



## WOLLONGING, Australia

### Green Connect

#### Key facts

Green Connect, a social enterprise in Wollongong, Australia, works to create more jobs, less waste and fair food. The case is a good example on how cities can leverage the work of social enterprises to provide adult learning.

<b>Timeframe and funding</b>	Green Connect was launched in 2011.
<b>City population</b>	295,669
<b>Governing body</b>	Wollongong City Council
<b>Link</b>	<a href="http://green-connect.com.au">Green Connect Illawarra - Book a fair food workshop today! (green-connect.com.au)</a>

#### Main objectives

The main objective of the social enterprise is to tackle unemployment, waste and an unsustainable food system. To achieve their environmental aims, Green Connect sells fair food to local residents and businesses, provides zero waste services to help reduce landfill waste and sells or recycles donated second-hand goods through an op shop. To address unemployment, the enterprise creates jobs for people who experience barriers to employment, particularly young people and former refugees.

## Content and mode of delivery



Green Connect employs young people and former refugees to grow fair food at an urban permaculture farm and offers labour hire and recruitment services, where the enterprise connects their staff to businesses and industries. Most of the employees have no prior work experience and, thus, the organisation gives them the first access into the labour market. Green Connect provides training, personalised support and paid work that enables these newcomers into the labour market to gain skills, experience and confidence. In addition, Green Connect provides support for their staff to transition from the organisation to other meaningful, long-term jobs.

From 2017 to 2019, Green Connect employed 166 former refugees and young people, created 42,000 hours of paid work for the target groups and transitioned more than 30 staff members into mainstream employment. Additionally, 91% of the staff reported an increase in confidence and purpose and 93% reported increased employability. Furthermore, 96% of staff reported improved connection to the community and 73% reported an increase in financial independence.

## Stakeholders



Green Connect is a social enterprise within Community Resources Ltd, a national not-for-profit organisation focused on creating jobs that make a difference to people and the planet.

## Key challenges, success factors & transferability



Green Connect are experiencing some challenges, including with ensuring sufficient funding to provide wrap around support for their workers who face multiple barriers to employment. In addition, obtaining government social outcome-based payments is challenging because the criteria can be inflexible and the farm's work and target group may not fit exactly into these criteria.

Despite these challenges, Green Connect has been successful due to its open and flexible "come as you are" approach which promotes inclusivity and encourages the target group to approach the enterprise. In addition, workers appreciate the paid employment opportunity they receive, which gives them some financial independence, identity and confidence. Moreover, the programme design and work hours factor in the unique circumstances of workers allowing them flexibility and time to address their other unique needs.

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