

Social Traders

Unlocking business for good



House Select Committee on Workforce
Australia Employment Services

Submission to inquiry into Workforce Australia Employment Services

July 2023



Relied on by over
500 certified social
enterprises



Business for good

Trusted by over 140
of Australia's largest
businesses



Partner for
multiple
governments



Backed by
Australia's leading
philanthropists



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“What you do has support from across the parliament. For those on the business side, you’re celebrating businesses. And for those who go into politics to help the most disadvantaged, you’re doing just that. The work of social enterprise spans the economy.”

Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury, March 2023

“We urge the Federal Government to engage in a meaningful and direct way with Social Traders, who will provide credible information, a sustainable business model and robust economic justification. One such example is certification, which we believe is a ready-made solution to de-risk investment for government and collect data for decision making, and we advocate for it to be immediately adopted.”

Vedran Drakulic, CEO, Gandel Foundation, January 2023

Executive Summary

Social enterprises are businesses that exist for good. They deliver jobs, training and pathways to employment for the most disadvantaged Australians. They are a ready-made solution to support 44,000 jobs for Australia's most marginalised job seekers by 2030.

This submission specifically relates to Terms of Reference¹ section:

(b) the extent to which Workforce Australia Employment Services delivers services in a way that is fair, leaves no one behind, respects individuals' diverse needs, and supports job seekers into secure work, in particular, its support for long term unemployed and young people; and

(c) other matters in relation to Workforce Australia Employment Services.

Social enterprises are an untapped resource for the Australian Government to deliver training and employment outcomes for some of the most difficult to place jobseekers. Certified social enterprises already support 14,000 marginalised workers.

Because social enterprise sits between traditional business and charity, many fall through the gaps in the support infrastructures that exist. This includes current employment services.

Social enterprise will deliver significant returns if considered and added to Workforce Australia as a valuable driver of employment for those hardest to place. Social enterprises fill the gap between supported and mainstream employment and use innovation and trade to deliver significant positive employment outcomes.

Social Traders certification has been built over five years with sector and state government endorsement. It is credible and rigorous while also being inclusive of all social enterprise legal structures, all stages of development and all impact models. The data collected by Social Traders offers unmatched outcomes measurement framework with over five years of longitudinal data and an evidence base to quantify pathway and employment outcomes as well as return on investment savings to society.

Additional policy levers can support further growth in the social enterprise sector which will drive better participation of marginalised job seekers. As part of a social enterprise national strategy, social procurement is a key mechanism at the government's disposal to enable social enterprises to deliver jobs and training outcomes. 140 businesses and governments have already committed to social enterprise procurement, including three states (VIC, NSW, QLD) and one territory (ACT). In the last five years \$607 million has been spent with certified social enterprises that delivered 4,902 employment outcomes for marginalised Australians².

Now is the time for the Australian Government to leverage the social and economic value of social enterprise.

Recommendations Social Traders can support and evidence:

1. **Social enterprise outcome payments:** Workforce Australia invest in social enterprises to deliver employment outcomes for marginalised Australians
2. **Certification:** utilise Social Traders certification to de-risk investment from government, protect against social washing and ensure genuine social enterprises are supported
3. **Data:** measure and monitor economic and social return through data and research to ensure government funds are effective and the success of government investment can be tracked and reported.
4. **Social procurement:** develop a Commonwealth Social Procurement Framework, including explicit support for certified social enterprises, to use the money you're spending today to deliver social and economic outcomes

¹ Terms of Reference, House of Representatives Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services, found at https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Workforce_Australia_Employment_Services/WorkforceAustralia/Terms_of_Reference

² Social Traders Impact Report FY22, found at <https://www.socialtraders.com.au/our-impact/>

Who is Social Traders?

Our vision is a thriving social enterprise sector that significantly contributes to a more inclusive and equitable Australia.

We are a DGR1 not-for-profit intermediary. We have supported the social enterprise sector since 2008 through capacity building, start-up support, advocacy, networking and finance. Today we work with over 500 certified social enterprises.

