

THE MILL HOUSE
VENTURES

IMPACT REPORT 2019-2021

CATALYSING COMMUNITY SOCIAL INNOVATION



A note from our CEO

I am pleased to present our 2019-2021 Impact Report. Since its establishment in 2016, the Mill House Ventures has been an experiment in innovative business advisory. Our mission is a simple one--to support a growing movement of social innovators to use the tools of trade to sustain meaningful and measurable impact.

When we started, most of our clients came from the not-for-profit and charity sectors. Nowadays, our 'typical' client is more likely to run a 'traditional' for-profit business. These clients need to tie existing business models to measurable impact in a way that uniquely distinguishes the social enterprise asset class from firms that practice corporate social responsibility.

Like many training organisations, 2020 was our great COVID-19 pivot. Digital delivery challenged us to make our training programs shorter and our well-being checkpoints more frequent. We are excited to have fewer online meetings in the future, but our commitment to agile and person-centred program design will remain.

Cindy Rose Mitchell

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2016

- SERVICE ONE, University of Canberra, Canberra Innovation Network and the ACT Government form a consortium for the investigation of a social enterprise hub in Canberra.



2019

- The Mill House Clinic, a student-led advisory service, is established at the University of Canberra.
- The Social Enterprise Accelerator program includes three ventures from regional NSW.

2017

- The first Mill House Social Enterprise Accelerator GRIST and REFINE Incubator cohorts graduate

2018

- The Mill House Ventures is established as a company limited by guarantee by UC and SERVICE ONE as its foundation members.
- 37 venture founders graduate from the second Social Enterprise Accelerator Cohort.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is established with the support of the Snow Foundation.

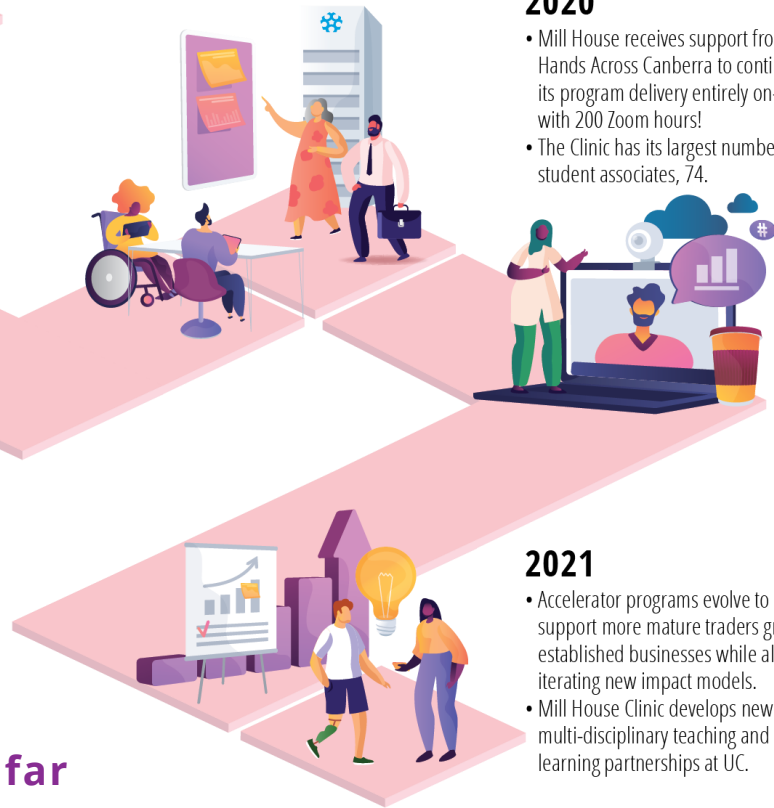
2020

- Mill House receives support from Hands Across Canberra to continue its program delivery entirely on-line, with 200 Zoom hours!
- The Clinic has its largest number of student associates, 74.

2021

- Accelerator programs evolve to support more mature traders grow established businesses while also iterating new impact models.
- Mill House Clinic develops new multi-disciplinary teaching and learning partnerships at UC.

The Mill House journey so far



Our Goals

The Mill House Ventures was established to support social innovators.

We increase their ability to achieve meaningful and measurable social, cultural, economic or environmental impact.

We do this by accelerating their capacity to develop sustainable for-purpose social enterprises in the Canberra region.

How does a Social Enterprise work?

Our changemakers sustain their desired community impact narratives using social enterprises. These enterprises provide products or services in a competitive marketplace to other businesses or directly to consumers. The 'point' isn't just revenue—it is also to enable impact through inclusive employment practices, sustainable product manufacturing processes and values-driven service delivery and pricing.

Social enterprise development is iterative and dynamic, and there is no 'typical' process. As the social innovation node of the Canberra Innovation Network, the Mill House provides a dedicated place for social entrepreneurs to practise the skills of hybrid venture development. At Mill House, they access skills, training, connections and capital that might otherwise take years of networking (and thousands of dollars in consultancy fees). Most importantly, they gain a community of fellow changemakers, potential collaborators and cheerleaders.

Our participants become advocates and leaders in the global social enterprise movement.



YASS

Six Eight Coffee Roasters



Flazeda

BELCONNEN



Kulture Break

CANBERRA



BUNGENDORE

BaseSoaps

NARRABUNDAH



Third Age Matters

**SOUTH
CANBERRA**



Getaboutable



HOLT

Stepping Stone Cafe

COOMA



Diversitea



MORUYA

Climate Factory

BEGA



Fun House Studios



**THE MILL HOUSE
VENTURES**

Who we support

Our impact across our region



The Mill House operates as part of the broader Canberra NSW regional economic development and business innovation support ecosystem. We have a particular focus on the ACT and regional NSW communities supported by our Foundation members.

In the ACT, we work closely with Canberra Innovation Network. In regional NSW, we have relationships with the Business Enterprise Centres and local council economic development specialists.

Whether we are working in Woden or Braidwood, Cooma or Moruya, our approach is the same. Community impact first; complementary trading model, second.

The Mill House

How our programs work together

Why is it called Mill House?

Traditionally, millhouses were financed as cooperatives to allow a number of farmers in a community to access the market.

Cooperatives are organisations that trade for the benefit of their members. They are the oldest known form of social enterprise.

