry and Employment Wade Noonan said the *Victorian Budget 2017/18* included \$5.8 million in new funding to boost the number of social enterprises and create new jobs.

The funding injection adds to the \$5 million announced earlier this year to support implementation of the *Social Enterprise Strategy*. The unprecedented \$10.8 million in support for social enterprises will:

- create a statewide network of social enterprises to boost collaboration and innovation
- deliver a major skills development program for organisations to grow their workforce
- increase opportunities for social enterprises to supply goods and services to government

The YMCA Bridge Project breaks down barriers to employment by providing young ex-offenders with the support, training and mentoring they need to get a fresh start.

Young people are given employment opportunities to reduce the risk of reoffending and improve self-esteem.

The YMCA's social enterprise – ReBuild – employs at-risk young people at its maintenance business, with staff involved in gardening, landscaping, painting and rubbish removal.

The YMCA Bridge Project has already helped place 75 young people into meaningful jobs.

Victoria is home to Australia's largest collection of social enterprises – with about 5,000 organisations operating statewide, employing around 75,000 Victorians. Nationwide, social enterprise activity is estimated to make up 2-3 per cent of GDP.

You can read the *Social Enterprise Strategy* at www.economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/social-enterprise

Quotes attributable to Minister for Industry and Employment Wade Noonan

"It's an exciting time for social enterprises in Victoria, with more than \$10 million in funding to support this thriving sector – creating jobs and business opportunities."

"We are leading the way with Australia's first-ever strategy for social enterprises."

Quotes attributable to YMCA Bridge Project Manager Mick Cronin

"The Bridge Project engages young people at a very vulnerable time in their life – whether it's contact with the justice system or the cycle of poverty and disadvantage."

"By involving them in positive education and training, we reduce the risk of reoffending and help them contribute to their local community."

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