

THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION  
ANNUAL REPORT 2010

BOLD IDEAS

The Australian Centre for Social Innovation was born out of the work of Adelaide Thinker in Residence, Geoff Mulgan, Director of The Young Foundation. He believed that the time was ripe for a centre of excellence in social innovation in Australia and that South Australia was a natural base for this kind of work due to a unique combination of factors such as a history of ‘punching above its weight’ in social innovation (South Australia was the first state in the world to allow women to stand for parliament, it addressed disadvantage in housing with the South Australian Housing Trust and introduced the Prohibition of Discrimination Act in 1966 - to name a few) and being the right size to experiment, test and upscale socially innovative projects. Premier Mike Rann and the Government of South Australia agreed with Geoff Mulgan’s vision and have provided seed-funding for an initial three year period for a national centre of excellence in social innovation. Our strong and diverse Board of Directors, inaugural CEO Brenton Caffin and a dedicated group of staff and partners are all focused on making the most of this opportunity to deliver positive social change in Australia.

In 2010, The Australian Centre for Social Innovation launched its inaugural program of work.

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## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In the twentieth century, burgeoning social programs in health, education and income support transformed government. In modern democratic countries government went from being a tiny fraction of the economy to accounting for somewhere between a quarter and a half of the economy. Immense strides were made in alleviating suffering. But not surprisingly for a change of that magnitude, it came with its disappointments.

Today we bump up against the limits of government every day. We've learned that governments have great difficulty moving beyond 'one size fits all' interventions in the lives of citizens. The limitations of governments have been in large part the limitations of formal organisations.

Not surprisingly, people are looking for alternatives – not to displace government, but to help address the intractable problems we face as a society.

Social innovation is one of those alternatives. It is inspired by a need as old as humanity itself: the need to help others, and the understanding that in so doing we help ourselves. But it's an exploration in new circumstances in which old ways have reached certain limits.

In the process of writing this Annual Report we all agreed that our nascent *Family by Family* project captures our aspirations. It is an attempt to reengineer one small aspect of social policy from the ground up. It is not hyperbole to describe it as cutting edge research and development for social services. And just as with cutting edge research in the sciences or business, it may not succeed. But already we are optimistic that it will. If it does succeed, it will have achieved something important – for social policy in Australia and perhaps the world.

We're tapping into product design expertise. We're using techniques from a range of social sciences like psychology, sociology and anthropology. We're using ethnographic, visualisation, and prototyping techniques alongside logic modelling and impact mapping.

But – and this is the key – we're deploying this expertise because we're trying to break through the old, organisational ways of doing things to really listen to the people we claim to be trying to help. We're trying to forge a way of doing social policy with the subjects of that policy rather than to them. That's why it's called *Family by Family*.

## BOARD MEMBERS

Nicholas Gruen, Chair  
Appointed November 2010

Anne Edwards AO, Deputy Chair

David Cappo AO

Tanya Hosch

Robyn McLeod

Martin Stewart-Weeks  
Appointed June 2010

Helena Williams

Tim Zak

Phillip Adams

Resigned May 2010

Ultimately, if we are successful, all those 'ologies' and techniques will help families themselves design the way they need to be helped, or put differently, the way they want to help themselves. They'll be the agents of their own destiny. And, as is the nature of things, they'll not just be helping themselves, but helping each other get there.

I'm a newcomer to all this, having joined the TACSI board late last year. I'm extremely grateful for the experience. I'm excited to see where it takes us. And I hope we justify the faith of others in us. We'll be doing our best.

Nicholas Gruen  
Chair



## CEO'S REPORT

Welcome to our first annual report.

The start-up phase of any new venture is both challenging and exciting. Our first year of operation was no exception.

Our key objectives for our inaugural program of work in 2010 were: to articulate what we are about; to engage partners, collaborators and the public; to start learning by doing; and to build up internal and external assets, including track record, to provide a platform for future initiatives.