The Mill House in Canberra is a place where for-purpose entrepreneurs bring their idea & learn how to use the tools of capitalism to intervene positively in the lives of vulnerable people in Canberra and our region.

Together, we grind and refine those ideas. The end product is for the benefit of the entire community.



Our Programs

Our Public Programs

Introduction to Community Social Enterprise

is where changemakers explore the various definitions of social enterprise and how to tie their measurable change to a business model.

Catalyse For Purpose Business is a collaborative incubator designed to help established entrepreneurs clarify and refine their **theory of change**.

GRIST is our flagship social enterprise venture development program. It offers intensive support and mentoring for the design, testing and validation of trading and impact models.

Our Student Programs

Social Enterprise Unit is where students work on their own social enterprise idea, explore business models and develop a minimum viable product.

Venture Studio is where entrepreneurial UC students apply a Social Enterprise lens to their venture design to explore niche markets, financial resourcing and innovation in impactful ways.

Clinic is a student-led consultancy where they deliver projects in their academic disciplines for local social and Indigenous entrepreneurs with the support of Industry professionals.

OUR IMPACT

TESTIMONIALS

The GRIST Accelerator Program was a real gift for me. The content, the resources, the mentors, the other participants, the formal and informal video discussions, the different opportunities were more than I expected. - GRIST Graduate

Catalyse For Purpose Business is a great workshop and I learnt so much in such a short span of time. I would like to say "Thank You" for the guidance from you to help us. We are looking forward to working with The Mill House Ventures again. - Catalyse for Purpose participant

Many elements of the program are insightful and eye-opening. The last day was where everything came together and made sense helped me focus on the next steps I needed to concentrate on for big impact. - Catalyse for Purpose participant

78 

Social Enterprise Accelerator Program Graduates

67 

new spaces and events have been opened to the public

40 

graduated GRISTers have a running venture

400 

community contributions have been made to social enterprises crowdfunding campaigns

26 

new hires have been made by GRIST in 2020

\$200,000+

has been raised by GRIST graduates to scale their Social Enterprise

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE ACCELERATOR

129 

University of Canberra
Students have graduated
through a clinic program

75 

projects pairing
social/ Indigenous
enterprises with
students have been
run

31 

different nationalities
have been recorded for
students coming through
Mill House internships

TESTIMONIALS

I feel Mill House has helped us at every step along the way and ensured that we produce good work. So, their mentoring wasn't important, it was crucial in what we produced this semester. Thank you! - Clinic Associate

Through this internship experience, I learned not only new knowledge and technology, but also teamwork, communication, cultural background and so on. It's very much in line with my expectations. - Clinic Associate

I have learnt a range of skills, such as how to be professional, how to conduct a market overview, email etiquette, and how social enterprises operate and develop. - Clinic Associate

CLINIC & STUDENT PROGRAMS

Social Enterprise Accelerator Impact Areas

The 5 impact areas we focus on to realise our purpose

Our purpose is to:

- Attract and develop sustainable for-purpose social enterprises in the Canberra region
- Increase their positive (social, cultural, economic and/or environmental) impact and;
- Achieve broader recognition for this way of trading

Our monitoring and evaluation framework details our impact areas. We accomplish our purpose when our clients can:



COMMIT TO IMPACT AREA

Clients commit to an impact area and understand:

- the **history** of the problem in the impact area
- the **players** already engaged in that space
- their **opportunity** to effect change



COLLABORATE TO REALISE IMPACT

Clients realise their objectives through and benefit from **collaboration** with other Mill House stakeholders.



SCALE IMPACT

Clients apply program learnings and **establish** viable impact venture/project.



ACCESS PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Service providers and business intermediaries **tailor their services** to our clients.



GAIN FUNDING FOR IMPACT

Social impact investor's engagement in social impact ventures is growing. Clients **gain investment**.

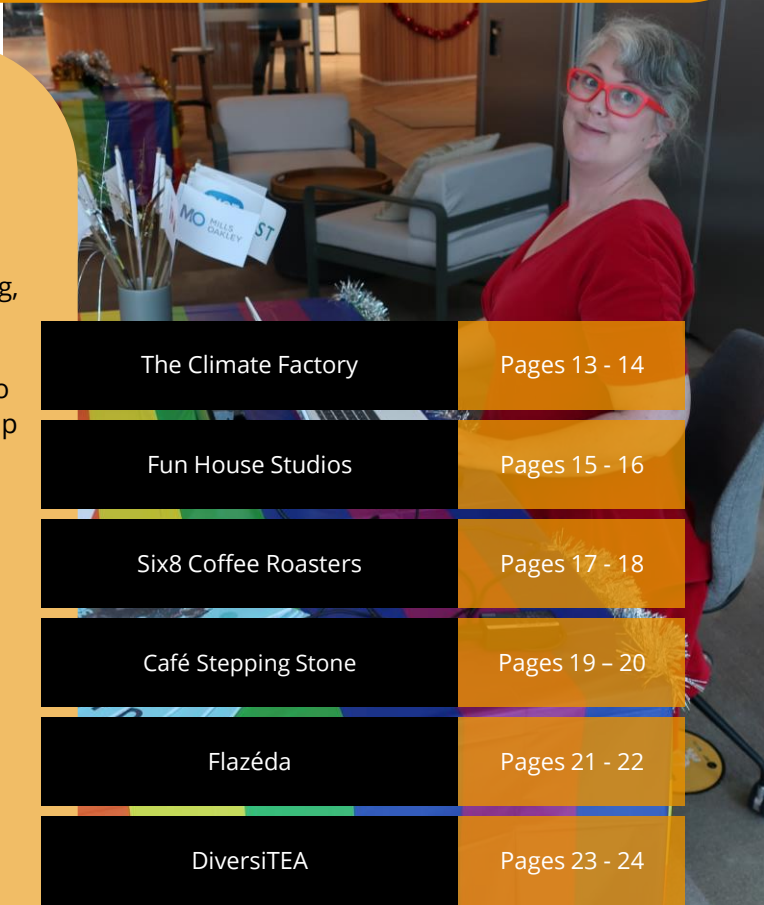


Reflections from our Social Enterprise Development Manager

Thinking back on the powerful collaboration I saw in our 2020 cohort of the Social Enterprise Accelerator program GRIST; I am reminded of the generosity of social entrepreneurs to rise to the challenge of starting and growing a business that trades for measurable impact. When Café Stepping Stone and Six8 Coffee Roasters collaborated on their wholesale supply and barista training, and Magnolia Learning collaborated with Flazéda on engaging artists and providing creative services, I was front row to the power of our community to accelerate impact. Sharing the journey of entrepreneurship - the highs and the lows - is all part of the cohort experience, which we nurture in GRIST. I have the undeniable joy of walking alongside Impact Practitioners from idea to execution, from the first Introduction workshop to the GRIST showcase, it's a privilege to facilitate the learning journey.