We play three core roles nationally, based on over a decade of listening to social enterprise sector needs:

- **Certification:** we're Australia's only certifier of social enterprises.
- **Data:** we collect the deepest and richest data on the social enterprise sector, including social and economic impact.
- **Access to markets:** we lead Australia's social enterprise procurement marketplace. That includes capability building for social enterprises, advocacy and education for business, supporting government policy development and implementation, and connections between social enterprises and buyers.

We are endorsed by over 140 corporate and government members³ including leading Australian businesses such as Coles, Westpac, Suncorp, Lendlease and Downer, as well as the governments of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Australian Capital Territory. Research shows that 86% of businesses expect their spend with social enterprises to increase as more governments and customers catch on⁴.

We have the backing of some of Australia's leading philanthropists including Gandel Foundation, Ian Potter Foundation and Helen McPherson Smith Trust.

We have a 10-year plan to unlock over \$5.5b in demand for social enterprises by 2030. This will enable social enterprises to create over 44,000 jobs for the most marginalised Australians. At the end of financial year 2022, social procurement demand and impact is tracking ahead of predictions. Crucially the second half of the decade factors in Federal Government policy support to enable remaining growth opportunities.

Why social enterprise?

A social enterprise is a business, for good. They trade like any other business, but exist specifically to make the world a better place. Social enterprises do three things:

- Have a social, cultural or environmental purpose
- Generate a substantial portion of their income from trade
- Invest profit and resources into their purpose so that public/community benefit outweighs private benefit
-

There are 12,000 social enterprises across Australia. They contribute \$21.3 billion to the economy, and employ 206,000 people⁵. Social enterprises invest 29% of their revenue into delivering impact⁶. They are larger on average than traditional businesses and charities⁷.

Through the Social Traders social enterprise dataset, we know that employment generating social enterprises annually contribute/provide:

- \$211m in direct wrap-around supports for beneficiaries
- \$217.9m in wages and superannuation paid to beneficiary employees
- 14k beneficiaries directly employed
- 13.7m hours of direct employment for beneficiaries (direct paid employment)
- 1.4m hours of employability-skills training provided to beneficiaries

³ *Social Traders business and government members*, Social Traders (2023). Available at: <https://www.socialtraders.com.au/business-and-government-members>

⁴ *The State of Social Procurement in Australia and New Zealand*, CSI Swinburne, in partnership with Akina, Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply, IPA & Social Traders (2021). Available at: https://www.ipa.com.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/ipa_social_procurement_report_nobleeds.pdf?sfvrsn=c6ef4a92_2

⁵ *Business for good: the size and economic contribution of social enterprise in Australia*, Social Enterprise Australia (2022). Available at: <https://socialenterpriseaustralia.org.au/business-for-good/>

⁶ *Pace22: the profile of Australia's certified social enterprises*, Social Traders (2022). Available at: <https://www.socialtraders.com.au/news/pace2022>

⁷ By employee headcount, 6% of ABS businesses are medium or large, 25% of ACNC charities are medium or large, compared to 42% of certified social enterprises being medium or large.

Pace22: the profile of Australia's certified social enterprises, Social Traders (2022). Available at: <https://www.socialtraders.com.au/news/pace2022>

Social enterprise outcome payments

We recommend Workforce Australia invest in social enterprises to deliver employment outcomes for marginalised Australians

Social enterprises are businesses that exist for the primary purpose of solving a specific social, cultural or environmental problem. More than half (currently 53%) of certified social enterprises have a purpose related to employment for the most marginalised. Employment is an area where social enterprises are well-placed to contribute to change and solutions.

Social Traders groups the impact of employment generating social enterprises into three broad categories:

1. Training – where the social enterprise provides training/mentoring to marginalised people with the aim of increasing work-readiness.
2. Direct employment – where the social enterprise provides direct employment and wrap-around supports to marginalised people within the social enterprise.
3. Pathways to employment – where the social enterprise assists marginalised people into employment outside of the social enterprise with an external or host employer, or assists them to return/progress to further study. Also represented in this category are social enterprises that provide tailored recruitment and placement services for a particular marginalised cohort.

The most common beneficiary groups supported by certified social enterprises generating employment outcomes are people with disabilities, new migrants and refugees, and marginalised youth.

