

# MEDIA RELEASE

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## Bridging the gap – social enterprise and local government study

A new study produced by researchers from the UTAS Institute for Regional Development (IRD) looks at the relationship between social enterprise and local government.

The report *Social Enterprises and Local Government: A Scoping Study* was prepared by Dr Robyn Eversole and Mary Duniam from the IRD, in partnership with the Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government (ACELG), based at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS).

Social enterprises are locally-focused organisations that promote social and community goals using economic trading activities. Such organisations can bridge the gap between communities, local government and other sectors to create positive impacts for local communities.

Dr Eversole said that there is a growing interest from local government in new kinds of collaborative relationships, and that councils such as the Launceston City Council in Tasmania and the Paramatta City Council in NSW are already involved in social enterprise development .

“Councils are looking for ways to generate place-based solutions to local needs,” Dr Eversole explained.

“While we know that some councils have been involved in social enterprise development, we don’t know much about the role that social enterprises are playing now or how they may help them to meet their goals in the future.

“This is the first time a study has been conducted to look at these questions.”

The research reviews relevant literature in Australia, the US, Canada, the UK and Europe, and identifies three main types of local government-social enterprise interaction:

1. Local government creating social enterprises
2. Local government supporting social enterprises
3. Local government partnering with social enterprises.

Program Manager for ACELG, Steffanie Pillora says the study is timely, and may assist local governments to meet the needs of their communities.

“With the many demands and expectations upon Australian local government from community members and other sectors, local councils may start to consider collaborative place-based solutions such as social enterprises to assist in meeting the current challenges facing communities,” Ms Pillora said.

The study provides an overview and analysis of the issues and opportunities related to social enterprise and Australian local government, supported by available evidence and case studies. Directions for the future are suggested in its conclusions.

The paper can be downloaded here: <http://www.cradle-coast.utas.edu.au>

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