I'm looking forward to bringing more changemakers together to make a measurable difference and welcome you into our growing community.

Irene Lemon, 
Enterprise Development Manager



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The Climate Factory

The Climate Factory is a landscape architecture practice that creates climate-cooling outdoor spaces founded by Edwina Robinson who graduated from Mill House's Accelerator program in 2019.



My MVP, and the crowdfunding campaign, has created a ripple effect and a new group of community activists has stepped up to start a Micro-Forest movement, and they want to partner with The Climate Factory to achieve this vision.

GRIST saw Edwina develop an MVP for the Downer Community Micro-Forest:

The Downer Micro-Forest is a community initiated, and community funded, pilot revegetation project that cools the local landscape, creates habitat and provides hope for the future.

Impact so far:

- **\$23,635** crowdfunded to fund the pilot project
- **189** Supporters
- **Impact Investment** from SERVICE ONE Alliance Bank to contribute to the venture startup
- **\$15,000** ACT Government grant
- **1800** trees and shrubs planted in the micro-forest site
- **120** volunteers activated



What's great about being a Mill House alumni venture is I know how to do that iterative work.

COMMITTING TO AN IMPACT AREA

The Climate Factory is committed to addressing urban hotspots through creating Micro-Forests, first here in Canberra and we are looking at a national roll-out, but I realised since graduating GRIST that this mission needs a team.

COLLABORATIONS

Thankfully, since GRIST, I have a wider community of activists who are equally concerned about Climate Change and the wicked problem of biodiversity loss and deforestation. The Climate Factory partnered with Watson residents Purdie Bowden, Liz Tavener and Joani Cornish to develop the Watson Micro-Forest initiative. The group has raised \$52,992 from 186 community and business supporters.

INVESTMENT

I supported the Watson Community Micro-Forest team with crowdfunding advice, including the types of messaging they should be saying, and giving feedback on their draft. They needed to run the campaign themselves, as they are the leaders in their community for the project, but they have invited me in to be lead designer, and there is great collaboration with other designers and specialists. This has also given The Climate Factory a new revenue stream so I can continue our mission.

SCALING

This "ripple effect" has given me a new appreciation for scaling impact. I must admit, crowdfunding, managing volunteers and hosting community events is very intensive. We have had incredible collaborators and community friends, about 120 people over the life of the projects, but the need to develop and iterate our business model requires more time. I think, right now, I am getting paid \$10 an hour. It's not sustainable, so I am changing the revenue model to become more of a consultancy service. Maybe one day, the Micro-Forest movement will reach an economy of effort that is viable and sustainable, but for now the prototype – while a wonderful impact for the community and local environment – is going through another iteration to discover how we scale.

Fun House Studios

Fun House Studio is a creative digital studio and social enterprise in the Bega Valley, designed to support young people. Founded by Cayce Hill who reached out to the Mill House to help her find a sustainable funding strategy and scale the impact of her newest project.

GRIST saw Cayce develop an MVP for TOBi, an app to teach healthy screen use. The impact so far:

- **38 supporters** contributed to the MVP
- a **monthly membership paid** by people from all over the region
- a group of **young people are leading the work** for the app development

The payments have allowed the young app developers:

- to take on training and,
- explore creative and technology careers

The Mill House for me was about using capitalism and the power of the market to realise my mission - which for me is about young people - and creating community impact.



COMMITTING TO AN IMPACT AREA

GRIST has given me a very focused and solid understanding of business. I was constantly prioritising how will I make money, which for my social enterprise was about researching the market to understand what my target buyer wanted, and then making and testing a product that they would pay for. GRIST gave me the confidence to try and answer that question.'

COLLABORATIONS

The power of GRIST was the opportunity to come outside of my immediate community and connect with a whole network of changemakers, such as the wider community development and social work sector. Those connections have instilled a deep appreciation for how important the work Fun House is doing really is, and how much it means to the community.

INVESTMENT

Since graduating GRIST, with COVID and closing down the Fun House venue – it was too big, and I was losing money – I really needed to double down on the revenue opportunities. I wanted to ensure my young people could still realise their potential. That's where TOBi was born. An App to reduce screen time might seem ironic but the young people designing and creating the product, and the target buyer (which is mums and dads) looking for an easy solution to a really big, wicked problem, we decided to trust the market. This means we have decided not to pursue grants just yet, and we rely on early adopters to invest.

SCALING

I feel like a parent each time one of our ideas finds its feet. So, if we follow the analogy, a few children we have had include a games development company. They originally rented a space in the original Fun House venue. I've seen lots of things like that come through Fun House. They just needed a safe place to come and start, and we gave that to them. I count that, and the youth work, as the most important mission Fun House impact has created.



Six8 Coffee Roasters

Six8 Coffee Roasters is a Social Enterprise roasting ethically sourced, specialist coffee beans and operating a café in Yass, NSW. Founded by Toni & Daniel Neuhaus, Six8 donates \$1 AUD from every kilo of coffee purchased by their customers to their impact partners.



Our mission is to rescue, prevent and restore children from sexual slavery, with a simple cup of delicious coffee.

Impact so far:

- **6** new jobs created in regional communities
- **Expanded** their retail presence in Yass to now include a full café menu
- **Featured in Lonely Planet** guide to Australia; putting Yass on the tourism map
- **Distributed \$7,500 AUD** in profit redistribution to their impact partners in Cambodia

Impact Partners:



COMMITTING TO AN IMPACT AREA

Through Mill House we identified a new Impact Partner, Destiny Rescue, 70% of children are trafficked from the Asia Pacific region, so impact partners in those Countries is important. This allowed us to maintain our connection to our existing impact partners yet commit to the mission at a much bigger scale. We also appreciate the greater transparency around impact. It helps our customers see the power of their dollar to achieve real impact.

