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SUCCESS IN SOCIAL INNOVATION IN SA, WHAT HAS
HAPPENED, WHAT HAS WORKED?

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SUCCESS IN SOCIAL INNOVATION IN SA WHAT HAS HAPPENED, WHAT HAS WORKED?

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This conference was held on Kurna land. The original custodians lived sustainably on the land where Adelaide is now located for many thousands of years. I pay tribute to the Kurna people, and particularly the elders of hundreds of generations, for their innovations in sustainable living practice, language, culture, stories and their innovation in medicine and healing. The Kurna people were the original social innovators in this location

This conference is valuable for two reasons in particular:

1. it is a great opportunity to give some thought to where we're going with innovation and, in particular, the social element of innovation
2. it is also an opportunity to gather stories of past innovation from a wide perspective. I'm sure that this conference is one where for every story told another three or more will follow.

I want to contribute to both of these aspects, and wish to begin with my slant on the elements of social innovation from South Australia's history. In doing this I recognise that there are many histories, and I will tell you some stories from just one person's perspective.

Working almost exclusively in non-government human services organisations, including advocacy focused peak bodies, has shaped my experience of social innovation. In this paper I draw heavily on these experiences. A priority for me is to highlight some of the contributions to social innovation in South Australia that have come from community-based not-for-profit service organisations, as there is a risk that this contribution is overlooked or undervalued.

A couple of key elements of my own history have been my many years of employment and, more particularly, volunteering in this work area. I've also had strong links with the Christian Church and have spent 12 years working for organisations that started off as Methodist missions. In drawing on these experiences, I do not want to deliberately tell a biased story, rather I present examples of what has been achieved in the areas where I've been involved. Many other people can tell similar stories from different experiences. One of the great things about this conference is that it is an opportunity to gather together stories and experiences. A great thing about community-based innovation is that it's happening all the time with a myriad of people and organisations innovating in their own way.

To start thinking about innovation, I refer to a great innovator, though not a South Australian, Leonhard Euler, one of the great mathematicians of history. Euler's conjecture was a development of the thinking of another great thinker and innovator, Pythagoras. Euler's conjecture was this: that $x^4 + y^4 + z^4 = w^4$ has no solution. Back to this later.

Before talking a little about some examples of community-based social innovation in South Australia, there is merit in touching briefly on the understanding of four terms, each widely used at the moment, and each starting with the word 'social'; specifically:

- social inclusion
- social innovation

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- social entrepreneur
- social enterprise.

The importance of a clear and shared understanding of what these terms mean, and what they don't mean, cannot be overstated. Examples of what can go wrong with language can be found with the terms 'social capital' and 'mutual obligation', both useful concepts that have been butchered to mean so many different things to different audiences that they are rendered meaningless or are captured by a particular ideology.

Social inclusion

The current usage of the term 'social inclusion' has its genesis in the unification of Europe and the realisation that the most important factor in a more united Europe was social cohesion. This led to discussion about social exclusion. The concept was understood to be broader than simply income poverty and unemployment. In the widest terms, social inclusion was understood to be about three broad factors:

1. the capacity of individuals and households to purchase essential goods and services
2. participation in socially and economically useful activities
3. active and constructive social interaction.

The terms 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion' are used interchangeably—they are two sides of the same coin.

In Europe, and in particular the United Kingdom under Blair's New Labour, consideration of policy responses to social exclusion started with a focus on both who was excluded, and on who was doing the excluding. The key focus of responses to the 'who was excluded?' question was on education and labour market participation, as well as strategies to increase health, transport, housing and financial services. The key focus of responses to the 'who is doing the excluding?' question was on the public service, though institutions like banks were also targeted. The Social Exclusion strategy in the UK had a very strong focus on better service delivery and in particular the concept of 'joined up government'.

