



MULTIFUNCTIONAL HUB DISCOVERY REPORT

Overview

The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process is a series of workshops that will endeavour to define and obtain support for the initiatives for innovation and economic development, based on evidence.

The workshops are an opportunity for key business, government, community and research stakeholders to verify the evidence presented in the Regional Context Analysis about a particular local asset, and to confirm that there is at least one innovation opportunity which can develop from that asset. The workshop begins with discussion about the specific asset, and then engages in a process of imagining how the innovation opportunity based on this asset might develop over the subsequent 5-10 years. Depending on the outcomes of these conversations, the final part of the workshop moves to explore how this might be achieved, and identifies barriers to be addressed. Following the workshops an Innovation Working Group (IWG) may then be established to drive the defined project if it is deemed to be a viable opportunity.

Workshop Summary

The creation of a workshop to explore multifunctional hub opportunities was established in recognition of the need for social connectedness and more activities and opportunities and available information within the area, while identifying the value the Great Alpine Art Gallery and Swifts Creek Community Centre, as well as other small groups such as basketry, pottery, learning groups and classes, is already currently providing. Historically sporting events and community plays as well as dances and festivals were pivotal to maintaining social connection within the community.

However, challenges such as geographical and social isolation, reduced population, lack of transport, lack of accommodation and ability to develop more, and limited gathering places hinder community cohesion. Despite this, there are numerous assets including diverse knowledge, skills in fibre and textiles arts, pottery, and a passion for local produce utilisation and traceability. Yet, there's a need for more gathering spaces and facilities to support collaborative activities.

Discussions at the workshop to explore opportunities included:

- Current infrastructure is inadequate, though does its best to provide what it can.
- Lack of childcare and children's social opportunities doesn't incentivise families to come to and remain in the area.
- Collaborative use of venues.
- Silo community groups.
- Arts community contributes dramatically to tourism in the area and draws many to the area to experience the landscape and creative opportunities including photography.
- Residential collaboratives and tours within the creative community have been run with great success, demonstrating potential, however volunteer resources are strained.
- Challenges were identified in managing community-owned assets and ensuring visibility of suitable venues for activities.

The conclusion of the workshop focused on the potential for growth in the creative sector through a 'Creative cultivar' program and building on this to realise the opportunities in also growing small business and sharing knowledge and mentoring that already exists within the community.

The workshop highlighted challenges like social isolation and inadequate infrastructure, yet also identified the community's rich assets in the arts and local produce. Discussions emphasised the need for collaboration, particularly in venue usage, and recognised the arts community's role in local tourism. The proposed 'Creative Cultivar' program offers a pathway for nurturing creativity and fostering small business growth through existing knowledge and mentorship networks.

Conclusion

While all potential outcomes hold potential, there are a significant number of small businesses supports already available and all learning and growth are potentially able to be incorporated into the education and skills IWG. It would be recommended that the potential outcomes contribute to the framework and goals for the Lifespan Learning Community project.