COLLABORATIONS

Six8 Coffee is stocked by Little Luxton, and during GRIST we picked up a few more wholesale clients, including Café Stepping Stone. We saw the power of this ecosystem to support each other's missions and we are proud of the collective impact we are making.

INVESTMENT

As a Profit Redistribution Social Enterprise, we are 100% achieving our mission completely under our own steam. This means I focus on running an excellent business, so we have profits to donate to our impact partners. Sometimes, the pressure is overwhelming, but I have an excellent team, and a supportive partner to share the load. My greatest challenge is managing our growth. We are growing, and without a careful eye on our outgoings, that growth can be unsustainable. For instance, I really wanted to expand into a Brewery for the Yass community, as there is a gap in the market for our type of business – ethical and impactful – but it was not the right time. Perhaps in the future, as Six8 Coffee Roasters and our Trader & Co ventures mature, we will explore the next business. For now, I am investing in our relationships so we can grow organically and sustainably. Oh, and maybe even have a holiday with my family! That balance has been a wild ride!

SCALING

We had the opportunity to buy the café kitchen business in Trader & Co, which has scaled our offerings, but at the moment - while we refresh the menu and employ more staff – our outgoings are more than I want. I'm dedicated to making a profit though, so we can donate more to our mission.



I really love running my own business, but it must remain true to my dream and vision of changing the world and protecting vulnerable children.

Café Stepping Stone

In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic forced the founders, Hannah Costello and Vanessa Brettell back to Australia, where they found the perfect new home for their social enterprise in the new Ginninderry community in Canberra's north. Mill House helped them accelerate their new business establishment.



GRIST really helped us to access existing networks in Canberra. The Mill House community is generous and open and there is a strong desire to help people who do good. Simple things like coming to a café which also includes great social outcomes resonates with the Canberra community.

GRIST saw Hannah and Vanessa develop an MVP for working with CALD women in a café. Their impact so far:

- **8 migrant CALD women hired**, with a new casual joining the team
- **Expanding into catering** with clients including:
 - Strathnairn Arts
 - Ginninderry and the Ginninderry Conservation Trust
 - Australian Strategic Policy Institute
 - Murray Darling Basin Authority
 - ACT for Bees
- **Partnered with Navitas**, an English language service provider, to develop more opportunities for CALD women.

COMMITTING TO AN IMPACT AREA

We had a big sense of achievement in Colombia as we had managed to build a self-sustaining Café in Cartagena. The pandemic forced us to close everything. Coming back to a supportive network at Mill House was reassuring as it felt like we had someone to hold our hand. We decided to give it a go in a new community. We had experts in Canberra help rebuild our confidence and passion for impact. Here in our new cafe, we started working with CALD women. The connections and mentoring through Mill House gave us a deeper respect for the theoretical side of impact so we could help our new employees.

COLLABORATIONS

It's difficult finding reliable and credible providers to help grow a business. It was great to have recommendations for suppliers and service providers that understand Social Enterprise. Their belief in our impact was validating, and pro and low bono support from lawyers and accountants helped. I was really happy with our GRIST experience, but the impact has really come alive after the GRIST program. We are employing lots of CALD women and our impact is growing.

INVESTMENT

We are ready to go deeper with our community to support the impact. Since graduating, we have applied our experiences to figuring out what our Migrant and Refugee women need and collaborating with Strathnairn Arts, and the Ginninderry community to welcome diversity into this space.

SCALING

We have some wonderful conversations happening with SPARK and the Ginninderry Development team, as well as a growing reputation across Canberra due to some excellent media coverage, thanks RiotACT and ABC Local Radio! We are growing and hiring new women as fast as we can!

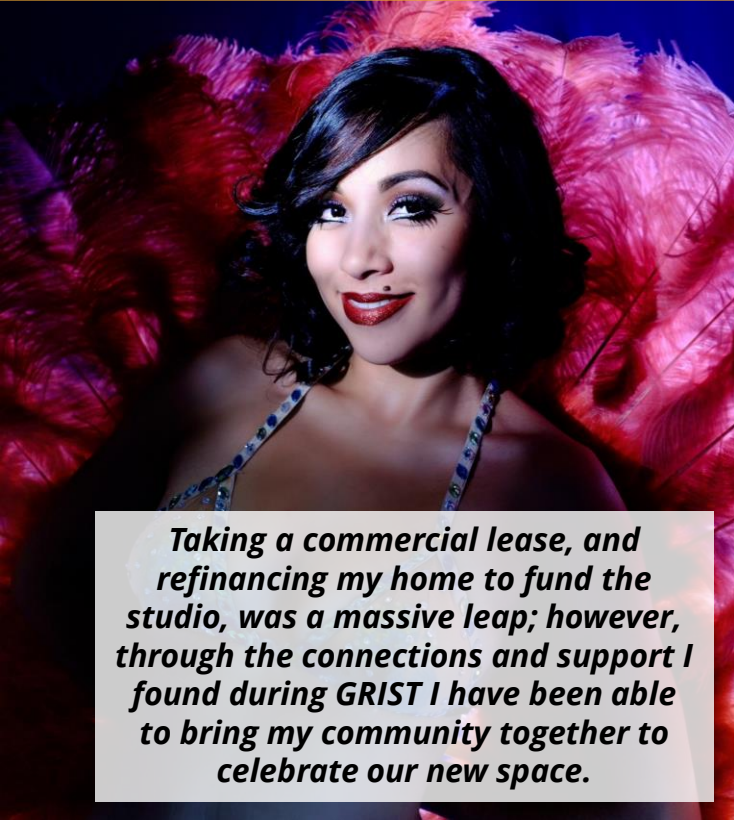


Mill House helped us reopen here in Canberra and get back to our impact quickly.



Flazéda Hub – presented by Jazida Productions

Rachel Reid founded Jazida Productions 5 years ago but has performed as Jazida to great acclaim for longer. Rachel saw the need for an establishment that actively encourages diversity in the arts, and a safe place for alternative artforms to develop, and used the GRIST program to test her idea and launch the Flazéda Hub.