Another important aspect of social exclusion thinking in the UK and Europe was the distinction between 'wide exclusion' and 'deep exclusion'. Wide exclusion applied to a number of population groups, including women and various cultural groups, whereas deep exclusion focused on families with intergenerational unemployment, including health problems and poor education. In the UK there has been a very strong focus on measuring social exclusion and the responses to social exclusion, in particular through the publication of the indicator's set 'Opportunity For All'.

Social innovation

Arguably, social innovation is a much less developed concept, although it too has grown out of Blair's New Labour in the UK and, depending on one's perspective, is an outcome of the Social Exclusion strategy, and in particular, of better ways of delivering services. Thinker in Residence in 2007/08, Geoff Mulgan, was actively involved with the Blair government, and so his views are no doubt influenced by his UK experience.

It is difficult to agree on a definition of social innovation, but I suggest that social innovation be regarded as any new activity or process that improves a community or society. I suggest that there are three broad elements of social innovation:

1. better ways of providing community services
2. the willingness or capacity of a community to take up new ideas and new ways of doing things (e.g., a farming community being prepared to trial new processes or crops)
3. applying community development approaches to solving social problems across sectors and disciplines.

The Stanford Social Innovation Review¹ states that social innovation can only be understood after understanding the concept of social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneur

In short, a social entrepreneur is an entrepreneur motivated by altruism rather than profit. The Stanford Social Innovation Review defines social entrepreneurship as follows:

We define social entrepreneurship as having the following three components: (1) identifying a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium that causes the exclusion, marginalization, or suffering of a segment of humanity that lacks the financial means or political clout to achieve any transformative benefit on its own; (2) identifying an opportunity in this unjust equilibrium, developing a social value proposition, and bringing to bear inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude, thereby challenging the stable state's hegemony; and (3) forging a new, stable equilibrium that releases trapped potential or alleviates the suffering of the targeted group, and through imitation and the creation of a stable ecosystem around the new equilibrium ensuring a better future for the targeted group and even society at large.

Social enterprise

In summary, social enterprise is the application of business principles and practices to generate socially useful outcomes. Peter Thomson is regarded as a pioneer of the social enterprise movement. He is a priest who studied at Oxford in the early 1970s, was also part of Blair's New Labour, and in 2001 was appointed as chaplain to the brotherhood of St Laurence. Peter's definition of social enterprise is:

Social enterprise exists to benefit the community. Its focus is on self-help, working together, creating opportunities for me to benefit and supporting communities to build their own wealth.²

Earlier in South Australia's history, the cooperatives movement was the major form of social enterprise, examples included Eudunda farmers, community hotels (Renmark and Kimba still have hotels that are community run) and Kaiser Stuhl. Another example of a community enterprise is Goodwill, while Townsend House and the Can-do Net is a 21st century example.

Stories from our history, what has happened?

There is little doubt that a key and early driver for social innovation in this state goes back to the dirty dusty smelly cities of Europe, and particularly England, in the mid 19th century. This was a time when some in the church recognised growing levels of poverty and ill-health as cities grew without planning so as to provide labour for industrialisation. Some of the early responses to social hardship were to take children and young people out of the dirty cities to clear their lungs in the healthy countryside, initially through programs like summer camps and then subsequently the establishment of 'uniformed groups' including the Scouts, Guides, as well as the YMCA, YWCA to focus on encouraging physical activity and citizenship.

Early social innovation

The Reverend Ivor Bailey wrote about the experiences that were influential in establishing the Methodist Missions in Australia.³

¹ www.ssireview.org

² *Social Enterprise in Australia, an Introductory Handbook*, Adelaide Central Mission Inc, 2002

³ *Mission Story*, Rev Ivor Bailey, Lutheran Publishing House 1987

Undoubtedly the instigator of this movement (Central Missions) was Charles Garrett, who had been developing a missions program in Liverpool since 1875. Garrett introduced homes for destitute children and the aged, a Labour bureau, a scheme to assist prospective immigrants, a shoeblack brigade and cocoa rooms as an alternative to the public house, as his social and philanthropic work was integrated with his evangelical outreach. He was concerned with the needs of the body as well as the soul.

