

Developing open employment outcomes for people with an intellectual disability utilising a Social Enterprise Framework

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Abstract.

BACKGROUND: Workplace participation for people with ID is a major policy issue, with both economic and social imperatives. Policy reforms in Australia associated with the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) require new and innovative approaches to address these problems.

OBJECTIVE: This project was established to investigate how a *Social Enterprise Framework* could be used as a mechanism to transform supported employment services (Australian Disability Enterprises) into open employment settings that secure meaningful, rewarding, and sustainable employment for people with ID.

METHODS: A systematic literature review was undertaken, and a model of Social Enterprise was developed that would be inclusive of people with ID. The theoretical model was reviewed by industry experts and refined. Its practical application and feasibility was then tested through the implementation of an organisational audit and strategic planning exercise. This was designed to produce an enterprise model.

RESULTS: Social Enterprise is an umbrella term describing any organisation that focuses on social change. For people with ID, its essential features include an economically viable business, which provide the payment of ‘a living wage’, in a setting involving meaningful work that includes opportunities for the acquisition of socially valued skills and career development, as well as contributing to the person’s opportunities for social relationships.

CONCLUSION: Though a challenging undertaking, Social Enterprise provides a promising employment option for some people with ID, when such initiatives are driven from executive and senior personnel of an organisation.

Keywords: Social Enterprise, open employment, micro-enterprise, intellectual disability, discovery, living wage, choice, inclusion, Australian Disability Enterprise

1. Social Enterprise background

Social Enterprises have existed in Europe and the UK since the 1970’s. They were developed initially

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as avenues for promoting *citizenship* for people with psychiatric disability, post de-institutionalisation. However, the term “Social Enterprise” is a relatively recent addition to the lexicon of Australian business, and the disability sector in particular. In Australia, the term has been used to describe a diversity of business models and support services; including ‘places where people can go to do things they like’, and ‘places where people volunteer’. Social Enterprise

has also been a term used to describe ‘sheltered workshops’ and Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs). It could therefore be argued that this term is ill-defined and poorly understood within the community at large.

The ambiguity surrounding what constitutes a Social Enterprise serves to highlight some of the potential challenges, and indeed barriers, that Social Enterprises face as they attempt to find their place in mainstream community consciousness, and that of the business community. In practical terms, this means that potentially when a business seeks to present itself to the community as a ‘Social Enterprise’, arguably one of its major attractions to potential customers, the concept might not be well grasped. This could have the effect that the business is viewed as synonymous with a ‘charity’, detracting from its potential to develop socially valued roles for people in the community. Furthermore, it might not be identified as distinct from other commercial enterprises, and so fail to find a distinct niche in the market place that is likely to attract customers, especially those with an ethical consideration to their purchasing practices.

The initial challenge for a disability sector organisation seeking to make a transition to a *Social Enterprise* is therefore to develop its own corporate understanding of what constitutes social enterprise. Importantly, drawing on the literature and the experience of previous business endeavours, nationally and internationally, to establish and operate viable Social Enterprises, ADE’s need to formulate an operational definition of what they are seeking to achieve, and what they intend to communicate to existing staff, potential employees, government, and the community (i.e., potential customers).

In an effort to address some of these challenges, the European based EMES International Research Network is currently running a global research project (the International Comparative Social Enterprise Models (ICSEM) Project 2013–2017). This project is mapping global Social Enterprise models, and investigating the processes that have led to the development of these various models. This project is seeking, in time, to reach a consensus definition of Social Enterprise, which can then be more effectively communicated to government, business, and the community.

In Australia, *Social Traders*, a specialist Social Enterprise development organisation established in Victoria, has defined a Social Enterprise as a business “...having a social, cultural or environmental

mission or purpose, and pursuing these goals through trading and channelling most of the profits towards this mission.” This definition is consistent with those proposed by a number of researchers (Smith, Knapp, Barr, Stevens, & Cannatelli, 2010; Hayllar & Wettenhall, 2011; Barrakat, Collyer, & O’Connor, 2010).

Notably, the definition advanced by Sole Traders is consistent with that of not-for-profit organisations more generally. For example, Smith et al. (2010) cite the Girl Scouts of America (GSA) as being a very successful not-for-profit organisation that assumes the identity of a Social Enterprise. Though, it is a not-for-profit that generates over \$US400M each year in cookie sales. However, their purpose for generating such profits is to advance their stated mission, of ‘*building character and skills in girls for success in the real world*’. Identifying the Girl Scouts of America as a Social Enterprise serves to highlight two of the important hallmarks of a successful Social Enterprise; namely that it is both mission driven and commercially successful within a well-defined market niche.

In its strictest sense any enterprise that generates and retains profits for advancing a social, environmental, or humanitarian purpose (as distinct from the sole purpose of growing the business, or distributing profit to shareholders) could be defined as a Social Enterprise. Here though it should also be noted that a Social Enterprise can emerge as being distinct from a ‘collective’ or ‘co-operative’ enterprise, which might exist for the sole purpose of ‘profiting its members’, rather than the pursuit of a broader social agenda. To help deal with such complexities of form and function, Hayllar and Wettenhall (2011) suggest that when thinking about a definition, it might be more helpful to consider Social Enterprise as *an activity*, that is, *a way of doing business*, rather than a distinct business form or type of legal entity.

For current purposes therefore, Social Enterprise emerges as a hybrid business model. It integrates many of the social values traditionally associated with the community services not-for-profit (charity) sector, with those of the for-profit, commercial sector. In essence, Social Enterprises have as their foundation both a strong sense of mission *and* a commercially viable business model.

For any ADE, embarking on a mission to support the social and economic inclusion of people with Intellectual Disability, and seeking to do this in a commercially viable way, will require thought to be given to:

- what they are seeking to achieve, and why this is important;
- how they might achieve this; and,
- importantly, the extent to which this is congruent with the needs and aspirations of the people with disability they seek to serve.

In addressing these questions, it will be important to give consideration to both the ethical integrity and commercial viability of any such proposal.

What follows therefore are the results of a review of the available literature, both peer-reviewed and the grey literature. It is intended to both inform and promote discussion within the ADE sector as it investigates the suitability of, and options for, harnessing Social Enterprise in its support of people with disability to achieve social inclusion.

2. Literature search and retrieval strategy

Given the relative ambiguity of what constitutes a Social Enterprise in the Australian context, an initial literature search was conducted using the term “social enterprise” and confining the search to peer reviewed journal articles available online. This search generated 3,686 search results across 50 categories. The addition of the term “open employment” reduced the number to 9 results however, none of these results had any relationship to Social Enterprises as envisaged for the current purposes (i.e., providing employment opportunities for people with disability). For example, The San Diego State University’s Zahn Innovation Centre has identified ten successful Social Enterprises. However, none of these have a focus on people with a disability. In a similar vein, Forbes Magazine reports a list of the world’s top 30 Social Entrepreneurs (28 Americans), none of which had a specific focus on work involving people with a disability. Here though, an examination of the activities of these Social Enterprises can provide insight into the essential characteristics and working of successful Social Enterprise (Dees, 1998).

Removing the term “open employment” and replacing it with “disability” revealed 57 articles however, these results mainly fell into the category of home care, co-ops and various meanings of disability. Using the terms “Social Enterprise” and “supported employment” provided 135 results with a relevant focus on the employment of people with disability.