Taking a commercial lease, and refinancing my home to fund the studio, was a massive leap; however, through the connections and support I found during GRIST I have been able to bring my community together to celebrate our new space.

GRIST saw Rachel develop an MVP for the Flazéda performance hub in Belconnen. The impact so far:

- **70** online students joined the virtual program from every state and territory, as well as some international students
- **89%** of our students, audiences and stakeholders reported improved mental health from our interactions
- **Won** the Canberra Local Business 2020 Award for Outstanding Performing Arts
- **Steady growth:** *More students, performers and creatives join our hub every week! Most of the shows sell out, and we keep winning awards!*
- **Increased diversity and opportunities for artists with a disability:** *We have featured Disibili-Babes (artists with a disability) in our shows, and we regularly have an Auslan interpreter for our audience.*

COMMITTING TO AN IMPACT AREA

Flazéda shows feature the alternative performing arts and bring together artists that traditionally experience barriers to professional development and performance opportunities. I have more classes scheduled, more students enrolling and more community partners coming forward to support this mission. Sometimes the business community struggles to see creatives in our entrepreneurial light, but winning the Business Award really changed that attitude, more people are coming forward to support our impact.

COLLABORATIONS

Performers from Jazida Productions and the Flazéda Hub won the Adelaide Fringe Festival Best Dance Award, which ensured their credibility and built our reputation nationally. I have also collaborated with Disabilities ACT and secured several grants and tenders through ACT Government to deliver work and performances. I have produced shows with the Belconnen Arts Centre and regularly engage many local creative service providers and small businesses.

INVESTMENT

Without the support and investment of my community, who have stepped up and donated, volunteered, pledged, attended shows and hired the venue, then this dream would have been impossible. The responsibility to bring more accessibility into classes and shows, and incorporate the technology requirements, means there is a great impact investment to be made in the virtual programs we offer.

SCALING

I am hiring new artists all the time. We are growing jobs and creating opportunities for more creative and cultural activity in Canberra. To scale impact, new revenue streams will help us reach more alternative performers and grow our audiences. Mentoring alternative performance artists is a wonderful way for ensuring our stages represent all people in our community.

After our launch event, which was a fundraising campaign, we jumped into delivering classes and broke even that first week! It was really positive. Now we run 8 classes a week for term 1. Term 2 will have more classes!



DiversiTEA

DiversiTEA is an initiative started by Yvi Henderson and the Cooma Multicultural Centre whose mission is to assist people from diverse cultural backgrounds to live harmoniously in Cooma and the Monaro region.



MAGIC DiversiTEA is a huge undertaking by the community to share culture and connect over a humble cup of tea. The power of food to bring people together still amazes me, and the willingness of the CALD community to be open to trading for impact is inspiring.

GRIST saw Yvi develop an MVP for Magic DiversiTEA tearoom. The impact so far:

- **\$23,200** crowdfunded to fund the pilot project
- **68** supporters
- **Impact Investment** from SERVICE ONE Alliance Bank to contribute to the venture startup
- **New families join our community every week** – the Snowy 2.0 project is bringing new migrants to the region, and the women and children are bringing their culture to DiversiTEA
- **\$10,000** in bushfire recovery and other community funding

COMMITTING TO AN IMPACT AREA

The biggest challenge for MAGIC DiversiTEA was due to these big catastrophes like the fires and the pandemic which meant that nothing happened in our community because of lockdown. Builders and repair teams were spread out across the region. It was a big challenge to get builders in to complete the kitchen fit out. We had to innovate, and we used our building and the space for popup events and used portable equipment to bring people together.

COLLABORATIONS

The wonderful students from the University of Canberra helped give us guidance with a Business Plan, and Marketing Plan AND a website! It really highlighted how unique our café is and we used these plans to bring new experiences into the community. Our food program – cooking and selling – was augmented by community development events, music, performing arts, cultural dress and showcasing all the cultures here. We had a big outdoor event planned, but because of the weather, I needed to totally reformat the event to be an indoor food market. The experiences have helped people develop their market stall and entrepreneurial skills so when DiversiTEA officially opens they can confidently participate in the social enterprise.

INVESTMENT

There is still a big connection to our initial impact, but we have had to be very flexible with how our money is used to grow our social enterprise. I have also received a few more grants and support from the community for new events. The stall holders are also using their profits from sales to tell the stories of food and community coming together in Cooma.

SCALING

We have to hold our MAGIC Annual General Meeting soon and we will be electing representatives to guide the development of the social enterprise. There are some amazing women who are stepping up to become part of the group to help us grow and scale our impact. Snowy2.0 project is bringing lots of new migrants to our region. Looks like there will be more cups of tea to pour.



As the social enterprise pivots and responds to the community needs, we have had some great CALD people with highly skilled experiences in business step up and build on the foundational elements I worked on in the Mill House. This really showcases the grassroots approach to our impact.

Clinic Impact Areas

The 4 impact areas we focus on to realise our purpose

To achieve our organisational purpose we partner with the University of Canberra to develop a pipeline of for-purpose social entrepreneurs and advocates by introducing students to impact models and the social enterprise tools.

We run three different programs for students with a focus on delivering:



ENGAGING STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Our programs provide students with:

- Real & meaningful project outcomes
- Exposure to social entrepreneurs
- Frameworks to grow their approach to work



LOCALLY ANCHORED HUB OF LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Our work-integrated-learning provides exposure to industry professionals and the local entrepreneurship ecosystem and our network of community partners.



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Students develop entrepreneurial and networking skills through our collaborative approach and supportive environment.



