

Consultation overview

Jobs Queensland is undertaking research to understand appropriate roles for government to help support social enterprise activity to deliver economic and social outcomes for Queensland.

The research specifically considers the extent, role and outcomes of social enterprises in Queensland's business and jobs market, and aims to assess the costs and benefits of possible mechanisms for government support.

Jobs Queensland undertook a range of engagement and consultation activities across Queensland in early 2019 to inform the project.

The engagement and consultation activities consisted of:

- a survey of social enterprises and organisations in the social enterprise ecosystem
- regional forums in Mt Isa, Cairns, Sunshine Coast and Brisbane/Logan
- a regional focus group in far north Queensland focused on issues relevant to Indigenous social enterprises
- a series of interviews and discussions with local, national and international experts in this field.

Consultations were well attended by stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and different views about how government can help and support social enterprises in Queensland.

Key consultation outcomes

The consultation process revealed a range of broadly consistent stakeholder views about social enterprises in Queensland, including:

- Identifying and defining social enterprises is complex given the diversity and differing levels of maturity of social enterprises in Queensland.
- Social enterprises are not a new phenomenon in Queensland, however, many social enterprises have been in operation for a relatively short period.
- Social enterprise ecosystems are also diverse and comprise funding bodies, networks, and accelerators and incubators committed to growing and developing social enterprises.
- While social enterprises exist across Queensland, there are a number of clusters of higher levels of social enterprise activity, such as in the Brisbane, Logan-Beaudesert and Cairns regions.

- Many social enterprises are place-based entities and strongly connected to a local or regional community that provide valuable networks, mentoring and peer support. The sector in Queensland is particularly strong at the 'grass roots' level.
- While a number of challenges faced by social enterprises are similar to those experienced by small businesses generally, there are some key differences given the pursuit of both commercial and social/environmental/cultural objectives.
- There are differing and unique opportunities and challenges for social enterprises in regional and remote communities when compared to those operating in southeast Queensland.
- Capacity and capability building is beneficial for social enterprises. A number of organisations already offer support and services for social enterprises that are seeking to establish and/or grow.
- There are a range of potential support mechanisms that government could use to support social enterprise in Queensland, each with their own benefits and limitations. These include (but are not limited to) enabling access to procurement opportunities, capability and capacity building and support for ecosystems.
- Social enterprises have an important role to play in their communities and the Queensland economy.

Next steps

These consultation outcomes will inform advice that Jobs Queensland will submit to the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development in the second quarter of 2019.

The report will provide a Queensland specific understanding of the extent, role and outcomes of social enterprises in Queensland's business and jobs market, and will outline potential mechanisms for government support for social enterprise in Queensland.

[Subscribe to the Jobs Queensland e-Communiqué](#) and [follow Jobs Queensland on LinkedIn](#) to stay up-to-date with this project and the work of Jobs Queensland more broadly.