Whilst a simpler search strategy using the key words “social enterprise” and “supported

employment” might have resulted in a more efficient outcome, the use of the broader search parameters, and their subsequent findings, adds weight to the inference that the term “social enterprise” is still not clearly defined in the sense of a pure business model. Here though, it should be noted that the terms “supported employment” and “open employment”, as used in the search strategy, can have different meanings in different settings; where ‘supported employment’ in overseas settings can refer to business models that, in Australia, are distinguished as either ‘sheltered workshops’ or ‘open employment’.

There follows a synopsis and critique of the literature addressing the four primary questions: (1) what are the essential features of Social Enterprise; (2) what are the enablers and barriers which have previously been identified in the implementation of successful Social Enterprises; (3) what advantages might Social Enterprises offer with respect to the promotion of the social and economic inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disability; and (4) how a Social Enterprise model might prove to be both an ethically responsible and commercially viable legal entity.

3. What are the essential features of a Social Enterprise?

Lehner (2011) described Social Enterprise as a business model of a non-government entity that fulfils ‘a social need’ using market based approaches to generate the resources (income) necessary to both be financially viable and address the identified social need it was established to address. Social Enterprises have also been described in arguably more nuanced ways; as businesses that seek to use ‘job creation and pathways to employment’ as a tool to create social impact for people with barriers to inclusion (Paluch, Fossey, & Harvey, 2012; Williams, Fossey, & Harvey, 2012; Smith et al., 2010). These studies refer to Social Enterprise as a category of business that have typically focused on the provision of employment for people from marginalised sectors of the community.

Consistent with the focus on those who are socially and economically marginalised in the community, Paluch et al. (2012) and William et al. (2012) specifically focused on businesses established for the employment of people with mental illness. They identified firms to be Social Enterprises where at least fifty percent of the workforce had some type of mental illness. Notably, they distinguished Social

Enterprises from other business models such as Sheltered Workshops. They observe that the latter provided employment primarily for people with developmental or intellectual disability, where the majority of employees were persons with disability, and persons without disability typically assumed supervisory roles as distinct from being predominantly fellow-employees with those with a disability. Notably, in the context of Social Enterprise (unlike ‘sheltered employment’), workers are all attributed the socially valued status and rights of ‘employees’, rather than being considered ‘clients’ of the service.

Zaniboni, Fraccaroli, Villotti, and Corbiere (2011) examined Social Enterprises in Italy and noted that they shared similar characteristics to vocational rehabilitation services, with ‘place and train models’ of engagement. In Australia, similar models have existed since that mid 1950’s, when the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS) was established to work with people with ‘non-life long disability’ to re-enter the workforce. The CRS operated within mainstream employment services, under the guise of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). It is now known as Disability Management Services (DMS). Its counterpart within the lifelong disability sector is the Disability Employment Service – Employment Support Service (DES-ESS). These services have no strict model of operation, and have used both ‘train and place’ and ‘place and train’ approaches to their work.

Gidron (2014) argues for a new approach to Social Enterprises, called *Market Oriented Social Enterprise*. Such enterprises are defined as “organisational entities, regardless of their legal status, that have social (or environmental) objectives, and strive to use sales of products or services in the open market as the sole source of their revenue.” This approach serves to reinforce the earlier proposition that in developing our understanding of, and indeed a strategy to advance, Social Enterprise, it might be best to first investigate the potential *activity*, rather than the structure within which that activity is to be implemented (Hayller & Wettenhall, 2011; Parker Harris, Renko, & Caldwell, 2014). Here it should also be noted that, consistent with the current emphasis on person-centred services and the co-production of supports, involvement with people with disability in defining the desired activity would be paramount.

Gidron (2014) cites the work of Katz and Page (2010) in arguing that Market Orientated Social Enterprises fulfil three primary social roles: (1) contribution to the economy in that they created value

by the creation of new conditions of employment for people with a disability within the economy; (2) contribution to society in so far as they employ people with a disability to produce products or deliver services that can be used by people in everyday life; and (3) contribution to the individual which is highlighted by the profit imperative and the change in status of the person with a disability from client to worker. Importantly, they introduce and emphasise the principal and practice that the person with a disability is a fully paid worker (an employee of a business, not the client of a service), who shares in and enjoys all the rights and responsibilities of peer workers/employees without disability.

In summary, based on the current review, the essential features of Social Enterprise are:

- a business activity that is commercially viable (addressing an identified market niche), generating sufficient income to meet all the usual obligations of a business entity, including the payment of a *living wage* to all its employees;
- the primary purpose of the business activity is to address an identified social need, such as the social and economic inclusion of people who experience marginalisation in the community;
- staffing arrangements are such that marginalised persons are both the focus of the mission and actively engaged (i.e., employed) in the business, commonly reflect near equal proportions of those persons whose needs are the focus of the businesses’ mission, and others from the mainstream of the community;
- all workers are ‘employees’, with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with this socially valued role, not ‘clients’ or ‘service recipients’;
- work allocations (together with potential career and promotional pathways) overall do not distinguish between employees in terms of if they are a member of a focus population, or from the mainstream of the community, with wage structures reflecting this relative equality in the distribution of responsibility.

4. What are the enablers and barriers that have been identified in the implementation of successful Social Enterprises?

Concerning the employment of people with disability in particular, Gidron (2014) highlights the

use of a ‘strengths based approach’; looking for and harnessing the otherwise unrealised potential of the person. In practice, when appraising a person’s vocational potential and, for example, their capacity to participate in a Social Enterprise (or other vocational activity), Gidron’s approach would emphasise the assessment of what people can do, rather than what they can’t do (or need to be trained in, or up-skilled to do), and use this as the basis of their initial job search and placement. This approach is somewhat akin to the ‘place and train model’, in contrast to the ‘train and place model’. Arguably, the former provides for a speedier vocational placement and, following initial placement based on the person’s existing strengths, the opportunity to provide in-service training in the context of real tasks under real conditions.

Furthermore, the success of any business can, to a substantial degree, rest with the work performance of its employees, which in turn is linked closely with their intention and motivation to work. Consistent with this, Zaniboni et al. (2011), in examining the factors contributing to the success of a Social Enterprise, identified the importance of measuring the ‘work intention’ of those employed. It could be that the ‘intention to work’ of the individual is a stronger predictor of their vocational success than their entry level skills, and by implication the success of the business.

The focus on assessing the individual’s ‘vocational intention’ was a feature of the employment strategies originally developed by Marc Gold in the 1970’s (Gold, 1978) and based on the Ecological Inventory Strategy developed by Lou Brown (Brown, L., Falvey, M., Vincent, L., Kayn, N., Johnson, F., Ferrara-Parish, P., & Grunewald, L., 1980). These processes have been refined by the Griffin Hammis Associates in their “Discovering Personal Genius” (DPG) assessment tool (Griffin-Hammis, 2012). These more recent developments now consider not just what type of employment a person wants, but also the other domains in a person’s life which might relate to, effect, or be affected by their employment. These processes form part of what is referred to as Customised Employment.

Customised Employment as a practice has its strongest evidence base for work involving people with mental illness (Wehman, Kregel, & Seyfarth, 1985). However, in practice there are many organisations that have adopted this term without a real understanding of what constitutes ‘customisation’. This confusion has in part developed where ‘customisation’ has been misunderstood as a ‘service activity’,

or a way of providing employment, rather than a distinct ‘type of employment’ (Wehman, Sale, & Parent (1992).

The *Discovery* process and *Customised Employment*, when well implemented, addresses some of the criticisms of the current Supported Wage Systems (SWS) which has come to dominate the employment of people with Intellectual Disability, and other cognitive impairments; including the absence of skill development, job mobility and career pathways, and consequently the “pinning down” of clients in low skilled and low paid employment, typically conducted in isolation from the wider community (Gustafsson, Peralta, & Danermark, 2014).