For example, **Streat** is a certified social enterprise that generates employment outcomes through all three categories; direct employment, training and pathways. They run various programs and services, with a focus on providing young people facing barriers to employment with a pathway to paid employment. Below are two of their core programs:

- **Fast-Track to Work** is a supported 8-week program for young people facing barriers to employment who are seeking work in hospitality or in horticulture. This program includes workplace experience, fun and interactive work readiness workshops, social activities and individual case support. Our work readiness curriculum covers topics like self-care, basic living skills, budgeting, healthy relationships, teamwork, emotional regulation, legal rights and interview skills.
- **Paid to Work** is a 9-month program offering young people who complete our Fast-Track To Work program an opportunity to transition into 20-25 hours a week of paid employment in hospitality or horticulture with our employment partners. Graduates who progress into Paid To Work receive intensive post-placement support from STREAT's Youth Transitions Team. They're also paid award wages (or above), receive on-the-job training, and are often encouraged to continue employment with our partner employers once the formal program has completed.

Xceptional is a certified social enterprise providing recruitment services specialising in employment for neurodiverse people. They provide a tailored interview/screening process designed to create accessible and inclusive workplaces, providing support both to the employer and candidate throughout.

Below is a quote from one of the people placed into employment through Xceptional:

"The most supportive recruitment agency I've ever dealt with, recognising the concerns of neurodivergent workers, and placing them with organisations who recognise our unique value. The placing is followed up with coaching of individual and organisation to ensure that the fit works both ways."

Social enterprises can be found across the country in all industries, creating impact for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities and your electorates. Some more examples of certified social enterprises include:

- **Green Collect** (Yarraville & Braybrook VIC) offer environmental solutions for surplus office items to divert waste from landfill while also offering opportunities to long term unemployed as well as new migrants
- **Vanguard Laundry** (Toowoomba, QLD) a world-class social enterprise commercial laundry, purpose built to provide jobs and career opportunities for people with an experience of mental illness who struggle to secure work.

- **Clean Force** (Clyde NSW, Heidelberg West VIC & Ulverstone TAS) deliver commercial cleaning and grounds maintenance and had great success working with Social Traders Member CPB Contractors on Parramatta Light Rail. [Video case study](#) can be found ([click here](#)) on our website⁸.
- **Renew Property Maintenance** (West Perth WA) is a social enterprise with a mission to connect at-risk young people with entry-level paid employment opportunities.
- **Kick Start Cafe** (Prestons & Macquarie Park NSW) an initiative of PAYCE Foundation operates a fleet of food trailers on construction sites to provide employment and training to young people from social housing and facing barriers to employment.
- **WV Technologies** (Canberra, ACT, Welshpool WA and 4 other locations) “was the first company in Australia to obtain NAID AAA certification, the highest security clearance for all data destruction and sanitisation services”⁹. WV Tech are a Supply Nation and Social Traders certified social enterprise employing Indigenous young people.
- **Mambourin Business Solutions** (Melton & Bacchus Marsh VIC) provide opportunities for people living with a disability to develop new skills and to form professional as well as social networks
- **Collective Leisure** (Centennial Park NSW) is Australia’s first social enterprise leisure management company offering facilities management, physical activity & wellbeing programs and training & employment services, within the leisure industry.
- **Mylestones Solutions Garden Crew** (Beenleigh, QLD) employs people with disabilities in small commercial garden and maintenance crews across Queensland
- **Now and Not Yet Inc** (Warrandyte, VIC) serving the community through a cafe, catering, and events. The business has expanded to multiple sites, coffee roasting and sales and events by Tamil Feast. All profits are put back into supporting the Warrandyte community with a particular focus on marginalized, disadvantaged and at-risk people.

Certification to de-risk government investment

We recommend that the Workforce Australia utilises Social Traders certification so that it can be used to verify social enterprises and de-risk government investment.

“Certification is critical. It is really important to make it as streamlined and easy as possible for everyone in the supply chain to not only be able to find social enterprises, but know that they are dealing with legitimate social enterprises that are delivering real impact”

- Amber O Connell, A/D Social and Economic Inclusion, Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

Social enterprises are diverse and take different legal forms. Social washing is becoming an increasing concern. Certification de-risks government investment in social enterprise by ensuring social enterprises are genuine. Certification also leads the market to strive for innovation that puts the public benefit ahead of private benefit and promotes dynamism in our economy.