Our *Radical Redesign* initiative applied new methods of engaging citizens and users in the design and delivery of models to achieve better social outcomes. From our initial brief to find ways to prevent families entering crisis services in and around the child protection system, the families of Marion in southern Adelaide helped us to create *Family by Family*, a new model of family mentoring and mutual support.

Our *Bold Ideas, Better Lives Challenge* helped us reach out to connect with and hear about the rich diversity of activity that is underway in every corner of this country. It allowed us to select a number of projects that we hope will not only make a significant social impact, but will be exemplars and ambassadors of social innovation in Australia.

Our social entrepreneurship explorations allowed us to connect with local social entrepreneurs, understand their needs and challenges, and begin paving the way for a future Adelaide School for Social Entrepreneurs.

And our events, both the Blue Sky Sessions and our partnership to deliver the Social Innovator Dialogues, allowed us to connect with over 2000 people across Australia, to inject fresh perspectives on design, collaboration, and public sector innovation, and to advance the conversation about how we improve the practice of social innovation in Australia.

I believe that our initiatives have resonated with people and, while it is early days, I believe that they have the potential to generate significant positive social impact.

My thanks to everyone who helped us turn our bold ideas into reality in 2010, including the board and all of our staff, interns, partners, and sponsors.

Thanks for your interest and we look forward to sharing our learning as we continue our journey.

Brenton Caffin  
CEO



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# RADICAL REDESIGN

## RADICAL REDESIGN

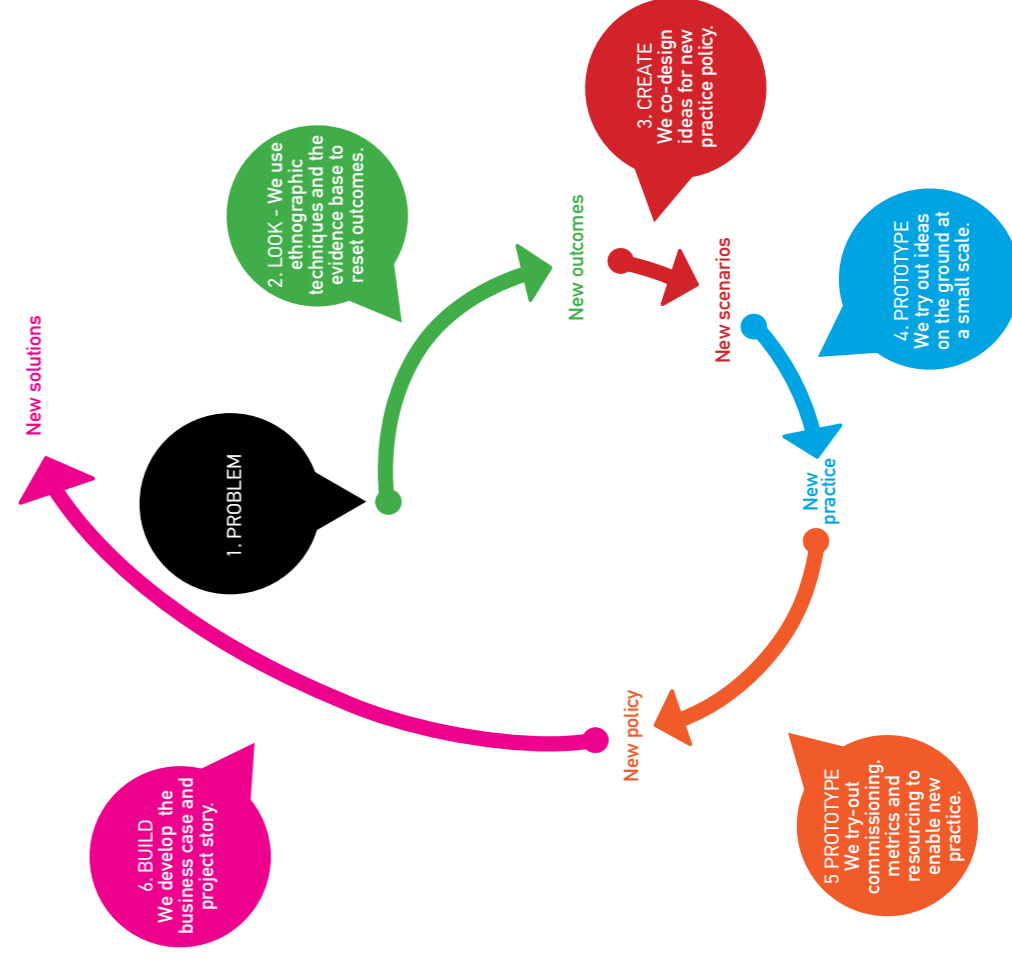
In 2010 TACSI began an initiative to radically redesign social services. We recruited a small team with cutting edge experience in applying a 'design + policy' approach to solving social problems.