Customised Employment is a strength’s based process that looks at the needs and interests of the person with a disability, and matches those to the needs of the employer. Techniques such as ‘job carving’ and ‘job restructuring’ are used to tailor employment to fit both the needs of the person with a disability and the productivity requirements of the workplace (Griffin, Hammis, & Geary, 2007). At its heart, *Customised Employment* is about individualising the ‘client – employer’ relationship such that the needs of each are mutually understood and addressed.

Discussion concerning Social Enterprises often raises the issue of *entrepreneurship*. There is a commonly held public perception of what an entrepreneur is, in particular within the context of profit incentivised capitalism. However, in terms of discussions regarding Social Enterprises entrepreneurship has a very different meaning.

Social entrepreneurship as might be involved in a Social Enterprise, is described as a process that transforms organisations, leading them to consider ‘bigger picture’ social problems, in addition to the day-to-day essentials of operating a viable business. Social entrepreneurs not only identify issues, but also strategise and leverage resources to achieve both the commercial viability of a venture (e.g., market share and profit) and to achieve socially valued outcomes (e.g., the social and economic inclusion of marginalised people) (cf Hayllar & Wettenhall, 2011; Bornstein & Davis, 2010). Social entrepreneurship can therefore be considered vital to the success of any social enterprise.

In addition to entrepreneurship, Gidron’s (2014) has identified the importance for leaders within a Social Enterprise to have an in-depth understanding of the business dynamics that leverage and give rise to what is termed ‘shared value’ in the operation of the business activity. This assertion of the importance of

having in place people who understand, and can both promote and leverage ‘shared value’ is also emphasised by Lehner (2011). Lehner’s work highlights the example of the manager of a not-for-profit who refers to herself explicitly as a *social entrepreneur*. Lehner observes and reports the manager’s work practices to include constant innovation across shifts and business cycles, and constant efforts to listen to and communicate with all stakeholders in the enterprise, in order to foster a shared commitment to and achievement of the firm’s social goals.

A further critical enabler emerges as the business venture’s (and in particular the leadership team’s) commitment to customising employment activity (and the necessary supports) to address the needs of the individual, so that the collective effort might be commercially viable, and have integrity to mission. An example of this would be the Walgreens distribution warehouses in the USA. The operations of these warehouses, while also employing people from the mainstream of the community, have been tailored to meet the needs of staff with a disability. Procedures include the provision of mentorship, and customised employment support to assist employees with disability attain competence in entry level positions, acquire the skills needed to move between tasks within the workplace, gain promotion within the warehouses, as well as progress to work outside of Walgreens.

Parker Harris et al. (2014) argue that social entrepreneurship is itself a pathway to employment for individuals with a disability. They advance the view that rather than focusing simply on teaching people task specific skills, in-service education needs also focus on forming the individual employee as a social entrepreneur in their own right. Parker Harris et al. would assert that quality employment opportunities, such as those to be found in Social Enterprises, intentionally (plan-fully) leverage every day workplace experiences (both challenges and successes) to promote a person’s problem solving skills (e.g., identification of an issue, generation of a goal, harnessing available resources, and deployment of those resources to the identified ends), and their confidence in applying these skills; in essence fostering each employee to be a Social Entrepreneur to the extent that they are able, and in a way consistent with their own aspirations.

Incorporating the intentional promotion of Social Entrepreneurship among employees, in addition to task specific skills teaching, provides the foundation for people to increase their contribution to, and control of, the Social Enterprise. Furthermore, it can

open-up opportunities for individuals to not only pursue open employment beyond the Social Enterprise, but also move to self-employment and other micro-enterprise business opportunities.

Micro Enterprises have proven viable pathways to employment for people with disability (Conroy, Irvine, & Ferris, 2009). The Micro Enterprise model is a rights-based approach. It has a strong focus on empowering individuals as self-directed entrepreneurs, and not just establishing them as a ‘worker’ for someone else. Micro Enterprises, as a form of Social Enterprise, seek to promote for the individual independence and a sense of achievement, improved community connections and inclusion, and reduction in reliance on government (e.g., social security benefits).

For example, The Community Living Project, an Australian (Adelaide) based disability support group created the Career Creation Micro Enterprise Project (CCMEP) to facilitate self-employment opportunities. Funded as a trial project by public and government, the project looked to support individuals with disabilities to pursue this avenue by providing assistance to define business ideas and then provide information and resources to proceed with individual business plans. The process uses a holistic approach by involving the person, their friends and family (i.e., a circle of support) to assist in developing the business idea that matches the person’s interests, abilities and resources (i.e., a person centred approach), based on the principles espoused by the Discovery/DPG approach (described earlier). This process is conducted over a three to six-month timeframe during which they the person’s aspirations, skills, talents and capacity are considered. Consistent with these discoveries, likely products or service that the person could bring to market and, importantly, which would be valued (i.e., purchased at commercial rates) in the local community are explored.

However, one of the issues that the CCMEP confronted was the initial low expectations of family about what might be achieved. Also, over time, it was observed that in some situations there emerged the potential for family support to “take over” the project from the person with disability (e.g., to increase efficiencies or productivity, and in turn grow the business beyond something the person with disability could control in their own right). Furthermore, in an attempt to broaden the process and spread the concept to other organisations, it became apparent that the risk of the client losing control of their enterprise would be a factor, particularly if they were partnered with

an able bodied person as a support partner (Barratt, 2016).

These issues highlight the continued struggle to raise community, support organisation, and family expectations regarding the capacity, and interest of individuals to progress beyond ADEs and 'sheltered employment. Despite these potential barriers, the CCMEP has to date supported seven individuals to develop micro enterprises, consistent with the principles and practices of Social Enterprise and in keeping with practices of the wider economy (Parker Harris et al., 2014).

Clearbrook, based in Illinois, USA is a disability support organisation that provides avenues for open employment through a suite of services that provide vocational training leading to open employment, and an independent community employment program for clients utilising Customised Employment strategies (as described above). Coming from a background of being a more 'traditional' disability service provider, they partner with Social Enterprises geared towards working with people with disability, so as to achieve outcomes for clients. An example of one success using such a collaboration is that of Mr Matthew Cochran, who now runs a successful micro enterprise servicing drink vending machines in Chicago (www.yikesbev.com). Working with Total Link 2 Community, a consumer developed Social Enterprise, Clearbrook utilised the DPG Customised Employment program and a dedicated employment specialist to assist Matthew to establish his micro enterprise.

In 2012, the Mental Health and Disability Services division of the Iowa Department of Human Services utilised an Employment Development Initiative (EDI) grant to increase self-employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including people with mental health issues. This program supported eighteen men and women to create unique businesses that focused on their strengths. Notably, they also harnessed the experience and support of a number of existing micro enterprises in the region. This regional collaboration not only supported the planning and ultimate success of the new businesses, but also minimised the chances of duplicating or indeed competing with existing local business. The enterprises covered a wide variety of occupational pursuits; such as diary calf care, lock smithing, taxidermy, optical lens production, photo booth servicing, and motivational speaking.

These micro enterprises are examples of the diversity of employment opportunities that are available

to people with disability, if employment support services (and families) think beyond the traditional avenues of packing, gardening, and other traditional service roles. What is also clear from these examples is that the capacity to be an entrepreneur, and the skills associated with entrepreneurial activity, are important factors in the success of social enterprise, and in particular where micro-enterprises are involved.