INNOVATION THROUGH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

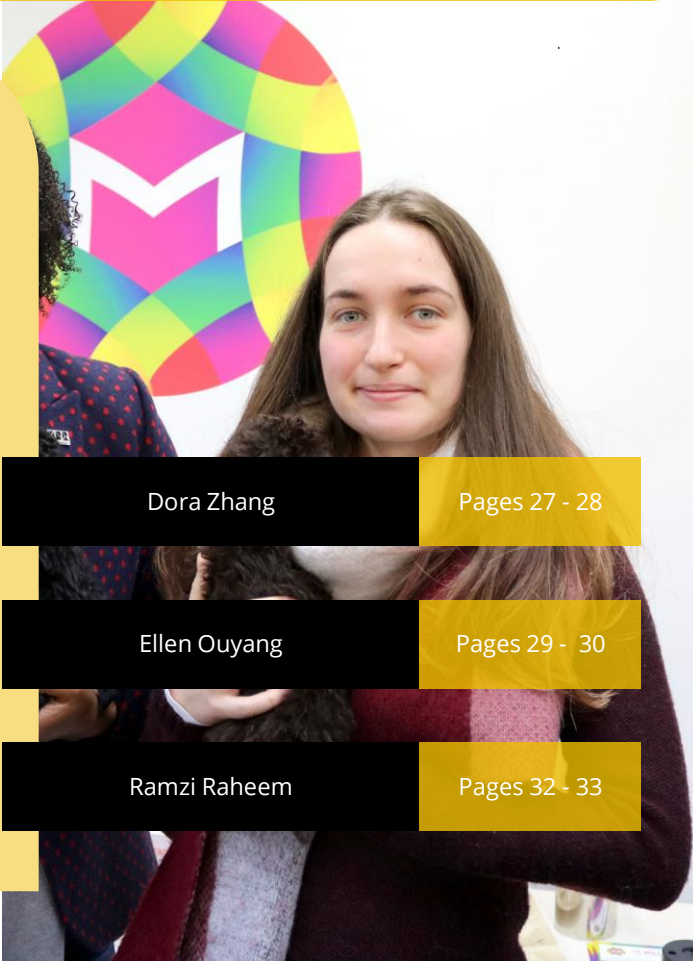
Students apply their new knowledge of innovation cycles and apply their new skillsets to solve social enterprise challenges.

Reflections from our Program Manager

I cannot help but see the incredible experience students get through exposure to social entrepreneurs and our industry professional mentors. As the original first Associate of the Mill House, I worked on developing the Clinic program. Market research showed us few internship opportunities existed for international students in the ACT. Our aim was to build a student-led business clinic to help integrate international students into the business opportunities in our region. The Clinic has supported so far over 130 students from more than 31 different nationalities across 75 projects. The success of our program could only happen thanks to the incredible support we've had from our Mill House Mentors. The Clinic has matured and is now supporting entrepreneurial students to ideate their social enterprise idea and create a minimum viable product. To reflect on our two years of activity, I'm excited to introduce you to three of our Associates.



Lina Connolly,
Business Development Manager



Dora Zhang

Pages 27 - 28

Ellen Ouyang

Pages 29 - 30

Ramzi Raheem

Pages 32 - 33

Project Snapshot

Dora came to Australia from China for a career change going from education to business management. She chose to do an MBA at the University of Canberra, majoring in Human Capital Management.



Doing these projects expanded my career expectations after I realised that management consulting has more impact on businesses.



Projects for

- 3 Emus an Indigenous enterprise specialising in recruitment
- Get Growing a social enterprise specialising in water harvesting solutions for our gardens



Mentored by

- A Consultant from Yellow Edge
- A Comms expert from Specialists in Communication



Deliverables

- Recruitment training module
- Public relations plan and government tendering strategy

Key Learnings & Outcomes

I had theoretical knowledge, but I never had the opportunity to practice in a real business until I worked with the Mill House.

Associate Reflection

ENGAGING EXPERIENCE

I chose to do my MBA at UC because I saw their postgraduate employment rate was higher. I heard about the Mill House from one of my entrepreneurship lecturers. I applied, interviewed and joined the Mill House. I worked on a project closely related to my major, Human Capital management, with my colleague and our mentor. We developed a training module for our client, an Indigenous talent acquisition agency. Our mentor helped us manage the client expectations and ensured the quality of our deliverable.

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

I've completed two projects with the Mill House. The second one was a public relations plan with a focus on government tendering. It was quite new to me, as I had never worked on any Government project before. I go through it with advice from my mentor. Later, when I did another project that involved an Australian Government client, I felt more comfortable because I had learnt how to navigate that environment with my mentor.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Mill House provided me access to Australian work environments. For the first project, I had theoretical knowledge of recruitment but no actual business experience. Working with the Mill House has changed my career expectations. Before, I thought I would work in HR.

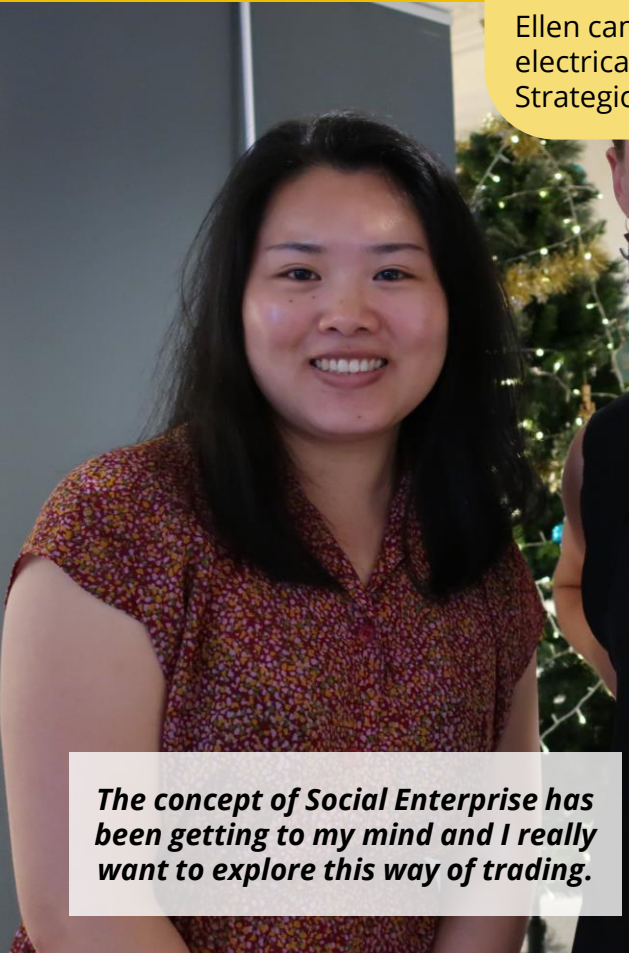
INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

I got to see two different types of entrepreneurs. The first client knew precisely what he was after. The second one didn't know how to get where he wanted, which made the brief overwhelming. Through these two projects, I learned how to communicate with the client and ask questions to ensure I understood the scope and outcomes of the project.