Social Traders certification¹⁰ is world-leading. It has been developed and adapted over five years. It is:

- ✓ Backed by international research.
- ✓ Co-designed with Minter Ellison and EY.
- ✓ Overseen by an independent expert advisory group.
- ✓ Endorsed by the social enterprise sector, and adapted ongoing based on sector needs.
- ✓ Inclusive of all social enterprises models, legal structures and stages of development.



Certification has been used to de-risk social enterprise grants and support by the Australian Government, Victorian Government and Queensland Government.

⁸ Social Traders Hall of Fame, 2020 Winners, Social Procurement Business/Government Agency of the Year CPB Contractors at <https://www.socialtraders.com.au/news/social-traders-hall-of-fame>. Video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cwtuEJ-PHW&list=PL-9cMCeB4pErZrG1L1kHKBweXq4u10i&index=10&ab_channel=SocialTraders

⁹ *The Importance of Data Security (2021)*. Available at: <https://wvtech.com.au/>

¹⁰ *Social Enterprise Certification Guidance Notes and Standards*, Social Traders (2022). Available at: https://assets.socialtraders.com.au/downloads/FINAL-full-guidance-notes-16May22_2022-05-26-004207.pdf

Data for accurate reporting & innovation

We recommend that the Australian Government invest in data

“Social Traders ‘Pace’ provides rich data on certified social enterprises, to provide a clearer picture of social enterprise in Australia.”

- Jess Moore, CEO, Social Enterprise Australia

Data is essential to understand the impact social enterprise can create and enable learning and innovation.

Social Traders holds Australia’s largest dataset of verified social enterprises, growing at an average of 29% year on year. It’s the only dataset in Australia that:

- Includes economic *and* impact data, across 35 data points (see Appendix 1 for list of data points).
- Includes five years of longitudinal data (and is growing continuously).
- Includes individual data on *verified* social enterprises.
- Is inclusive of all social enterprise models, stages and legal structures.
- Is a live dataset that is continually updated (weekly).

The data held by Social Traders can be used to monitor the employment outcomes of social enterprises. It can be compared across regions, beneficiary groups and over time.

Social procurement to deliver employment outcomes

We recommend that the Australian Government create a social procurement policy that includes social enterprise and support for social procurement activity



Social procurement is one of government’s biggest levers to bring marginalised jobseekers into the labour market and create more opportunities for more Australians.

By harnessing money that is already being spent, both by government and business, social procurement provides a lever to address some of Australia’s critical economic challenges without adding to the Government’s budgetary pressures.

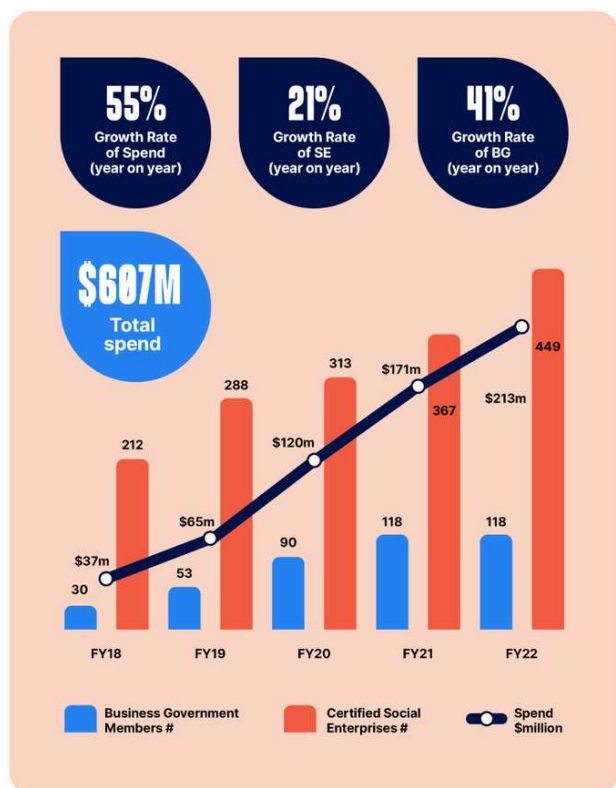
In 2016, 75% of social enterprises said that their biggest need was new access to markets and buyers¹¹. The Australian Government has the opportunity to buy from social enterprises and create policy that encourages industry to do the same. This will drive growth, generate social value beyond the value of the products being procured.