The enablers of a successful Social Enterprise therefore emerge as:

- Strengths-based assessment guides initial employment, placement, task allocation, and subsequent in-service training;
- Work intentions are a guiding force to initial employment and placement, rather than just a focus on skills;
- Customisation of work activities and production requirements, and the training needed to achieve in these activities;
- Social Entrepreneurship as a driving force, and especially a characteristic of key leaders;
- Fostering social entrepreneurship as a characteristic (and ability) of each individual employee is an intentional goal of the business;
- Leadership intentionally and strategically fosters and leverages shared values among the entire workforce, to maintain a common focus on the businesses mission, recognising that this is also a key driver of commercial success;
- Having a vision for, and providing tailored support to the individual to achieve a range of socially valued employment outcomes, internally and externally to the business. This vision could encompass: increased independence and self-direction on existing tasks; movement between tasks within the Social Enterprise; promotion to more complex duties, including mentoring others; pursuit of open employment; or the pursuit of self-employment (e.g., micro enterprise).

When considering the barriers to the successful implementation of Social Enterprise, there is a paucity of literature that has investigated, reported and made these factors explicit. At its most simplistic level however, it would be reasonable to assert that the failure to attend to, and plan to ensure the presence of, each of the enablers as documented above could be considered a barrier to the successful implementation of Social Enterprise.

Consistent with the experience of other areas of reform in health and social services, one of the most

substantial barriers to the successful implementation of a new policy and service activity is that of entrenched values and beliefs among existing personnel that are contra to the new initiative (Schalock & Verdugo, 2012). Sometimes these entrenched values and beliefs can be addressed through staff education. However, in seeking to shift such values and beliefs, it must be acknowledged that, for some, the call to shift values, beliefs and subsequent practices can cause substantial anxiety; people can be very afraid of trying something new.

Effective change management processes (Schalock & Verdugo, 2012) are therefore critical when seeking to shift existing organisations ADEs, and their employees (both those with and without disability) to a Social Enterprise model. Furthermore, it needs to be acknowledged that some people might choose not to make the transition. Provision therefore needs to be made to support the exit of some persons to other opportunities, possibly more aligned with their goals and expectations.

In terms of sourcing open employment opportunities, as one potential output of a Social Enterprise, a notable barrier to employment is acknowledged to be employer perceptions and concerns (fears) in the wider business community regarding people with a disability (Henry, Petkauskos, Stanislawzyk, & Vogt, 2014). It's important to note that the business of business, outside of Social Enterprise, is solely to make profits for owners and shareholders; and certainly not to act as benevolent societies. In such settings, the only reason to employ someone is if the business has a need, and the person available is the right person with the right skill set for the job. Furthermore, employers continue to express concerns about the impact of impairment on work capacity, such as reduced output, absenteeism, additional supervision requirements, as well as on potential adverse customer perceptions of the business (Henry et al., 2014). Additionally, employers continue to express concern about employing people with a disability in the absence of a government wage subsidy (Gustafsson, et al. (2014). Interestingly, similar attitudinal barriers have been reported by persons with disability when seeking support from disability service providers to establish self-employment options (Parker Harris et al., 2014).

However, these attitudinal barriers are observed to lessened if employers have some experience of disability (Smith, 2015). An example of such an employer is Mark Wafer, a Canadian franchisee of Tim Horton's, a donut and sandwich outlet. Through

his outlets Mark has employed over one hundred people with a variety of disabilities. They make limited accommodations for their staff with disabilities, and all of Mark's staff are paid award wages. Mark Wafer cites the example of a pastry chef he hired who is deaf. During the interview process pre hire, he pointed out to the chef that the pastry ovens had audible alarms to highlight when something was cooked. He asked the potential chef how she would cope with this and she replied that 'alarms are for lazy chefs'. This young lady turned out to be 30% more productive than previous able bodied chefs, and is still today the benchmark when Mark hires new chefs. Notably, Mark himself has a hearing impairment.

The absence of, or a poorly defined market niche will represent an almost insurmountable barrier to success. With this in mind, it is critical to conduct and formulate a business plan. However, given Social Enterprise presents as a unique hybrid in the business sense, as previously discussed, it is essential that such a business plan scopes both the needs of the local community in which it is proposed to be established, and the aspirations and goals (and intention to work) of the potential workforce.

Failure to plan to, and effectively communicate with, the community (the market/potential customers) also arises as a major barrier to success. People need to know the Social Enterprise exists, they need to know what it produces, the quality of the product, and be given a reason to make it their preferred supplier. On this last point, depending upon the product, it might be a matter of price competition in the market place (with existing businesses), the ability to bring a new product to market or to a new geographic location, ease of availability of the product, the quality of the product, and the ethics associated with the mission of the enterprise. All these issues need to be investigated and addressed in the development of the initial business case.

5. What are the advantages that Social Enterprise could offer people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities?

In Australia, government policy supporting the employment of people with a disability has generally focused on specialist disability employment service programs (Smith, 2015). These efforts have typically focused on the concept of 'job matching'. To facilitate this, government funded employment services have

directed their energy at finding ‘a job’ and providing short term skills teaching specific to the entry level tasks required by the employer. However, reports have revealed that in a market environment where payment to job support providers is made on the basis of ‘successful placement’ (e.g., stable employment over a 6-month period), all too often an “any job will do” approach is adopted (Smith, 2015). Consequently, many people with disability are at risk of placement in low skilled positions; such as collecting shopping trollies, rubbish collection, and basic cleaning jobs (Smith, 2015). Such work, though in ‘open employment’, often leaves individuals socially isolated in the workplace, and rarely provides the opportunity to work *with* others, and progress a career (Gustafsson et al. (2014).

Existing alongside these ‘open employment’ efforts, there have been sheltered workshops or ADE’s (Department of Social Security, 2015). In these settings people with disability are often relegated to the role of ‘client’, rather than ‘employee’, are limited in their opportunity achieve a living wage, remain dependent upon the Disability Support Pension as their primary source of income, and have limited opportunity to develop the skills necessary to facilitate their movement within or out of sheltered employment.

With these considerations in mind, a well implemented Social Enterprise has the potential to redress many of the identified failures inherent in, or at best the unintended consequences of, the existing sheltered employment and open employment placement systems. Consistent with the Service Accomplishments Framework (originally identified by John O’Brien in the 1980s, and subsequently revised), the literature identifies some of the advantages of Social Enterprise for people with disability to include:

- *Respect and Dignity* – people have the opportunity to move from being ‘clients’ of supported employment or a placement service, to employees in their own right. In particular, the remuneration expectations inherent in Social Enterprise are likely to enable people to achieve a living wage, or to at least be on a trajectory towards earning a living wage. Furthermore, the staffing ratios (e.g., persons with and without disability) and task allocation within the workplace tend to reflect a greater equality in the workplace than in more traditional sheltered employment, or indeed in open employment. For example, all staff have, consistent with their
- experience, skills and aspirations, the opportunity to assume the role of mentor, instructor, leading hand, or supervisor, and some could progress to management roles.
- *Skills and Competence* – people have the opportunity to acquire a mix of skills, that equip them to move both between tasks within the Social Enterprise and beyond; i.e., they have the opportunity for a career path, not just a job. The associated processes are supported by mechanisms such as strengths-based assessment, customised work allocations, and an emphasis on the provision of mentorship (rather than simply supervision). In some Social Enterprises, the provision of accredited work-place training, including Traineeships and Apprenticeships, provide a formal pathway for personal and professional development. Furthermore, the Social Enterprises will typically intentionally and explicitly identify and celebrate employee success (i.e., the attainment and demonstration of competence). In doing this, the enterprise is recognising that the achievement of the individual (and not just the profit margin) is critical to the success of the enterprise and the attainment of its mission overall.
- *Presence and Participation* – in order that a Social Enterprise meet the requirements to be a viable business, its products or services by necessity must be something that the local community knows is available, wants and values. Consequently, both the results of their labours and the employees themselves become visible in their local community, and come to be seen as valued contributors to that community. Intentional opportunities for work beyond the Social Enterprise further enhance participation for individuals in the wider community.
- *Choice and Control* – given Social Enterprise is driven equally by the need for commercial viability and its social mission, the prevailing ethos is conducive to extending to employees, opportunities to co-create their employment, and to varying degrees direct their work and that of the activities of the business overall. Importantly, because the business entity exists not only to be commercially viable for its own purposes, but also to fulfil a mission with respect to a group in the community who are in part represented directly in its workforce, it is incumbent upon the business enterprise to extend to its employees, opportunities (and the supports necessary)

to contribute to business planning and decision making, to the extent they aspire and are able.

