

Social Enterprise Finance Australia

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Social Enterprise Snapshot

Tender Funerals launches community-driven personalised services

A community centre near Wollongong south of Sydney will provide affordable and personalised funeral services to different religions and ethnicities in the area.

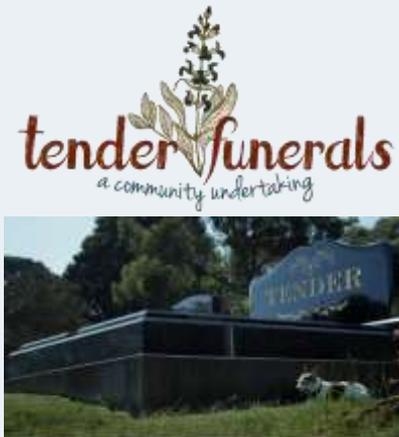


Photo: former fire station in Port Kembla

'SEFA worked with us to ensure we have a sound business model and to develop a relationship with The Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation. SEFA really believed in and backed our vision despite all of the challenges that we faced getting the project off the ground.'

Jenny Briscoe-Hough, General Manager, Our Community Project Inc

More three years ago, Jenny Briscoe-Hough had an idea to adopt a social enterprise business model for providing affordable funeral services. Equipped with the vision of returning the ownership of death to families, Tender Funerals was born.

Tender's vision is to reach a diverse range of cultures and beliefs, with a focus on working with disadvantaged and indigenous community members. It will run educational programs about how relatives can become more involved in the end-of-life process and change the way communities think about dying.

In August 2014, Tender was featured in an ABC television documentary and the idea gathered momentum. It received overwhelming support via a crowdfunding campaign, then the second largest in Australia. The timing was right for a business that offers affordable personalised funerals and an alternative to the traditional funeral industry. The crowdfunding finance constituted the initial piece of the funding puzzle. To complete the puzzle, it therefore became important for Tender to find mission-aligned partners that could fill the gap to support its start-up phase.

Tender became a reality when SEFA joined forces with the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF) to create a deal that combines both

debt and philanthropy. The SEFA loan assisted with the purchase of Port Kembla's former fire station, and the grant from VFFF is enabling the conversion of the building into a mortuary.

The road to holding the keys to the property was a long one, serving to demonstrate the commitment and perseverance of the people behind this community-driven initiative.



What SEFA says

'Tender is the first of its kind partnership in Australia. It demonstrates the power of a collaboration between a community organisation, the public (via crowdfunding), a foundation and a social lender that together create a very strong base for a sustainable social enterprise start-up.'

What Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation says

'The free flowing communication between the three organisations, and SEFA's willingness to share its insights on financials, streamlined the Foundation's processes and opened the door for collaboration in our newest strategic program – impact investment.'