Project Snapshot

Ellen came to Australia from China for a career change going from electrical engineering to communication. She chose to do a Masters of Strategic Communication at the University of Canberra.



The concept of Social Enterprise has been getting to my mind and I really want to explore this way of trading.



Project for

Thrive52 a social enterprise that provides support for parents of neurodivergent children and young adults



Mentored by

A Creative Industries and Social Enterprise business consultant



Deliverable

Marketing report looking at the industry and promotion strategies

Key Learnings & Outcomes

The concept of social entrepreneurship is new to me; it was my first time working with this different business model. This market research provided me with a better understanding of Thrive52's impact area and dyslexia.

Associate Reflection

ENGAGING EXPERIENCE

After four years of working as an engineer, I wanted a change and started a Masters of Communication. During my last semester, I came across the Mill House. It was an engaging experience; the Mill House has this welcoming attitude to International Students. And although I am new to it, I found social entrepreneurship inspiring.

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Thrive52 is all about sharing the founders' hands-on experience parenting dyslexic children. They didn't have a clear vision and mission. As a startup, one of the first steps consists in articulating your vision otherwise you cannot effectively market your business. Another element that affected the marketing recommendations I made was that they were bootstrapping.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The mentorship at the Mill House is something wonderful. As we are still students, we have that theoretical framework but no practice; implementing it was hard. My mentor provided me with the guidance needed to succeed; we now have a long-lasting relationship. Because I like helping people in general and have been volunteering at the Refugee and Migrant Centre, the concept of social enterprise has been getting to my mind. I really want to work in this sector.

INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Small businesses start with the idea that this is something that's going to work and generate some profits. Most entrepreneurs have worked in their area for a long time, which gives them a deeper understanding of what will work and what won't work.



Project Snapshot



Ramzi is a trilingual student who came to Australia from Iraq for a career change going from pharmacy to accounting. He chose to do a Bachelor of Accounting at the University of Canberra.



Project

DiversiTEA a social enterprise specialising in teas and food of the world



Mentored by

A marketing consultant from Challenging Ideas



Deliverable

Business Plan investigating marketing strategies around cultural celebrations

I want to be an entrepreneur, I want to start my own firm.

Key Learnings & Outcomes

Because I had experience writing business plans before, instead of developing my technical skills, I practised my soft skills and learned to listen to my client's.

Associate Reflection

ENGAGING EXPERIENCE

I came from Iraq, and I've been here five years now, four of which I spent working in the retail industry. Currently, I'm working at a bank as a customer manager since graduation. After coming to Australia, I started looking at ways to give back to the community. I began volunteering at the Refugee Settlement Centre. And when I had to do an internship as part of my studies, I wanted to do it for the benefit of the community, which is why I came to Mill House.

LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

Right from the start, the client was clear about what she wasn't looking for and explained that she was "looking to do something authentic." I kept these words in my mind throughout the project, and that's why we developed a business plan centred around sustainability, authenticity and the community.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Working with my mentor, Craig, I learnt many valuable lessons around communication, research, organisation and prioritisation. These soft skills have been invaluable in my new job, especially the multiple communication styles as there is no one size fits all. My studies have given me three things: communication, critical thinking, and the ability to work under pressure.

INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

I noticed that Not-for-Profits struggle mostly with funding. Because of that, the marketing strategy we build for DiversiTEA relied a lot on bootstrapping, which limited promotion options. Yvi had a lot of support from her community which helped her understand regulatory requirements.



Mill House Partners

Showcasing our partnership with Mills Oakley

Our partnership with Mills Oakley allows Mill House to provide appropriate support and supervision for social enterprise students from the UC Law Faculty. They also provide capability support to Accelerator Program participants through training, mentoring, service referral, and pro bono advisory.

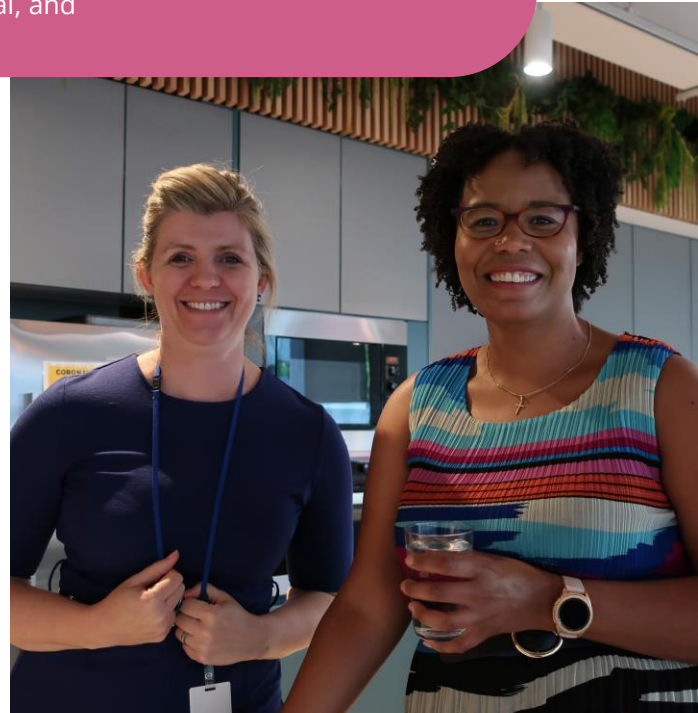
Speaking with Heather Wilson, Special Counsel from Mills Oakley:

What I like about Social Enterprise is it's for purpose and for impact. Its connection to the community and the passion that the people in it have, they're excited about what their project is.

For our team in the Canberra office, one of the great things about working with Mill House and the participants who come out of the program is thinking about how we can do what we do differently. Every time I come away from meetings with the Mill House team feeling more inspired to do things differently in what I do.