In terms of practical demonstration of the advantages of Social Enterprise to people with disability in particular, a number of business models have been formally investigated and described in the literature. They include work with both people with disability while at school and later in life, as well as with other marginalised groups in the community.

Government funded *Transition To Work* (TTW) programs exist to support students with a disability in high school in their transition from school to employment. These are government funded programs that provide up to two years of support for school leavers with a disability to find employment. However, these programs tend to operate quite separately from mainstream disability employment programs with little crossover, limiting their ability to provide a seamless transition to employment, although recent changes made to these programs by the Australian government may make transitions between the various government employment programs easier.

When working with people after their transition from school, Kernot and McNeill (2011) examined thirty-three Social Enterprises across Australia. These businesses covered a range of industries and service types, including: delivery services; environmental work; food production; arts media and design; advocacy; and information technology. However, only two of these businesses had chosen to focus on employment pathways specifically for people with a disability; Nundah Community Enterprises Cooperative (NCEC), and Outlook Victoria. The remaining enterprises had a variety of foci, ranging from youth, migrant and refugees, indigenous populations, and social/environmental causes.

Outlook Victoria operates a number of divisions, providing services across environmental recycling, disability services, employment, and a community centre that offers a range of personal development and community interest activities. The advantages and outcomes for people with disability have been reported to include the receipt of award wages, opportunities to acquire skills through traineeships, which can provide clear pathways to career and other employment options.

NCEC operates a café, and a work crew that provides contract garden maintenance for commercial, government, and domestic clients. The advantages and outcomes for people with disability have been reported to include improved productivity, reduction

in social welfare receipts, increased community involvement and a workplace designed around the needs of the employee, rather than trying to operate as a one size fits all organisation.

Many of the advantages of Social Enterprise (as discussed above) can also be realised in the context of existing commercial businesses that are prepared to incorporate the principles and practices that characterise a Social Enterprise. For example, in New Zealand CQ Hotels have a number of staff with disabilities, and have an active plan to increase their total staff with disabilities to 25% of their workforce, all of whom are paid commercial award wages. Underpinning this commitment, and what could be said to amount to the development of a Social Enterprise within an existing business, CQ Hotels developed a value system to guide their business plan; the first principle of which was that 'CQ was a place for everyone'. The business plan was for CQ Hotels to deliver a quality product for which their customers were prepared to pay a market price, along with giving their staff a sense of pride in themselves and their workplace, and be seen to be giving something back to the community.

It meant that as a business, CQ Hotels would capitalise on every commercially viable opportunity and commit themselves to working with and supporting the diversity of persons that exists within their local community. It meant engaging with and supporting all people within the community. Management took the view that if your business plan does not align with the principles of universal access (both in its infrastructure and operations), then you risk excluding up to a quarter of society. In the case of CQ Hotels, building the right culture, right attitude and making the operational accommodations that, in hindsight, were relatively easy to implement, as well as attending to the physical accessibility of the premises, made the hotel more attractive to new markets, such as the aged population. Critical to success, has been the full support and active involvement of CQ Hotel's Board and Executive Management.

Notably, CQ Hotels is a for-profit enterprise subject to commercial imperatives, and not a benevolent or charitable organisation with government funding or donors providing financial resources. While not purely a Social Enterprise, CQ Hotels highlight the important characteristics of being a profitable business with a clearly articulated social mission. They highlight the application of a strength-based approach to hiring, together with a focus on the individual's intention to work (Zaniboni et al., 2011).

Importantly, they recognise that individual ‘intention’ is a key factor in promoting self-determination in career planning for people with a disability (Wehmeyer, Parent, Lattimore, Obremski, Poston, & Rousso, 2009). Furthermore, they recognise that promoting self-determination is critical to successful employment outcomes, for the individual and the business.

In summary therefore, the potential advantages that Social Enterprise could offer people with Intellectual Disability have been identified to include:

- An increased focus on the vocational aspirations and the potential (strengths) of people with disability (embedding a person-centred and career goal orientated approach to the provision of employment services)
- Opportunities to explore and move to, and between, higher skilled and better paid work
- Opportunities to explore vocational options that have a relatively higher social value/status than those commonly inherent in ADEs and other forms of ‘sheltered employment’.
- Economic security, including stability of employment and the payment of a living wage (which can in turn contribute to opportunities for better health promotion, educational opportunities, and social opportunities)
- Social cohesion and social inclusion, nurturing and building on connections in and links to the wider community (i.e., person-to-person relationships, both in the work place, and those developed outside of work as a result of being a ‘worker in the community’) through work activities and the products produced
- Social and cultural empowerment, through policies and practices that intentionally leverage vocational opportunities to enable people to participate in society, have good health, life-long education, and support to exercise choice and self-determination at work and outside of work.

6. How might a Social Enterprise model prove to be both an ethically responsible and commercially viable legal entity, in the context of ADE’s to promote employment opportunities and social inclusion for people with a disability?

Consistent with the diversity of opinion as to what constitutes a Social Enterprise, and the diversity

of social projects undertaken by Social Enterprises, there is yet to be a consensus view as to the most appropriate organisational structure. However, at this point in time, most Social Enterprises within Australia operate under a not-for-profit/charity status, either as incorporated bodies (under state legislation) or as companies (under commonwealth legislation).

Situated within this discussion is the potential for dual identities within one organisation (Smith et al., 2010). A clear example of this, though in the USA, is that of Girl Scouts of America (GSA). GSA generates over \$800M in cookies sales each year, and consequently ranks as the third largest business in the ‘cookie industry’ for the three-month period of the year when cookies are being sold. Notably, despite these sales figures, the GSA retains its USA taxation status as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charity.

Governments globally in recent years have begun to tackle the issue of appropriate legal structures to facilitate the evolution of ‘public interest companies’, such as Social Enterprises. Once such evolution is the development of Benefit Corporations in the USA, which is defined as a social purpose company that commits to a social or environmental cause, and utilises its profitable bottom line to further such causes. Essentially, they are legal structures that allow the directors to make decisions that place primacy of public benefit over profits, as opposed to normal company structures that hold directors responsible for making decisions solely in the interest of profit and shareholders.