Social Traders is Australia’s leader in social enterprise procurement, with a robust proof of concept showing its viability and effectiveness.

¹¹ *Finding Australia’s Social Enterprise Sector 2016: Final Report*, Centre for Social Impact Swinburne & Social Traders (2016). Available at: <https://www.socialtraders.com.au/news/finding-australias-social-enterprise-sector-fases>

In the five years from FY2018 to FY2022, \$607 million was spent with certified social enterprises, and that has grown at an average of 55 per cent every year.

Social enterprise procurement, supported by Social Traders, is growing nationally every year



Australian Government proof of concept – Indigenous Procurement Policy

The Commonwealth Indigenous Procurement Policy (IPP) shows how social procurement can be done at Federal level. It includes:

- Annual targets for the number and value of contracts for Indigenous businesses from the Government.
- For contracts of a certain value, and for all contracts delivered in remote Australia, Indigenous businesses have the opportunity to demonstrate value for money before a general approach to market.
- Indigenous employment and business participation targets for contracts wholly delivered in Australia for contracts over a certain value in specific industries.

The IPP has generated over \$6.9 billion in contracting opportunities for Indigenous businesses since 2015. And it has led state government and corporate adoption of Indigenous procurement policies and practices.

There is significant opportunity to go further and drive even greater value from the Government's annual \$70 billion goods, services and construction expenditure. The Australian Government has yet to embrace the wider opportunity of social enterprise procurement.

Victorian Government proof of concept – Social Procurement Framework

The work of the Victorian State Government also sets an example. It has adopted a Social Procurement Framework that supports buying from Victorian social enterprises, Aboriginal businesses and other social benefit suppliers. It also set a 3% social procurement spend target on the \$30 billion Big Build pipeline. Victoria is the most mature social enterprise procurement market in Australia, accounting for 54% of all social enterprise procurement activity.

The Victorian Government funded Social Traders over four years. We leveraged the investment to deliver 223% in the value of services to the Victorian social enterprise sector through matched funding from philanthropy and trade.

Over four years \$156 million was spent with social enterprises. That created \$87 million in savings to society through:

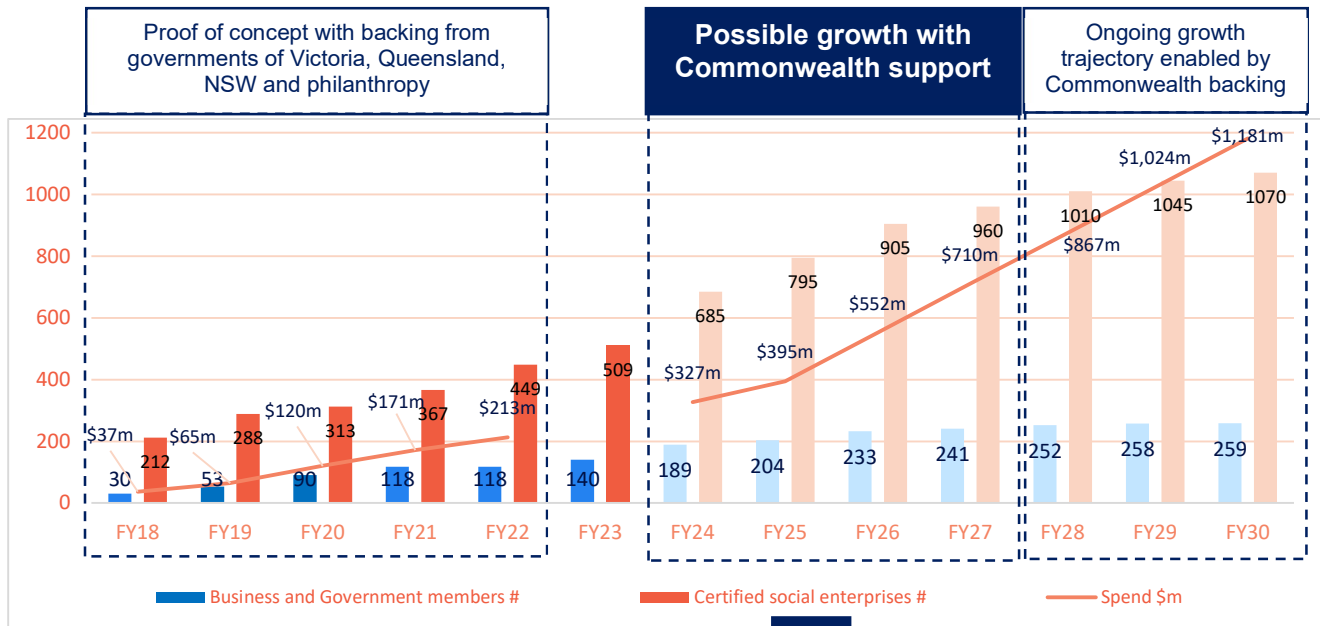
- 901 jobs for the most marginalised
- \$6.3 million in community services
- 207,000 hours of training for the most marginalised
- \$1.6 million in charitable donations