The *Radical Redesign* approach involves a team of experts in design, social science and community engagement working closely with individuals, families and communities to co-design solutions to social problems. This contrasts with traditional approaches to policy making which adopt a 'top down' approach to the design and delivery of social services.

By starting with people and working backwards to create new practice and policy, we aim to deliver measurable social impact and model new approaches for social change "in, with and for" people, communities, social services and government.

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## THE RADICAL REDESIGN APPROACH





## FAMILY BY FAMILY

The first project of the *Radical Redesign* initiative focused on families.

From our conversations with members of the community, front line agencies, government and academics, there was strong consensus that reducing the incidence of families coming into contact with crisis services was an urgent problem for South Australia which also had nationwide relevance.

While we agreed about the problem, we didn't know what form the solution would take, or how it would be delivered – those answers would come out of our work with families.

Using a co-design approach to frame the problem, we developed a brief to produce a solution which would 'enable more families to grow and thrive' and result in fewer families spiralling towards crisis services. The solution we co-designed with families became the *Family by Family* program.

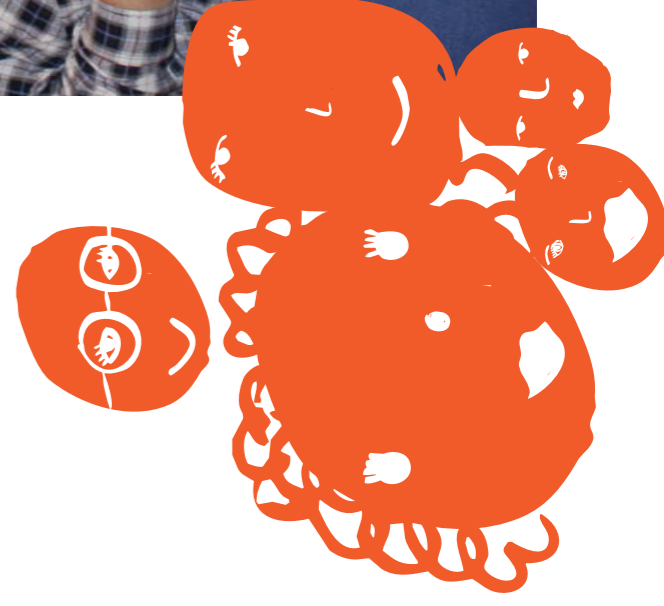
In creating *Family by Family*, we worked with 100 families from the suburb of Marion in South Australia. The problem which resonated with nearly all the families we spoke to was family stress. Most of them wanted their family life to get better and less stressful.

We also identified that there is very little support for whole families until their problems are bad enough for crisis services to get involved.

Our conversations with families framed the problem, but also pointed the way towards a solution. We also discovered an unlocked social resource in the community – families who had moved through times of stress and crisis and were now thriving.

In response, we developed *Family by Family*, a program delivered by, with and between whole families.

It brings together thriving families, who have moved through tough times, with families who have identified something in their family life that they want to change or improve.