These English experiences were no doubt the inspirations for early South Australian leaders, including Reverend Thomas Maughan, who, upon his arrival, very quickly got to work establishing a mission to assist the underprivileged people of Adelaide. Rev Maughan and his congregation bought land and established the church on the poor side of town; the seedy, western side of King William Street. The initial social innovation, from what became the Central Methodist Mission, was a deliberate choice to place itself among the forges, the farriers, the pubs and the opium dens—the places where income was low and where people most needed help. Moving forward in time past a recession and a world war, we return to Adelaide again at the time of the Great Depression, and ask ‘what was happening in social innovation in the early 1930s?’

The Great Depression

The Great Depression of the 1930s was a very tough time indeed. In 1930 the official unemployment rate was 29% and was still 10% at the start of the Second World War in 1939. On May 1 1930 *The Advertiser* wrote ‘living on the banks of the Torrens or huddling in the Exhibition building, and begging for one’s bread is not conducive to high ideals. Men should at least have the opportunity to work for their food and shelter. No man should be forced to beg; it is demoralising’.

This statement was in support for a public appeal launched by the Central Methodist Mission, through its superintendent Reverend Sam Forsyth, who had arranged a lease of 460 acres of land in the Hundred of Kupto. This land was to be used to establish a colony to enable unemployed men to work at producing food. Sir Langdon Bonython and Mr Tom Barr Smith were the initial donors who provided the stimulus to raise the £5,000 needed for the colony. By June 10th 1930 the Kupto colony was functioning, with railway carriages used for accommodation. One state politician later commented on Kupto saying ‘it was a haven, a multi cultural melting pot and an employment agency all in one, the only successful non-government initiative to help the unemployed during the Depression’.

Perhaps the Port Adelaide Central Mission which, late in 1930, started its most ambitious Depression response project, would challenge this last observation. Port Adelaide Central Mission Superintendent Willason was concerned that there was a significant number of unemployed men with fishing and shipping experience in the port area, yet people were going hungry. Again the philanthropists Sir Langdon Bonython and Tom Barr Smith came to the party by purchasing the *Gertrude*, a metal hulled fishing steamer. In April 1932, *The Advertiser* reported that the *Gertrude* had returned with ‘a large catch of beautiful fish of many kinds. The whole catch was disposed of in eight hours. All expenses of the ship were paid, and a good cash gratuity given to the crew, and the people of the district had a plentiful supply of fish’.⁴ These two stories offer a couple of examples of community organisations managing innovative projects in response to major community need.

After the war

We forget that at the time of the Second World War, human experience was that economic depression followed war. It was an extraordinary measure that the Allies took to start working on post-war reconstruction during the war. In Australia the Post-War Reconstruction Committee was established in 1942,

⁴ Quoted in *Building Community*, Brian Dickey & Elaine Martin, Port Adelaide Wesley Centre, 1999

with quite a bit of the war yet to come. The significant impetus that the governments gave to active strategies for post-war reconstruction also created a climate for community innovation with an agenda to rebuild community, and soon after to respond to new and emerging social issues.

On the sixth of June 1946 the SA Council of Social Services was established, incorporating the Youth Welfare Co-ordinating Council. Reg Coombe and Amy Wheaton were among the drivers of this new organisation. In its early years SACOSS established a number of new organisations to deal with significant and emerging social issues. These organisations included the Marriage Guidance Council, the Good Neighbour Council, Civilian Maimed and Limbless Association, the Phoenix Society, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Mental Health Association.⁵ SACOSS also worked with councils of social service from Victoria and New South Wales and hosted the first meeting of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) in Adelaide on 29th August 1951.

At this time, social innovation was largely a process of putting together people with an interest in the current or emerging social need. SACOSS played this role and then linked interest groups with well-connected members of society who could help open doors. As a social innovation, SACOSS provided support for new and emerging services and organisations, and then helped them to become independent. This social innovation was about incubating new service organisations. Prominent people involved included Amy Wheaton, Barbara Garrett and Marian Disney.