One of the highlights for me is connecting with Mill House participants at an early stage in their social enterprise journey. At that early stage they're often thinking about how they're going to structure their business and you can participate in the design and set it up for their goals and what they want to do now. To some extent future proofing so the business can grow and change. You're still doing law but you're doing it more creatively and strategically.

At Mills Oakley we also like to use our network to refer people to support or assistance when its outside our skillset. We've connected Mill House participants with people working in the joint venture space for funding opportunities or business development. When they are at the set up phase we know they might need some banking or other financial support so we refer them to SERVICE ONE.



Heather Wilson (Mills Oakley) and Cindy Mitchell (Mill House)

Mill House Partners & Friends



GRIST 2019 Opening Reception



Introduction to Social Enterprise with Manjula Mishra (left) and Amrita Burman (right), founders of Simply Lentils



Reconciliation Day with Hugh Chalmers (Director), Dennis Foley (Mentor) and two University of Canberra students



GRIST 2020 Graduation with Ellen Ouyang, Clinic associate and GRIST alumni



Social Enterprise Peer Network 2019 Yasmine Gray (Getaboutable), Alan Tse (Altina Drinks)



GRIST 2020 Graduation with Cindy Mitchell (CEO) & Maree Sainsbury (Director)

Collab Lab: Youth Homelessness Pathways Challenge



Cindy Mitchell (centre left) with the Canberra Innovation Network team

The Challenge was a novel way to bring experts in evidence-based service delivery, individuals with lived experience and for-purpose entrepreneurs together in the same room and support them with a common language and tools for genuine collaboration.

Mill House partnered with Canberra Innovation Network to run a two-day collaborative workshop & capture solutions from participants that addressed the question: **“How can we incentivise novel solutions, delivered collaboratively by multiple service providers with different approaches and ideas informed by the latest evidence?”**



The workshop attracted

- 36 participants ranging from:
 - Government,
 - Community Organisations,
 - Tech entrepreneurs &
 - Social entrepreneurs
- Forming 11 teams, with some merging before the end
- Resulting in 8 final submissions & pitches

And was supported by

- 12 mentors assisting the teams
- 4 judges comprising of:
 - Cindy Mitchell, Mill House CEO
 - Georgina Byron, Snow Foundation CEO
 - Dianne Kargas-Bray, Chair of Hands Across Canberra
 - Dr Justin Barker, Executive Director of The Youth Coalition

The finalist were invited to

- include a diverse set of collaborators committed to making a difference to young people's lives and,
- apply for funds set aside for this project.

SERVICE ONE Alliance Bank

Showcasing our founding member and our partnership

SERVICE ONE is a 100 per cent customer-owned social enterprise bank. We exist for purpose—firstly, by providing access to competitive financial and banking products to our members and secondly, by investing our profits to generate positive social and environmental impact in the communities where our members work and live.



We are proud to be a founding member of the Mill House Ventures. We see their work to improve the financial sustainability and impact of other for-purpose businesses in our region as central to our mission and vision.

Our involvement with Mill House is much more than just an annual donation. Our CEO is a hands-on member of the Mill House Board of Directors, mentoring the Executive and developing and executing the organisation's strategic mission and vision. My colleagues and I have volunteered as GRIST program mentors. We delivered training on banking and general small business financial literacy with Mill House. We have hosted many training and social enterprise networking events throughout Canberra and regional NSW.

Mill House has become a highly valued and recognised source of business intermediary in our region and a source of pride for our members. Of course, we are always happy when Mill House clients become SERVICE ONE members! In addition to full business banking services, we have a Social Enterprise Loan program. Mature social enterprises in our region and Mill House graduates have been able to work with us to get much-needed growth and expansion funding.

We are thrilled to be making such a positive impact by doing what we do best—supporting our neighbours in meaningful and tangible ways to DO GOOD!

Adam Marshall

Adam Marshall, General Manager Sales & Transformation

Altina Drinks receives SERVICE ONE Social Enterprise Loan

Facilitating social impact investment

At Altina, we had a vision to normalise alcohol free drinking and reduce the stigma of not drinking, thereby reducing the negative impacts drinking has on our community. We spent one year creating prototype products and testing the market to see if we had a viable social impact business.



Adam Marshall (SERVICE ONE), at Altina's manufacturing warehouse next to Altina venture founders Alan Tse and Christina Delay

After we received overwhelming positive feedback from customers, we drafted a business plan and cash flow forecasts to get funding. Traditional banks shied away from us, saying that even though we had a social impact business, their low risk tolerance meant they could not fund our vision and business plan. At that time, we were part of Mill House Ventures who put us in touch with SERVICE ONE a social enterprise Bank. SERVICE ONE Bank allocates a portion of their profit to fund social enterprises and social impact businesses with sound business fundamentals and we proved we had those fundamentals!

Before we got the loan, Christina and myself were not paid a salary to run the business while still funding the business overheads with 23 Canberra stockists.

18 months on from receiving the loan money, we are paid a (small) salary, retained revenue to fund business operations and we have hired one warehouse assistant staff at market salary with 98 stockists around the country. We are proud of our achievement given the global pandemic effect on businesses, families and the community.

Alan Tse

Mill House Board of Directors and Team



Matthew Smith, SERVICE ONE CEO, Director



Cindy Mitchell, Mill House CEO (left) & Cindy Schwartz Director (right)



Hugh Chalmers Mentor & Director



Maree Sainsbury, University of Canberra, Director



Craig Fitzgerald, Director, Chairman



Petr Adamek, Canberra Innovation Network CEO, Board Observer



Irene Lemon, Social Enterprise Development Manager



Lina Connolly, Clinic Program Manager



Billy Smith, Engagement & Operations Manager



While our team is small, we have 60 industry mentors who volunteer their time with our clients and students. Without them, our programs wouldn't achieve the impact we're so proud to share with you in this report!

We can't fit them all here, but you can see them all on our web site We thank them for their generous support and time spent with our program participants.

We are always looking for new people to accelerate impact. Mentoring at Mill House is a great way to get involved. Please get in touch to discover more about the ways you can create measurable impact in our community.

JOIN US

To be involved in the growth of a thriving social ventures ecosystem in Canberra and the region you can contact us on:

Clinic@millhouseventures.com.au

Cindy Mitchell, CEO

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