In 2005, the United Kingdom introduced legislation to create Community Interest Companies (CIC’s) as a legal framework for Social Enterprises as an alternative structure for organisations that wanted to trade for a social purpose, but not necessarily seek charity status (i.e., they intended to create profit in the usual business sense). In order to ensure that the company traded in a manner that addressed its stated social purpose, these firms have in place an “asset lock provision” in their articles of incorporation. This ensures that the profits and assets of the company are devoted solely for the benefit of the community. In an Australian context, such legal mechanisms have some commonality with the provisions required in the articles of association for Australian not-for-profit companies as defined by the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

Within the European Union (EU), a number of countries have adopted a social co-operative model to give legal status to Social Enterprises (Fazzi, 2012). Social Co-ops are described as autonomous

associations of people that unite to meet their common social, economic and cultural cause. Spain refers to them as ‘worker companies’ and they are subject to the same operational requirements as mainstream businesses. The principle discussion at this point in time in the EU appears centred around governance structures, and as to whether the number of stakeholders has an impact on the efficiency of the organisation.

It has been noted that single stakeholder structures can be more coherent in pursuit of efficiencies however, recent trends suggest that models of SE with structures consisting of workers with higher-level skill sets are overtaking the original models that consisted family members, volunteers or other members of the community. What is interesting here is that there is some commonality with the notion of micro-boards that has been an emerging trend in microbusiness models overseas and, more recently, in Australia, that bear some likeness to the original models of social enterprise. In this context, micro-boards act as advisors to microenterprise operators, with current discussions regarding the structure of such relating to incorporation or not.

The notion of a Social Benefit Company is starting to develop in Australia, as not-for-profits seek to deal with the ‘identity issues’ (and associated public perceptions) created by not taking on the increasingly hard to obtain ‘charity status’. One such Australian company is Chuffed, that was initially founded as a ‘deductible gift recipient’ or charity. However, Chuffed soon found the funding limitations imposed on charities compromised its ability to raise capital to pursue its social goals. The founders of Chuffed were attracted to the USA model of public benefit corporations however, they cited a lack of case law to support such a proposition in Australia. The founders therefore invested in legal advice, and developed what they believe is an appropriate structure for themselves. Notably, Chuffed included a “Mission Lock” statement (akin to the UK model described above) within its legal structure that requires 100% of shareholder agreement to alter the purpose of the organisation, in an attempt to ensure that the original founders purpose can be protected.

However, there is a view emerging among those currently working within a Social Enterprise framework across Australia that over time, as more organisations follow the social benefit route, it is likely that corporations’ legislation, at both a state and commonwealth levels, will need to evolve to cover this new breed of not-for-profit hybrids. What is apparent at this point in time is that there is no

consensus as to the most effective legal structures for supporting Social Enterprise, and that the immediate way forward is to make use of the legal structures currently in place at state and commonwealth levels, but tailoring the articles of incorporation to ensure an appropriate relationship between mission and profit, consistent with the principles of Social Enterprise, are made both explicit and binding.

In summary, Social Enterprise could prove to be both an ethically responsible and commercially viable legal entity, to promote employment opportunities and social inclusion for people with a disability by means of:

- A business model established under a for-profit or not-for-profit/charity status, either as incorporated bodies (under state legislation) or as companies (under commonwealth legislation).
- Having governance provisions that clearly articulate the ‘social purpose’ of the business, such that the directors are empowered to make decisions that place primacy of community/public benefit over profits, though balanced against the need to remain a viable business.
- Including in the governance provisions an “asset lock provision” or a “mission lock provision” that ensures any surplus (profit) that is realised, and the accumulated value of other assets of the business, are devoted solely for the benefit of the community.
- Exploring different models, based on the needs and priorities of the people involved. These might include single person micro-enterprises, co-operatives or collectives, as well as more traditional business models.

7. Towards an Australian model of Social Enterprise

At the heart of many ADE’s mission is the need to support client choice, self-determination, aspirations and ambition. The NDIS and other government sponsored labour market programmes (e.g., those providing support to people with and without disability to develop small-business/self-employment options) will provide more opportunity for people with disability to pursue vocational goals, which will include support to pursue employment.

Disability Service providers have within them the potential to become leaders in supporting client choice and rights to employment outside of the

existing supported employment models. At the same time, ADE's can develop new opportunities within the existing supported employment services (e.g., its Australian Disability Enterprises) for people to acquire skills and confidence, and to experience career paths both within and external to existing services.

A number of disability service providers currently run both a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and ADE's, which share some synergies. These two business arms are ideally placed to support the development of a Social Enterprise model that incorporates opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills to broaden their ambitions and increase their capacity to participate in a variety of sectors within the labour market; including enhanced supported employment, open employment, micro-enterprise and self-employment. Whether this is pursued under the existing structures or whether service providers create a new social enterprise to support employment is entirely a management decision for the service provider.

The overall multi-element approach proposed in this paper is consistent with the recommendations proposed by the Department of Social Security, within the Disability Employment Discussion Paper (2015). The NDIS provides an additional catalyst to develop this multi-element approach, in response to increased funding for clients to pursue employment.

Disability Service providers already provides lifestyle support services. Adding employment support to the suite of current lifestyle support services would increase the range of outcomes available to provider customers, potentially attract new customers, and create new revenue streams to support the service providers overall mission. As an example, a disability service provider could work with customers to provide specialised assessments relating to the customised employment process (as described above). As at 1st August 2015, Commonwealth funding for such services were listed at \$172.13 per hour. The skills required to administer this type of assessment and generate the appropriate supports are similar to those required for the facilitation of current person centred planning processes. After this, the base rate for providing on-the-job support/post-placement support is \$AUS 54.46 per hour, with rates being higher based on the category of client and their support needs.

Service provider experience in ADE's provides a good starting base and an ideal environment for many people to develop open employment skills. For those

wanting to pursue open or self-employment, the process starts with a customised employment assessment to truly understand the client, their abilities, dreams and the social capital that they can draw on. It is a flexible process that is designed to personalise the relationship between the individual seeking employment and the employer so that both their needs are met.

The assessment process utilised in best practice customised employment is known as *Discovery*/DPG. It is designed to link the person's journey of discovery of their own interests, ambitions and potentials, to the processes of job creation and ongoing supports. It is a non-comparative, non-competitive strategy that utilises community connections and negotiated approaches to businesses to find employment opportunities for clients seeking open employment. The process itself can take from 20 to 60 hours, but averages 30 hours. The process ideally starts in the client's home, which is something that service providers are currently doing with lifestyle support assessments.

The *Discovery* process provides the evidence for the client to pursue either open employment or self-employment. It identifies and highlights the existing social capital the client can draw upon to make their employment dream a reality, or identifies where such social capital need to be built as a first step towards realising their ambitions. *Discovery* stems from the need to address the fact that recent employment practices, although based solidly in person-centered planning, have not proven particularly successful. One key challenge is that the focus of many person-centered approaches is the listing and cultivation of personal interests, knowledge and skills, but without reference to the knowledge, skills and connections of those around them (Keeton, Brooks-Lane, Griffin, & Cassidy, 2015). However, interests and ambitions devoid of related skills (or robust instructional strategies to teach new skills) or enabling connections (social capital), make meaningful and lasting employment a tough goal to achieve. The *Discovery* process addresses this problem by intentionally illuminating the key assets of both the person and their environment.

The difference between jobs developed on the basis of interests alone versus those developed based interests + skills + enabling environments is immediately evident. Assessment of interests + skills might lead the job seeker with an interest in animals to consider not simply spending time with animals, but to become employed sweeping the floors and stocking shelves

at a local pet store or, cleaning-up after the animals at a pet shelter. And, assessment considering interests + skills + enabling environments could help to find such a position and identify a range of supports that could make it possible – getting ready for work, travelling to and from work, developing the on-the-job skills, negotiating the social dynamics of the workplace, and building a presence in the workplace and the wider community. If the *Discovery* process revealed that this same job seeker also had strong skills with computers and social media, she might instead manage the customer database and social media outreach for pet adoptions for that same animal shelter, or start a small business providing this service virtually for pet adoption organizations throughout the region or state.