Keep on moving

Now we move to the early 1950s when every parent's greatest fear was that their child would contract polio. Children were sent to school with camphor bags sewn into their singlets as a prevention against polio. (Jonas Salk developed his polio defeating vaccine in 1955.) The truth is that a significant number of young people contracted the disease and there was much debate on how to help survivors cope. The prevailing wisdom was that immobilisation worked best, with limbs, the most commonly affected part of the body, constrained by callipers.

One of the small number of people with an alternative view was Mabel McCutcheon, who was actively involved with the Port Adelaide Methodist Mission. As a nurse, Mabel was convinced that hydrotherapy and physiotherapy was the best response to the ravages of polio; keep the limbs moving as much as possible. The Port Adelaide Methodist Mission converted a significant part of their premises into small rooms containing baths to support Mabel's passion.

Radio station 5AD ran the Kangaroo Club at the time, and the Kangaroo club ran a fleet of ambulances, particularly for children (there are some significant similarities between the Kangaroo Club and the Variety Club of today). These ambulances made many visits to the Port Adelaide Methodist Mission as people embraced the radical approach of hydrotherapy and physiotherapy. In this instance, social innovation was driven by a willingness to challenge the orthodox view and driven by the indefatigable passion of one person, Mabel McCutcheon.

The kids are alright

Another set of significant South Australian social innovations started in the living room of a Methodist manse, which is where a trainee minister, Garry Killington, gathered a small group of people together to find better ways to help the state wards of the Glandore children's home. It was common for Christian families to take a ward from this children's home to their house for Sunday lunch and a Sunday afternoon outing. It was evident to many of these Sunday afternoon hosts that the residents of the children's home were craving for

⁵ *The SACOSS Story 1947 – 1997*, Michael Page, 2002

the sort of attention that was normal for children living with parents. Garry and his small team set about finding ways to support the children and to foster links with the general community. The National Fitness Council agreed that Garry's ideas were worth funding and, as an organisation was needed to receive the funds, the Service to Council was established.

The late 1950s was also the time when the first group of children from the post-war baby boom was reaching adolescence. These young people developed their own culture which was threatening to the mainstream community. There were also growing numbers of alienated young people who felt they had little choice but to live on the streets.

Garry and the small team of volunteers thought it important that attempts be made to get to know these young people, to understand their culture, and to find ways to re-engage them with the community. Garry spent many months hanging around in the city where the street kids were, and slowly developed rapport, understanding and eventually trust with them. In so doing, the Service to Council, through Garry, was one of the very first organisations in the world to develop a street approach to engage young people, a radical departure from the prevailing centre-based approach to youth work, where young people came to a centre for recreation or whatever. The Service to Youth Council street work approach subsequently went to King's Cross, St Kilda and a host of other locations where street-based young people were at grave risk of exploitation. Garry and Max Kau were the driving forces behind Service to Youth Council for many years, not only providing services to marginalised young people, but also investing heavily in training and development for volunteer youth workers.

All the lonely people

In the early 1960s a couple of people at the Royal Adelaide Hospital were concerned that a growing number of people presenting to casualty had attempted suicide. They came across an idea that was being developed by the Samaritans in the United Kingdom of an anonymous telephone service aimed at people who were feeling suicidal. Dr Basil Hetzel, the Reverend Frank Hansen and Ken Treagus resolved to establish an anonymous telephone counselling service in Adelaide.

While in the final stages of developing their proposal, they heard about very similar plans being developed by the Reverend Alan Walker in Sydney. The service he was about to launch was to be named Lifeline. The Adelaide and Sydney groups agreed to cooperate to develop the service and agreed on the name Lifeline. The Adelaide Lifeline service opened soon after the Sydney service, a service which is now found throughout Australia and around the world. The social innovation from Adelaide in developing Lifeline is not well known.