Clockwise from top left: A mum sharing her cooking skills, cartoon drawing at a family festival, kids playing at a 'Yarn over dinner' event, crafting at a 'Yarn over dinner', a family festival in Oaklands Park.



Family by Family was shaped by interactions with 100 families who helped us try out a range of interactions and experiences including festivals, family to family link ups and skill sharing.

*Family by Family* draws on the untapped resource of thriving families to offer a different kind of support, which is about showing rather than telling; support which is focused on building a family's capacity and connections for change.

By the end of 2010, we had developed the final prototype of *Family by Family* by working closely with 20 participating families over a 12 week period to test out different family experiences and interactions. This iterative design process allowed us to quickly test interactions and revise them when they didn't work.

We were very grateful to the families who worked with us to get the model right. Our sounding board was also extremely helpful to us during the process, and comprised of representatives from child protection services, local government and academia.

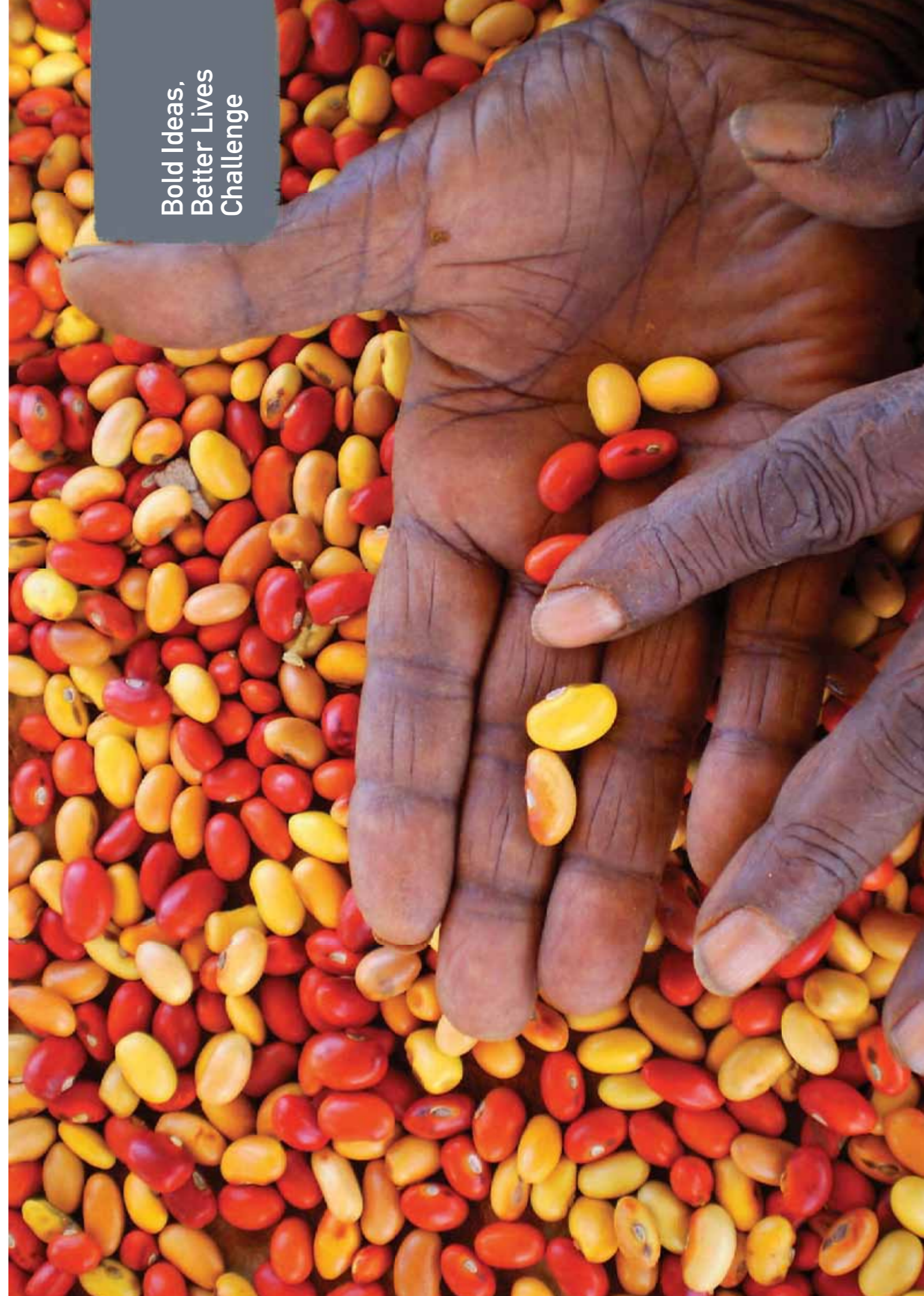
*Family by Family* is now attracting external investment and in 2011 will grow to two locations and hundreds of families.

