

Social Enterprise Finance Australia

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SEFA snapshot

Community centre buys commercial bakery

Corryong Neighbourhood Centre has used a SEFA loan to purchase a bakery business that now creates opportunities for employment, workplace training and additional income.



“SEFA have been incredibly helpful in the funding process and we look forward to working with them to show our small, rural community the benefits of social enterprise”

Sara Jenkins, Business & Education Coordinator CNC

Corryong is a small town in the Upper Murray in North- East Victoria. It’s the gateway to the Snowy Mountains, and home to the famous Man From Snowy River Festival. Not unlike many rural Australian towns, the local community faces economic and social difficulties and high youth unemployment. The Corryong Neighbourhood Centre (CNC), which has been involved in youth work and community engagement for more than 15 years, tries to foster opportunities and promote community development through education and social inclusion.

The CNC’s vision is to support a socially connected, educated and sustainable community by providing education and encouraging participation. It largely depends on government and philanthropic funding to deliver its programs and services, which include social inclusion groups, youth activities, community services and the management of local events. A reliance on external funding in a challenging market means that project delivery can be complicated and sometimes uncertain.

When the bakery next door to the CNC went up for sale, the two CNC coordinators, Sara Jenkins and Michael Leonhard, immediately saw the potential – a chance to run a social enterprise that could provide opportunities for vocational training

and meaningful employment for youth and long term unemployed. The CNC would be able to continue to deliver on its social mission and to run a commercial business. If profitable, it could also fund other CNC and community programs.

Sara and Michael wrote their business plan, began negotiating with the bakery’s then owner, and engaged the CNC’s Board Members. They also contacted SEFA to find out how a loan could help turn their idea into a reality, and how feasible it would be. Within months of coming up with the initial concept the community bakery, began trading as the “Upper Murray Community Bakery”.



What SEFA says

'We are pleased to support the Community Bakery. The business allows the centre's coordinators and members to play to their strengths. They have commercial drive, experience in training, properties to secure the loan, and a chef in the mix. It was an obvious opportunity knocking, right next door.'