Living in the 70s

By the mid 1970s, the economic and social landscape of South Australia, as in the rest of Australia, had changed significantly as a result of post-war reconstruction and one of Australia's greatest economic booms. However, by the mid 1970s, the assumption of full employment was starting to look shaky. The Central Methodist Mission responded by establishing a financial counselling service and a credit union to help people cope with more limited and less certain incomes. The Adelaide Central credit union, established by the Central Methodist Mission, has since become Australian Central, a well-established financial institution born of social innovation.

The 1970s was also a time of significant social innovation by the South Australian government, considered later in this paper, which was no doubt enabled by the climate created by a socially aware and entrepreneurial premier, Don Dunstan.

The recession we had to have

In the early 1990s, unemployment was high across the state, and particularly high in some suburbs. The Port Adelaide Central Mission offered a wide range of skills training services, but was increasingly concerned that there was little chance of employment for the people from the most marginalised communities: Aboriginal people and newly arrived refugees.

An innovative project was developed by first identifying recession proof products. It was hoped that some way might be found to assist some of the people most marginalised in the labour market. Three products were seen as being recession proof, that is, their sales increased as the economy worsened. These three products were beer, lingerie and chocolate. Being good Methodists, they decided to establish a small chocolate factory, which ended up developing and producing the first ever chocolate Easter Bilbies for sale. Part proceeds of the sales went to the Australian Foundation for the Eradication of Rabbits to assist with habitat protection. Over time, large confectionery companies were able to produce at a cheaper price, but the chocolate factory employed about 15 refugees from Central America and some of the commercial chocolate bilby producers have continued to part fund environment groups.

Where is SA going?

In the early 1990s there was considerable concern, particularly in the business community, about South Australia's declining economy and a worsening community perception of the business fraternity. The response from the Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry (now Business SA) was to establish Business Vision 2010, a process that would bring together people from the business, environment and social sectors to develop projects that would benefit the SA community. Business 2010 was very successful in fostering cross-sector collaboration by focusing on developing practical and implementable projects. Two of the projects established were the Governor's Leadership Foundation and the Indicators Project, which was a forerunner to the SA Strategic Plan's Progress reports.

All innovation has a significant social dimension. The vision of leaders like Lindsay Thompson, Ian Webber, Tony O'Malley and others was central to business sector initiated social innovation. It is curious that a very successful, collaborative process was wound down and eventually wound up, despite attempts to re-energise it as Viva-SA. Social innovation is never easy!

Government facilitated social innovation

While one of my purposes in writing this paper is to document examples of social innovation developed by community (non-government) organisations, there are some outstanding examples of innovation with social objectives that have come from the South Australian Government, three standout examples being:

1. the South Australian Housing Trust
2. CITY (Community Improvement Through Youth)
3. Neighbourhood Youth Work Program.

South Australian Housing Trust

One of the state's greatest thinkers, Hugh Stretton, wrote of the spur to establish the Housing Trust, he wrote:⁶

Wainwright (William Wainwright, SA Auditor-General) wanted to attract industrial investors. But how could South Australian manufacturers expect to compete with producers in New South Wales and Victoria whose population was the main market for the products? ... if goods to sell in the richest states

⁶ Hugh Stretton, *Australia Fair*, UNSW press 2005

could cost less to produce in South Australia, industrial investors would be happy with that. How could South Australia restrain its cost of living and therefore its wage costs? Price controls might frighten business as dangerous ‘government intervention’. But more than a quarter of the cost of living index went on house rent. How to keep rents low, but still provide decent houses?

The answer was the South Australian Housing Trust, which was established in 1936 by an act of state parliament with the objective of providing affordable housing for workers, particularly lower income workers. Stretton observed:

Who paid for it all? For 40 years the homebuyers and tenants and industrial investors paid for it. The Housing Trust's main link with government was a guarantee of its credit, so it borrowed at lower interest and serviced its loans from its earnings. By 1970 it had built 68,000 houses. It had supplied more than half of them to new homeowners by sale or rental purchase. In the remaining 33,000 more than 90% of the tenants were paying commercial rent. The operation had not so far cost the taxpayers a cent.