Our experiment with *Radical Redesign* itself is also growing beyond the bounds of the original project where it was developed. In early 2011 we'll be recruiting designers, anthropologists, social policy analysts, and other creative thinkers and doers to join the *Radical Redesign* team. We'll train them in our methodology, and take on other social problems, starting with ageing.



We welcome risk-taking, experimentation, and learning from both success and failure and we encourage others to do so too. We are biased towards action, insatiably curious, critical thinkers and willing to challenge the status quo.

Detail from italk's 'Bean Tree' story from Central Australia and 'The Depression Story'



Bold Ideas,  
Better Lives  
Challenge

## BOLD IDEAS, BETTER LIVES CHALLENGE

One of TACSI's key projects for 2010 was the *Bold Ideas, Better Lives Challenge*, which helped us begin engaging directly with enthusiastic and creative thinkers and doers from across the country. The Challenge was run as an open national competition to find and nurture the most innovative ideas for changing Australian society for the better. TACSI is investing over \$1 million in the winning projects.

The Challenge launched in April, asking individuals and organisations to submit their idea in response to the question, "What do you think are the big problems facing our society and how do you think we can solve them?" The judging panel selected eight projects which will share the investment pool and receive ongoing project support from TACSI's dedicated Venture Support Officer for up to 18 months.

254 applications were received over the two month entry period. The eight winners were announced by the Premier of South Australia, the Hon Mike Rann, at a gala event in November.

The Challenge helped create public awareness of TACSI and its mission, as well as helping us to connect with hundreds of community-identified social issues and community-led innovations responding to those issues.

Over 2011, we will continue to support the eight Challenge winners as they get down to the business of testing out their ideas for positive impact in practice and we're excited to work with them to make it happen. This process will help TACSI develop our capacity to incubate social innovation projects, which we hope to apply to project partnerships and possible future Challenges over 2011 and 2012.

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AroundYou



Employment Pathways for Deaf Students



**BOLD IDEAS, BETTER LIVES CHALLENGE**

# WINNERS

## THE EIGHT WINNING PROJECTS WERE:

### Aged Care Digital Lifestyles

Empowering people in residential aged care to become digital citizens in a way which makes sense to them, via digital services aimed at improving their social, cultural, intellectual and emotional experiences by helping them grow their social networks within and beyond their aged care setting.

### AroundYou

Connecting people with their neighbourhood and building local community through events, activities and services online and via mobile devices. This project helps people make the first step into their neighbourhood simply and easily by creating a 'one stop shop' site which brings together information which is currently fragmented across many websites and can be difficult to find.

### Employment Pathways for Deaf Students

Creating access to employment for the hearing impaired through development of workplace tools, technology and training. The process and technology will be tested in partnership between the Victorian College for the Deaf and the MadCap Café Westfield Fountain Gate.

### Hello Sunday Morning

Challenging Australia's binge drinking culture and encouraging individuals to take responsibility and change their drinking behaviour. This project aims to take a grassroots approach, providing young people in particular with access to an online community for sharing their Hello Sunday Morning experience and mentoring each other.

