

Beyond Grants: Community Centres Funding their Future



Online conversation hosted 5 May 2026

ABOUT

The topic of priority and challenge facing our sector is that of funding. Here is a summary of a recent conversation around the areas of Social Enterprise, Philanthropy, Fee-for-Service and Business Partnership.

Find the recording [here](#) to dig in deeper.

Scroll below to submit your interest in joining the conversation further!

SPEAKERS

Amy Orange- Co-founder and Managing Director of Collab4Good (Social Enterprise)

Sophie Doyle- CEO of Foundation SA (Philanthropy)

Mike Penberthy- General Manager of Iwiri (Fee-for-Service)

Cathy Becker - Strategic Partnerships and Fundraising Manager ac.care (Business Partnerships)

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE THE HEART OF A NON-PROFIT + THE HEAD OF A BUSINESS



KEY LEARNINGS

- Core elements to SE: (1) led by a social/environmental/cultural mission (2) trade a product or service for substantial portion of revenue (3) reinvest majority profit back into their social purpose
- It's a business model, not a legal structure. The mission drives the commerce, choose the structure that fits your context
- Start with WHY it shapes everything downstream
- One person can't build this alone, consider the role of partners, board, volunteers, join forces across centres, as a sector etc.
- Co-design from day one, shared ownership creates resilience and sustainability
- Long build, but social enterprises outlast traditional businesses, grassroots passion is the fuel.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

- Develop your Why/Theory of Change
- Social Enterprise Council (SASEC)- for membership, events, peer connections etc.
- [SASEC Resource Library](#)- central repository in SA (built with Collab4Good)
- [Business for Good program](#)- state govt-funded, open to ABN holders under 20 employees
- [Social Traders](#) certification- third-party credibility once operational, and opens up some grant opportunities
- Run a community co-design session to begin exploration
- CCSA is open to bringing centres together to explore SE, get in touch with your interest (see below)!

PHILANTHROPY GIVING WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING IN RETURN

KEY LEARNINGS

- Not just money- opportunities for partnering across the 4 T's: time (volunteering), talent (pro-bono skills sharing), treasure (funding), ties (connecting with professional/social networks)
- SA's seven community foundations are an accessible entry point
- Always start from community need, never from a funder's wish list
- Collective voice is louder, work with your community, stakeholders, or even other centres on shared needs
- Long trust-based game and free networks exist to speed the journey

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

- [Local community foundations](#)- Eyre Peninsula, Fleurieu, Barossa, Stand Like Stone, Adelaide Hills, Spinifex, Foundation SA
 - [Philanthropy Australia](#)- some free resources like fortnightly newsletter, lists of open grants nationally, and can join as member (may be cost prohibitive for individual centre)
 - [SA Philanthropy Network](#)- free events connecting orgs with funders
 - [FRRR \(Foundation for Regional & Rural Renewal\)](#) — regional centres especially
- Contact [Foundation SA](#) about which funders might align with your work hello@foundationsa.org.au

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FEE-FOR-SERVICE SELLING THE SKILLS OF YOUR COMMUNITY

KEY LEARNINGS

- Look inward first - what skills, interests and expertise does your community hold. Which of these will others pay for?
- Community leads the direction- the board/directors need to be engaged and supportive.
- Do market research early, make sure there is a market for what you are looking to sell
- Ensure proper requirements are met as relevant to your circumstance (eg. ABN, GST, BAS, payment models) before you start
- No hard rule for % to take as margin, this may be impacted by client type and agreement with employee/contractor/community delivering it

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

- Start with a community listening session/learning conversation/asset mapping- what skills do people have they want to share? What business skills exist to draw on within and associated with your centre?
- Do basic market research, is there an actual paying market?
- Have business model and associated requirements sorted before approaching anyone (see note about Business for Good above)



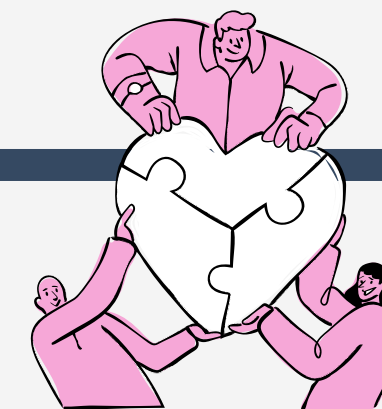
BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS BUILT ON SHARED VALUES

KEY LEARNINGS

- Strategic alignment beats cold outreach, shared values and community are everything
- Personal contact is better than emails, show up, have a tailored two-minute pitch, make them feel like partners, don't just ask for money.
- Build your framework first, agreement template, pitch doc, governance in order
- Approach as a mutual opportunity, you're offering them a chance to invest in their community, not asking for a handout
- Collect the no's to get the yeses - they give you information and further clarity as to who is right for you!

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

- Research who shares your values and works for/within your community- approaching from this lens shows deeper alignment to launch a natural partnership
- Create a one pager, an elevator pitch, a specific ask (and have your governance docs in order) etc so you're ready to network.
- Map existing supporters and formalise those relationships first- easiest path to an early yes.
- Tap into your existing community, discover personal connections with businesses (eg. volunteer connections? employees of businesses? participants who run businesses? businesses you hire in your centre? etc.)
- Have a collective approach to building partnerships- find/build-up others in your community to give their skills to the work



WHAT'S NEXT- IS UP TO YOU!

Would you like to work together with other centres to build/boost these funding streams?

With an individual centre lens, a regional approach, as a sector, other... It could include peer learning, a social enterprise incubator, collective pursuit of philanthropy, regional business partnership building, case studies from centres already doing this work- it's completely open to co-creation!

If yes, please let us know here: <https://communitycentressouthaustralia.snapforms.com.au/form/beyond-grant-funding-learning-conversation-feedback--and-next-steps>