There is little doubt that the SA Housing Trust was a world leader in the provision of public housing; modest, comfortable and affordable housing. The Trust's involvement in the housing market, particularly at the lower end of the market, also served to moderate the speculative elements in the residential housing market. It is lamentable that this world leading program has been dismantled by a combination of misguided economic advice, dismantling of the Commonwealth State Housing agreement, and the lobbying of private developers.

CITY (Community Improvement Through Youth)

This highly innovative program, which came out of the South Australian Department of Labour and was actively championed by the Minister and Deputy Premier, the Hon Jack Wright, was summarised earlier. The program was a response to increasing unemployment at a time when the prevailing wisdom was that an unemployment level of 2% or more would unseat a government. Arguably the state's most significant response to this social ill that had been unknown for three decades, the CITY program made small grants directly to groups of unemployed young people so that they could engage in community improvement projects. In this way the participants developed skills which would enable them to be more competitive in the labour market. The other tangible outcomes were many practical local level projects from shade pergolas at child care centres to magazines and even a campsite. While this program has not operated in South Australia for some time, it is an approach that has been widely replicated in many countries.

Neighbourhood Youth Work Program

Ian Cox was the Director of the Department of Community Welfare (DCW) during the 1970s when a number of youth issues were emerging, including the rise of gangs, drug and substance abuse, graffiti and homelessness, to name but a few. DCW took the radical step of employing youth workers at local office level to work with disaffected young people and to link services and supports, particularly for at risk young people. Until that stage it was almost unheard of for governments to employ youth workers, and particularly to employ them at local level. Each of these three innovative programs responding to social needs had some significant common elements:

- while the programs were government driven, they relied on collaboration with community organisations and local community networks, for the program to work effectively
- each program ran against prevailing public service orthodoxy
- each program had a powerful project champion that was very senior in government
- the Premier and his cabinet gave genuine permission for the public service to be innovative.

Social innovation: what have we learned?

Taking an overview of the short stories that were briefly outlined above, from a predominantly community perspective there is merit in asking ‘what have been the drivers of social innovation?’ Some of the answers to this question are depression, war, recession and Whitlam. What do these have in common, given that all but Whitlam had fairly drastic negative consequences for the community?

It would appear that the more dire the circumstances the greater the level of social innovation, or putting this another way, does social innovation decline as social capital (or social inclusion) grows? It is probably not dire economic or social circumstances that drive innovation, particularly social innovation. Rather the main driver of social innovation is the capacity to take risks. Often more desperate times give rise to a climate in which it is easier to take risks, because the consequences of failure are minor, so tough times can be a useful, but certainly not essential, precursor for innovation. From business, key strategies for managing risk have been the creation of futures markets to hedge against uncertain future returns, and the development of insurance markets. So, given that governments may be considered to be at the greatest, political, risk, when social innovation goes wrong, where can governments buy social innovation risk insurance policies? In the absence of such policies, there are some other measures that can be taken to foster a culture of risk taking so that communities reap the benefits of social innovation.

What have we learned? Creating a climate for social innovation

The following are proposed as elements necessary to create an environment for social innovation:

- Shared responsibility—a community needs to understand that perceived failure is an essential element of innovation, and some attempts of social innovation will fail.
- Another important element of shared responsibility is the realisation that government doesn't have to do it all, nor should ministerial or departmental executives think the government is the only means of innovation.
- Trust in each other, our institutions, our companies and governments has diminished in Australia over recent years. The diminution of trust has given rise to evermore spin (corporate and political) and leaders that see that they need to be in total control of everything. This is understandable but not healthy, particularly as a climate for social innovation.
- Project champions—well-known business and community leaders that champion social innovation are particularly able to engender community trust and make connections that might not otherwise occur.
- Common vision—the SA Strategic Plan, and similar approaches in other jurisdictions, are significant processes in attempting to gain community support for achieving significant social outcomes, and thereby provide a context in which the occasional failure can be acceptable.
- Community institutions as well as governments and business need to be active contributors and partners in social innovation.
- Accountability, being able to demonstrate success from socially innovative projects to partners as well as to the general public is important. The measures of success are invariably more elusive than the fiscal bottom line so frequently used to demonstrate commercial success.
- Celebrate ideas and outcomes. This is easy to say and harder to do without the perception of ‘it’s just more spin’. However, celebrating success is an essential element for innovative processes to be ongoing and mainstream, rather than remaining cute ideas on the periphery.