### Renew Australia

Placing creative, social and cultural initiatives in empty or disused buildings to re-engage people with underutilised central urban areas. This project seeks to build a national platform for bringing Australians back to underused areas in their cities, building on the success of the Renew projects in Newcastle, Townsville and Adelaide.

### Sharing Universal Stories of Depression

Raising awareness of depression among culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This project aims to achieve cross-cultural understanding and communication through italk – an innovative approach using technology and community engagement to develop communication tools in visual form – not text.

### Tjungu: Learning Country

Building community capacity and social entrepreneurship with indigenous communities across the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands in central Australia. Tjungu also addresses the elders' desire for shared understanding between people on the lands and those outside its borders.

### Who Gives A Crap?

Turning consumers into philanthropists – a social enterprise selling environmentally sustainable toilet paper that will donate its profits to support environmental conservation and reforestation in Australia and water sanitation in the developing world.



Loop Space, Renew Newcastle. Photo by Narinda Reeders.

## FEASIBILITY STUDY OF AN ADELAIDE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

If social innovation concerns itself mainly with questions of what and how new ways of addressing unmet social needs are created, then social entrepreneurship deals fundamentally with the question of who creates them.

In 2010, we started to explore the state of social entrepreneurship in South Australia in order to assess the feasibility of expanding the School for Social Entrepreneurs to Adelaide.

The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) was established in London in 1997 and now has 11 locations across the UK. The Australian arm began operations in Sydney in 2009, and the Melbourne school commenced in 2010. The New Zealand Centre for Social Innovation is also currently establishing a school in Auckland.

SSE exists to provide training and opportunities to enable people to use their creative and entrepreneurial abilities more fully for social benefit. The SSE runs practical learning programmes aimed at helping develop the individual entrepreneur and their organisation simultaneously: their approach, and belief, is that social change is people-powered, and that the most valuable assets and resources we have are human ones.

As part of our explorations, we hosted a picnic to meet local social entrepreneurs and, using a range of techniques, to discuss their challenges and barriers, as well as opportunities for enhancing social entrepreneurship in South Australia. SSE CEO Benny Callaghan joined us on the day, to connect with local social entrepreneurs. One advantage that Benny saw in Adelaide was the city's connectivity and ability to pull people together.

Building on our preliminary investigations, TACSI remains supportive of the School for Social Entrepreneurs model and will be working with SSE Australia to assist in expanding the model to Adelaide in 2011.



## EVENTS

As part of TACSI's mission to support and transmit new ideas and solutions, we worked hard over 2010 to develop two different event series aimed at encouraging the sharing & discussion of ideas across as broad a cross section of society as possible, from everyday citizens concerned with solving social problems, to local experts and decision makers within government and non-government agencies.

**Our Blue Sky Sessions provide a free monthly forum for people to come together in a spirit of learning and inquiry to discuss the pressing challenges of our day and how to tackle them.**

### Blue Sky Sessions

Our Blue Sky Sessions provide a free monthly forum for people to come together in a spirit of learning and inquiry to discuss the pressing challenges of our day and how to tackle them. The format is informal and interactive. Speakers provide some introductory remarks around a given question before some Q&A, followed by general discussion and networking.

We launched the Blue Sky sessions in April, and hosted seven sessions in Adelaide, with speakers as diverse as Bert Mieijers from alternative leadership program Kaospilot, through to Gavin Artz of the Australian Network for Art and Technology talking about whether art and technology can drive social change.

In August, we expanded the Blue Sky sessions to Melbourne, and our own TACSI team members Sarah Schulman and Chris Vanstone gave a talk on their "Bottom up and backwards" *Radical Redesign* methodology: What can we learn from turning social problem solving back to front.

Already Blue Sky Sessions have become an important means of public engagement, and we look forward to continuing them in 2011, and expanding them to include regular sessions in other states.



### Social Innovator Dialogues

In 2010 TACSI was a proud partner in the Social Innovator Dialogues series, which facilitated Australian tours by three international experts in social innovation.

