

A collaborative history of social innovation in South Australia

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Abstract

In this paper I outline a collaborative history of social innovation in South Australia, a state that has a striking record of social innovation. What makes this history so intriguing is that, on the face of it, South Australia would seem an unlikely location for such experimentation. This paper outlines the main periods of innovation. Appended to it is the first attempt to collate all these social innovations in one document. This paper is unique in that its account of the history of social innovation has been derived after public consultation in South Australia, and is a key output from Geoff Mulgan's role as an Adelaide Thinker in Residence.

The paper analyses why, at times, South Australia appears to have punched above its weight as a leader in social innovation. Drawing on Giddens' 'structuration' model, the paper uses South Australian history as a case study to determine how far structure and/or agency can explain the main periods of social innovation.