What have we learned? The practical

The examples of social innovation coming from community organisations hint at some of the practical steps that can help make social innovation work:

- Real need—social innovation needs to respond to the clear and present concerns of the community with the innovative elements being practical and pragmatic. The problem being solved needs to be clearly understood.
- Passion—whether talking about Amy Wheaton, the Reverend Forsythe, Basil Hetzel or Mabel McCutcheon, the drivers of social innovation have not only been project champions, they have also been people of passion and committed to clear outcomes. Our current risk adverse era risks marginalising the people of passion.
- Learn from overseas and interstate. We don't need to reinvent the wheel in response to a social problem for which we want an innovative response. South Australian innovation has borrowed from the United Kingdom, in particular, as well as from interstate and other overseas locations. Interstate and overseas communities have borrowed from us. The effective application of good ideas, wherever they come from, to local situations should be the core criterion of any evaluation of effectiveness of socially focused innovation.
- Philanthropy and seed funding—the innovative responses from the Great Depression would not have occurred without philanthropists such as Sir Langdon Bonython and Tom Barr Smith. Philanthropists, trusts and funds like the Community Benefit Fund of SA⁷ are essential for the seed funding and underwriting that gives social entrepreneurs scope to apply their ideas.
- Cross-sector and cross-discipline think tanks, sometimes away from the media gaze, are going to be increasingly important to help people to test and hone ideas for innovation. We need more thinking about how this can happen, particularly using online environments.
- Short- and long-term—some social innovation will have a short life (e.g., the Port Adelaide Mission's Easter bilby project) while other innovations, for example, the SACOSS planted organisations, have a much longer life. Both short-term and long-term innovation is important.

Remember Euler's Conjecture ($x^4 + y^4 + z^4 = w^4$) has no solution! Well there is a solution: $2,682,440^4 + 15,365,639^4 + 18,796,766^4 = 20,616,673^4$. This solution includes the largest numbers ever used to solve a mathematical problem, it also gives us some supplementary hints about how to do social innovation. Some apparently simple problems need complex solutions, new technologies make new solutions possible, and solutions can come from an unexpected area. We can be certain that Leonhard Euler did not consider that his mathematical conundrum would be solved by a computer scientist! Never give up. It took nearly 250 years to disprove Euler's Conjecture!

In this paper I have demonstrated that social innovation comes from community organisations, specifically non-government organisations, as well as from government and corporate sectors. Some of the factors that are important for fostering an environment that encourages social innovation have also been mentioned.

Conclusion

Just before presenting at the conference, the concluding comments were changed in the light of the release of Geoff Mulgens report,⁸ his final recommendation, recommendation 6, sums up the points I have attempted to present, Geoff wrote:

⁷ Mark Henley is currently Chair of CBSA

⁸ Geoff Mulgen, 'Innovating in 360 Degrees', Report for SA Thinkers in Residence, June 2008.

NGOs in South Australia as elsewhere are often involved in innovating to meet changing needs. But the ways in which they are supported are often antithetical to this role. A more systematic and reciprocal relationship would include:

- overt funding for innovative NGO led projects with care differentiation between funding for innovations and funding for service delivery.
- A strong emphasis on beneficiary or user involvement in the design and implementation of new models
- new forms of support aimed at social entrepreneurs and as well as existing NGOs, including potentially a school for social entrepreneurs working on critical social issues
- stable funding: a constant complaint in many countries is that NGOs are treated worse than either this must all the public sector in terms of contract conditions.

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