Return on Investment: additional value delivered beyond the goods and services being procured

Every million dollars spent on goods and services through social enterprise procurement returns:

- 7.6 jobs for the most marginalised
- 4,060 hours of training
- \$28,000 investment into community services
- \$4,000 donated to charity
- 155 tonnes of waste diverted from landfill

With Australian Government investment and social procurement policy we can grow spend with certified social enterprises to a cumulative \$5.5b nationally.



FY24-27 outcomes enabled by Australian Government investment in social procurement

\$14.6 million community services & donations	1.8 million training hours	16,600 jobs	\$1.61 billion savings to society
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Multiple Australian Government initiatives complement these recommendations

Our asks link to and support the work already underway in five Australian Government departments.

1. Employment White Paper – Treasury

Following the Jobs and Skills Summit¹² in 2022, the Employment Taskforce within Treasury is developing an Employment White Paper¹³. Social Traders¹⁴ recommended using social enterprise procurement and certification to:

- Build resilient supply chains, making buying from social enterprise the norm
- Support social enterprise to improve labour market outcomes for those who face challenges in employment
- Create collaborative partnerships across government, industry, unions, civil society groups and communities

2. Targeting Entrenched Disadvantage Budget Package – Treasury

The 2023–24 Budget will deliver a \$199.8 million package to target entrenched community disadvantage. This package has a strong focus on intergenerational disadvantage and improving child and family wellbeing.

3. Payment by Outcomes Trial – Department of Social Services

Department of Social Services are trialling a funding model with White Box Enterprises to finance the impact costs of supporting jobseekers with a disability through Work Integrated Social Enterprises¹⁵.

4. Economic Pathways to Refugee Integration – Department of Home Affairs

Department of Home Affairs Economic Pathways to Refugee Integration (EPRI) used certification as a pre-qualifier for grants for social enterprises to create employment for refugees. The program invested \$21.3million¹⁶ over three years. If certification was endorsed by the Australian Government, we would have a larger number of certified social enterprises delivering impact and this initiative could be replicated across a whole array of social issues.

5. Future Made in Australia Office – Department of Finance

Department of Finance have started delivering on the Buy Australia Plan election commitment through the Future Made in Australia Office. This office aims to use Government's "significant purchasing power" as an "economic lever" and "deliver economic, social and environmental benefits"¹⁷ for Australian communities.

Previous Australian Government Policy that supports using procurement for additional social benefit:

Indigenous Procurement Policy (2015) – National Indigenous Australians Agency

The Australian Government Indigenous Procurement Policy has stimulated over \$5.3bn¹⁸ of expenditure by private and government sectors into Indigenous businesses since 2015 to build job outcomes and participation for Indigenous people. This is nationally the best example of using procurement for broader social objectives.