TACSI partnered with Australian Social Innovation Exchange (ASIX) and the Centre for Social Impact (CSI) to run the SI Dialogues across Australia. Over 1,100 people participated in the events, which included public forums and masterclasses in Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Auckland.

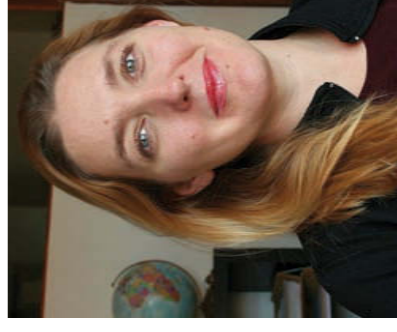
The SI Dialogues brings contemporary Australian thinkers and innovators in public sector policy, social justice and sustainable design into contact with the Australian public. The goal of this series is to provoke discussion and change at the highest levels by addressing the big issues affecting decision makers across the public, private and third sector.



Christian Bason



Ezio Manzini



Tonya Surman

The three guest speakers for the year were Ezio Manzini, a prominent leader in sustainable design and Professor of Design at the Politecnico di Milano, Tonya Surman, founding executive director of Canada's Centre for Social Innovation and Christian Bason, Director of Danish cross-agency innovation unit MindLAb.

SI Dialogues were very successful in attracting sponsors in 2010, enabling us to meet our goal of covering costs. We're grateful to the sponsors who made this possible, including: Macquarie Group Foundation, Victorian Department of Premier & Cabinet, CISCO, RIAUS (the Royal Institution of Australia) and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

## LINKAGES

A critical goal for TACSI is to build a supportive network of international and national linkages to improve our understanding of the social innovation space globally and in turn help us achieve our mission.

TACSI's CEO was fortunate to receive invitations to speak at a number of forums, from Vienna to Singapore, Seoul and Ottawa and took the opportunity to meet with local and regional organisations with an interest in social innovation. Thanks to the governments of Austria and Canada, the Hope Institute in Seoul and Intel Asia and all of the respective organising bodies for making our participation possible. We'd also like to thank Tonya Surman from the Centre for Social Innovation in Toronto and Christian Bason from MindLab in Denmark, not just for sharing their experiences with our CEO during his visits, but also for agreeing in return to participate in our Social Innovator Dialogues here in Australia.

Our participation in the Social Innovation Exchange (SIX) Spring School on innovation for an ageing society gave us contacts and plenty of food for thought for our emerging program on ageing, while the SIX Summer School in Singapore gave us the opportunity not only to connect and learn, but also to share our thoughts on social innovation in Australia as well as our emerging findings from *Family by Family*.

Within Australia, we have been delighted to link up with organisations that have a mutual interest in social innovation. Our partnership with the Australian Social Innovation Exchange and Centre for Social Impact, to deliver the Social Innovator Dialogues has been very rewarding and we welcome the inclusion of the New Zealand Centre for Social Innovation in 2011. We'd also like to acknowledge the excellent contribution of Jan Owen (then from Social Ventures Australia and now Foundation for Young Australians), Mark Daniels (Social Traders) and Jason Glanville (National Centre of Indigenous Excellence) for their work on our advisory panel for the *Bold Ideas, Better Lives Challenge*.

We also acknowledge our engagement with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the Victorian Public Service Innovation Action Plan, not only for the sponsorship of the Social Innovation Dialogues and Blue Sky Sessions, but also for their efforts to connect the social innovation space to initiatives inside the public sector to achieve greater social impact through innovation.

Of course, this is only the tip of the iceberg, and so to all of the organisations we worked with in 2010, we say thank you.

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The Australian Centre for Social Innovation acknowledges the Government of South Australia as our key supporter in 2010, through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Families and Communities through Families SA.



**Government  
of South Australia**

# BETTER LIVES SERVES

THE AUSTRALIAN  
CENTRE FOR SOCIAL  
INNOVATION

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