In short, matching the person's preferred work to existing and teachable skills is crucial and generally leads to higher-paying, more sustainable employment outcomes (Keeton et al., 2015). For clients that pursue open employment, once placed in employment, specialist disability services can provide ongoing placement support until such time as the client develops natural supports in the workplace. It may well be that the client will require ongoing transport and lifestyle supports, but this is very much an individual thing. Should a client fall out of work, the service provider could support the client to find new employment or via the RTO/ADE connection provide additional vocational skills training and experience, again with NDIS support that will lead to new employment opportunities.

The pathway to self-employment or micro enterprise starts in the same place as for the person seeking open employment. The difference being that the additional activities surrounding exploring and validating the idea, developing a business plan and the establishment of a micro-board to advise and support the client come into the frame.

One advantage that disability service providers have over many organisations is that they are generally large community service organisations that purchase a variety of services from outside vendors. It is likely that a number of the clients that develop micro-enterprises could also become suppliers to service provider, which whilst the relationship is strictly based on sound business principles it does have the advantage of furthering the provider's investment in social capital, whilst supporting people with a disability to self-determine and pursue employment on their own terms.

In developing a provider model (or models), the literature suggests four further areas for consideration:

working with employers in the wider labour market; working with staff in Social Enterprises; working with clients; and considering enabling processes.

7.1. Working with employers

The evidence strongly supports the proposition that familiarity with 'disability' improves the employment prospects for people with a disability. Recent activities in Australia by local councils has shown employers are open to the opportunity to employ people with a disability if adequately educated about the 'disability' and 'abilities' of the individual. Over the past year local councils in Melbourne have taken up the challenge of educating local business, with a group of Eastern Melbourne Metro councils running a successful breakfast function for business, which was followed up by one of the councils staging their own business breakfast.

It would be reasonable to assume that business by and large is not well informed about the proposition of employing a person with a disability and the accommodations and supports available from government to assist business to successfully onboard an employee with a disability. It highlights the need to actively engage with business, to offer assistance to customise employment opportunities that address the "jobs behind the jobs" that take employees away from what might be considered core business.

An example would be seamstress in a clothing factory having to replenish raw materials in order to continue sewing. The sewing is the activity that creates the valued end product, but the restocking is a secondary activity that takes the time of a highly skilled worker away from the core business of production. Similarly, answering telephones, taking messages, photocopying and filing all offer opportunities, and depending on the scale of the organisation, could result in the creation of a customised employment opportunity that would improve the overall capacity of the employer organisation.

This highlights the need for customised employment consultants (a potential product that social enterprise could offer at commercial rates) to engage with business and to help them to understand the opportunities that exist to improve the employer bottom-line, whilst creating new employment opportunities. It is this individualising of the employment process for the employer and the client that can promote successful employment outcomes (Griffin et al., 2007).

7.2. Working with Social Enterprise staff

Within any organisation developing a Social Enterprise to create employment opportunities, there will need to be support to create an environment that supports cultural change from the traditional role of client support or trainer, to fellow-employee, coach, employment consultant and business expert. Traditionally disability organisations have focused on lifestyle support and supported employment, or simulated employment. Any move towards an open employment setting will require a culture shift within the organisation that will require the support of management in order to effectively move to a strengths based process that focuses on what the client can do, the skills they have and what can be done to improve their skill set. Whilst it may share similarities with active support, the major difference is the support that needs also to be given to employers and the fading out of the Social Enterprise support as supports in the workplace takeover.

Social Enterprise staff will need to acquire the skills and knowledge to actively pursue customised employment. Staff will also need to acquire a certain level of business understanding in order to relate to organisations and their issues. Entrepreneurship, which is shown to be an essential ingredient in order to innovate (Gidron, 2014) is a new skill set that Social Enterprise staff will need to acquire, particularly in an environment that views the provision of services to people with a disability as a public good, subject to all the market forces that prevail on any private or public for profit organisation (Schalock & Verdugo, 2012). On this point, it might be that new staff need to be recruited, who come with existing entrepreneurial potential.

7.3. Working with clients

Using a person centred approach places the client's wishes and employment aspirations at the centre of the process. Where more individualised self-employment options are identified for a particular person, the development of a micro-board can assist to keep the client at the centre of the process. People with a disability are often subject to the low expectations of family, friends and employers. In part this is due to the construct that they need to be protected from exploitation and the community, a factor that seems counterintuitive to the capture and keep employment offered is supported employment. In reality this is something that clients mention as

a barrier to them achieving their dream of open or self-employment.

The low expectation about ability and the supposed limitations of their disability is often the limiting factor, rather than a person with unique skills that may make a business idea viable with appropriate supports (Parker Harris et al., 2014), which also recognises the person with a disability's unique perspective on unmet needs in the community. An important part of the planning process is the exploration of what about a particular job is important to them. The limitations imposed on a person with a disability can be mitigated by the use of the evidence based employment practices of Discovery/DPG.

Open employment or self-employment foster opportunities for clients to participate in a fully inclusive society, which often defines individuals by their occupation. Clients who work in simulated work settings for sub-minimum wages are unlikely to be perceived as fully-fledged members of society.

7.4. Supportive processes

Creating employment opportunities for people with a disability, whether it is open employment or self-employment through a micro-enterprise will require staff to understand the evidence based practices of customised employment. This will involve developing a sound understanding of the Discovery/DPG process that has been shown to increase the opportunity for successful employment outcomes by focusing on developing the untapped potential of the person with a disability (Gidron, 2014). Allied with this will be the need to apply aspects of the Self-Determined Career Development (SDCD) process that will highlight intent, a factor important to ensure that those clients seeking to go down this pathway are to successfully move to open employment.

The SDCD model is an evidence-based resource developed by the National Gateway to Self Determination consortium, composed of a group of university centers with a focus on developmental disability such as The Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities under the guidance of Professor Michael Wehmeyer, an acknowledged expert in the field of disability, self-determination and employment.

These processes, whilst evidence-based are largely misunderstood and misapplied within the context of open employment services in Australia. The evidence suggests that the compliance nature of the current disability employment system fosters an 'any job will do' approach to employment. True customised

employment focuses on the individual and works towards an outcome that respects the client's career choices, not just a job. It highlights that processes must be put in place that foster and support innovation over compliance.

8. Summary and model building

Social Enterprise is an ethical, commercially viable, and evidence-based approach to conducting business. It has the potential to provide the means by which disability service providers can deliver, consistent with their mission, the outstanding products and services that support people with disability, in all their diversity, to live the life they choose. Importantly, Social Enterprise is one means by which service providers can progress their 'NDIS readiness'.

However, our review of the literature reveals that Social Enterprise, though a feature of the business world since the early 1970s, is still very much in its infancy. Also, notably, it has not until recently been applied to the development of employment opportunities for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. Furthermore, as a concept, it is still evolving and can refer to a wide variety of business models established to address quite disparate social purposes. While there are current research efforts, internationally, attempting to develop a consensus opinion as to what constitutes a Social Enterprise, as a construct it remains open to interpretation.

What can be devised from the range of current businesses that identify as Social Enterprises is that, consistent with the definition proposed by Social Traders Victoria, Social Enterprises are any businesses having a social, cultural or environmental mission or purpose, and which pursues these goals through trading and channelling most of the surplus (profits) of the business towards their mission. Social Enterprise can be observed as being a hybrid business model; integrating many of the social values traditionally associated with the community services not-for-profit (charity) sector, with those of the for-profit, commercial sector. Social Enterprises have as their foundation (ethically and legally) both a strong sense of mission and a recognition of the value of a commercially viable business. As Hayllar and Wettenhall (2011) propose, when thinking about a definition of Social Enterprise, it might be more helpful to consider Social Enterprise as an activity, that is, a way of doing business, rather than a distinct business form, or type of legal entity.