Modern Slavery Act (2018) – Australian Border Force

The Modern Slavery Act makes large organisations responsible over who and where they purchase goods. It is no longer acceptable to say "we didn't know". As they review supply chains for potential risks, they are also seeing the opportunity to go beyond a "do no harm" approach and create community benefits through their supply chain.

¹² *Jobs and Skills Summit*, Treasury, Australian Government (2022). Available at: <https://treasury.gov.au/employment-whitepaper/jobs-summit>

¹³ *Employment White Paper Consultation*, Treasury, Australian Government (2022). Available at: <https://treasury.gov.au/consultation/c2022-322158>

¹⁴ *Employment White Paper Submission*, Social Traders (2022). Available at: <https://www.socialtraders.com.au/news/social-traders-employment-white-paper-submission>

¹⁵ *Payment by Outcomes Trials*, Department of Social Services, Australian Government (2023). Available at: <https://www.dss.gov.au/payment-by-outcomes-trials>

¹⁶ *Employment Pathways for Refugees*, Department of Home Affairs, Australian Government (2023). Available at:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/coordinator-general-for-migrant-services/employment-pathways-for-refugees>

¹⁷ *Buy Australia Plan*, Department of Finance, Australian Government (2023). Available at <https://www.finance.gov.au/business/buyaustralianplan>

¹⁸ *Indigenous Procurement Policy*, National Indigenous Australians Agency, Australian Government (2023). Available at: <https://www.niaa.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/economic-development/indigenous-procurement-policy-ipp>

Why now?

A combination of factors make now the right time to leverage the social and economic value of the social enterprise sector, including:

- ✓ **Alignment to current policy** initiatives, Employment Taskforce and Buy Australia Plan
- ✓ **Precedent from previous policy** initiatives, Indigenous Procurement Policy & Modern Slavery Act
- ✓ **Certification is already being used** by Australian Government programs, Payment by Outcomes Trial and Economic Pathways to Refugee Integration grants
- ✓ **Proof of concept completed** including costs and measurable impacts, with State Government references
- ✓ **Economic justification** in light of a tight fiscal environment, co-funded by industry and philanthropy
- ✓ **Using money already being spent** through procurement to deliver significant additional social value

Appendix 1: Data collected by Social Traders

- 1 Location of social enterprises by state
- 2 Location of social enterprises by region type (metro/regional)
- 3 Social enterprises by legal structure
- 4 Social enterprises by form of incorporation
- 5 Social enterprises by year founded
- 6 Total headcount of certified social enterprises
- 7 Social enterprises by employment range
- 8 Social enterprises by employment range and impact model
- 9 Total revenue
- 10 Total trading revenue
- 11 Social enterprises by revenue band
- 12 Social enterprises by trading revenue band
- 13 Social enterprises by trading revenue as a proportion of total revenue
- 14 Social enterprises by primary impact model
- 15 Total direct impact expenses
- 16 Direct impact expenses by impact model
- 17 Social enterprise by primary beneficiary
- 18 Direct impact expenses by primary beneficiary
- 19 Primary beneficiaries supported by impact model
- 20 Headcount of beneficiary employees supported by social enterprises delivering impact via employment and/or training impact model
- 21 Total wrap around support costs incurred by social enterprises delivering impact via employment and/or training impact model
- 22 Total wages paid to beneficiaries by social enterprises delivering impact via employment and/or training impact model
- 23 Ratio of direct support costs to wages paid to beneficiaries in employment and/or training impact model
- 24 Total annual hours of employment provided by social enterprises via employment and/or training impact model to beneficiary employees
- 25 Total annual employment training hours provided by social enterprises to beneficiaries
- 26 Outcome areas covered by social enterprises with a community need impact model
- 27 Total cost of delivering product/services that meet community need by social enterprises delivering impact via the community need impact model
- 28 Total annual tonnes of waste diverted from landfill
- 29 Total annual funds donated to a charitable purpose
- 30 Total costs associated with profit redistribution impact model
- 31 Social enterprises by ANZSIC division code
- 32 Social enterprises by ANZSIC subdivision code
- 33 Social enterprises by products/services offered
- 34 Social enterprises by service location
- 35 Location of social enterprises by region (LGA)



Unlocking business for good

Social Traders acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.