It is evident that the essential features of a Social Enterprise include that it has a clearly articulated (formally documented in its governance) social mission, and the imperative to pursue this within the context of operating a commercially viable business. With respect to operating a viable business, a key feature of Social Enterprise is that they generally pay all employees a living wage, consistent with local, regional, and national expectations (i.e., an award wage). Furthermore, distinctions between staff on the basis of, for example, disability are minimised if not eliminated. For example, the role of leading hand, supervisor or trainer need not be reserved for 'able bodied staff', and non-disabled staff will be employed to do 'shop-floor' production activities alongside persons with disability.

To enable a Social Enterprise to become established, to thrive as a commercially viable business, and achieve its social mission, the consensus in the literature, and in particular the literature concerning Social Enterprises for people with disability, is that it needs to employ strengths-based assessment that includes appraisal of a potential employee's 'intention to work', and their 'aspirations for a career'. Work tasks need to include the capacity for customisation based on individual abilities and aspirations, and are supported by training and coaching support. Furthermore, the support that is provided is not limited to the learning of a specific task on the production line, but includes the skills necessary for pursuit of other tasks and responsibilities (i.e., a career) and, importantly, social inclusion in the workplace. Notably, the literature highlights the importance of entrepreneurship, both as a characteristic of the leadership in Social Enterprise, and as a personal characteristic that should be cultivated among the entire workforce.

The potential advantages that Social Enterprise could offer people with Intellectual Disability in particular have been identified in the literature to include an increased focus on the vocational aspirations and the potential (strengths) of people with disability (embedding a person-centred and career goal orientated approach to the provision of employment services). It has been observed that the Social Enterprise approach has the capacity to not only provide 'a job', but 'a career' where by people can move between tasks within the business and, importantly, move beyond the business. Social Enterprise has the capacity to deliver higher wages, and extend to otherwise disadvantaged and marginalised individuals the dignity and respect of 'real work for real pay' (i.e.,

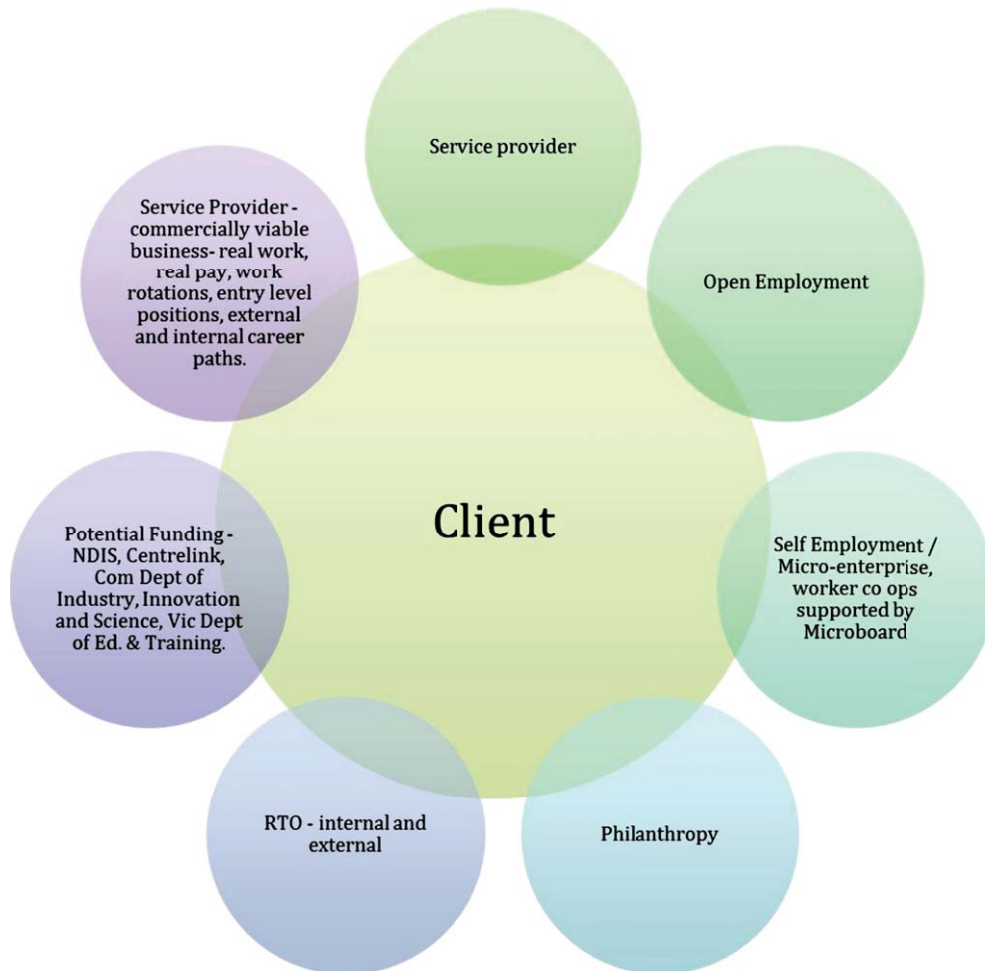


Fig. 1. A Potential Australian Social Enterprise Model.

a socially valued role in the community). The literature makes it clear that the pursuit of Social Enterprise has the potential to positively affect peoples' physical and mental health, together with their economic and social inclusion.

To progress the establishment of a Social Enterprise, as an ethically responsible and commercially viable means to promote employment opportunities and social inclusion for people with a disability, there are a range of options available. However, some of the core features would include: business models established under either a for-profit or not-for-profit/charity status, either as incorporated bodies (under state legislation) or as companies (under commonwealth legislation); the establishment of governance provisions that clearly articulate the balance between the 'social purpose' of the business and it imperative to be a commercially viable

business; and having built into its policies and procedures a clear commitment to promoting career paths both within and external to the business, and the options for exploring different career options based on the needs, priorities, and aspirations of the individual employees (e.g., job rotation within the workplace supported by on-going skill development, promotion within the workplace and the opportunity to assume higher levels of responsibility, support to move beyond the workplace to single person micro-enterprises, co-operatives or collectives, as well as traditional open employment).

8.1. Components of a potential model of Social Enterprise

The model that follows (Fig. 1) is intended to highlight the possible components of a potential

Social Enterprise Model. It depicts a core element consisting of a range of entry level positions, job rotation options, and both opportunities for internal promotion and external career paths. These could be structured within a single enterprise, or across multiple enterprises. These activities would be primarily supported by the internal Registered Training Organisation.

The model depicts three principle outcome options for those who wish to exit the supported business environment. These are open employment, joining a worker-operated co-operative, or establishing themselves in a self-employed micro-enterprise or small business. Both the micro-enterprises and the worker-co-operatives could be supported by micro-boards, involving family, friends, and drawing on ADE expertise. Service providers could also provide financial support by entering into a 'preferred provider arrangement' where the focus of the business produced products or services that the required.

The model also depicts a range of funding sources, including both state and commonwealth funds. These include consideration of both disability specific and generic funding (e.g., for traineeships, apprenticeships and small business development grants). The place of philanthropy is also highlighted. Most importantly though, community customers are considered vital to the viability of the model and subsequent quality employment outcomes for people with disability.

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Conflict of interest

None to report.

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