



# Strategic Plan

## August – December 2009

We hold as our vision:

*Truly sustainable, equitable societies, in which creative ideas continually inspire people to think critically, act collectively and live considerately.*

We see our mission as:

*Providing practical tools and services, so that every non-profit idea seeking to address a domestic social need has a chance to emerge and flourish.*

This document seeks to outline Project Australia's strategic direction and plans for the period August 2009 to December 2009. The document commences with a snapshot of who we are and what we do, before providing a brief history of our work and our rationale for existence. Greater detail is then provided about the four aspects of our work, our governance mechanisms and the team behind our work.

### **Who we are and what we do (a snapshot)**

Project Australia is a national incubator for social innovation, helping to generate and launch not-for-profit projects that utilise existing resources and address domestic social needs.

We are a progressive, not-for-profit social enterprise and have no political or religious affiliation.

Our sources of revenue include unconditional donations and fees from events and professional speaking.

Our team includes two part-time staff, 33 volunteers, 12 professional speakers and a six-person Board of Governors. We operate out of Sydney, with team members dispersed around the country.

We do four things:

- We offer free, informal consulting and networking for budding and existing social innovators;
- We provide an online incubator for social innovation (to be launched November, 2009);
- We conduct practically-oriented research about social innovation; and
- We manage Australia's first, professional youth speakers' bureau, uThinc (to be launched September, 2009).

Our work cuts across twelve theme areas: environment and sustainability, health and wellbeing, media and social enquiry, technology and society, youth issues and empowerment, employment and opportunity, culture and creativity, community and social services, democracy and civil society, human rights and social justice, Indigenous issues, and education and critical thinking.

### **Brief history**

In September 2006, a group of younger Australians began planning a series of discussions that would engage people around the country in sharing ideas and plans about how we can create a brighter Australian future.

From the initial national night of discussions, attended by over 100 people across all states and territories, a growing sense emerged that people wanted alternative, meaningful avenues and platforms to engage around important social issues. Out of these discussions, Project Australia organically emerged and continues, its direction constantly shaped by the input of people and communities around the country.

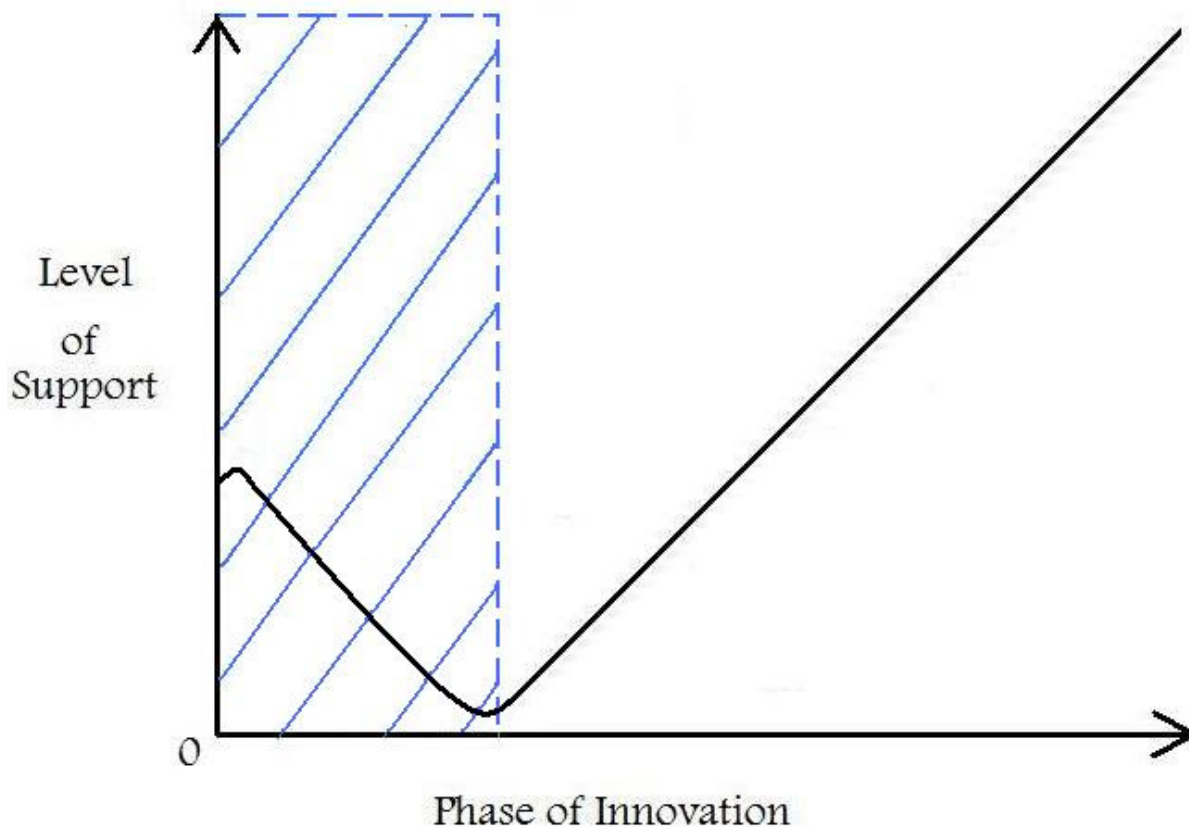
Since 2006, Project Australia has helped facilitate two more nation-wide discussion nights, assisted numerous social innovators with their work, tabulated over 800 ideas and projects from around Australia, held two fundraising trivia nights, expanded our supporter database to over 2000 individuals, and provided support for an autonomous, sister-initiative: Project Kenya ([www.projectkenya.or.ke](http://www.projectkenya.or.ke)), including \$3400 for an asset-mapping project in Kisumu and the financing of a personal computer for Project Kenya's Executive Director, Jerry Otieno.

Overall, Project Australia has engaged more than 200 people in some form of voluntary capacity, whilst working within a budget of less than \$25,000 since 2006.

### **Why we exist**

From our experiences, there appears to be a significant gap in Australia's societal infrastructure that restricts the progress of many socially-focussed ideas from concept to reality.

Whilst the Internet and social media make it easier than ever to ensure an idea is open to a world audience, the combination of content overload and an appetite for hype, mean that few ideas go beyond a blog post or discussion thread. Unless an idea has a registered, incorporated identity, deductible gift recipient status, or is proposed by an extremely driven, resilient and networked individual/team, it is really hard to get credibility, volunteers, advice or financial support to get the idea 'off the ground'. This gap has been compounded by the cessation of competitions like Big Break and Shell Livewire. An attempt to represent this, graphically, is shown in Figure 1.

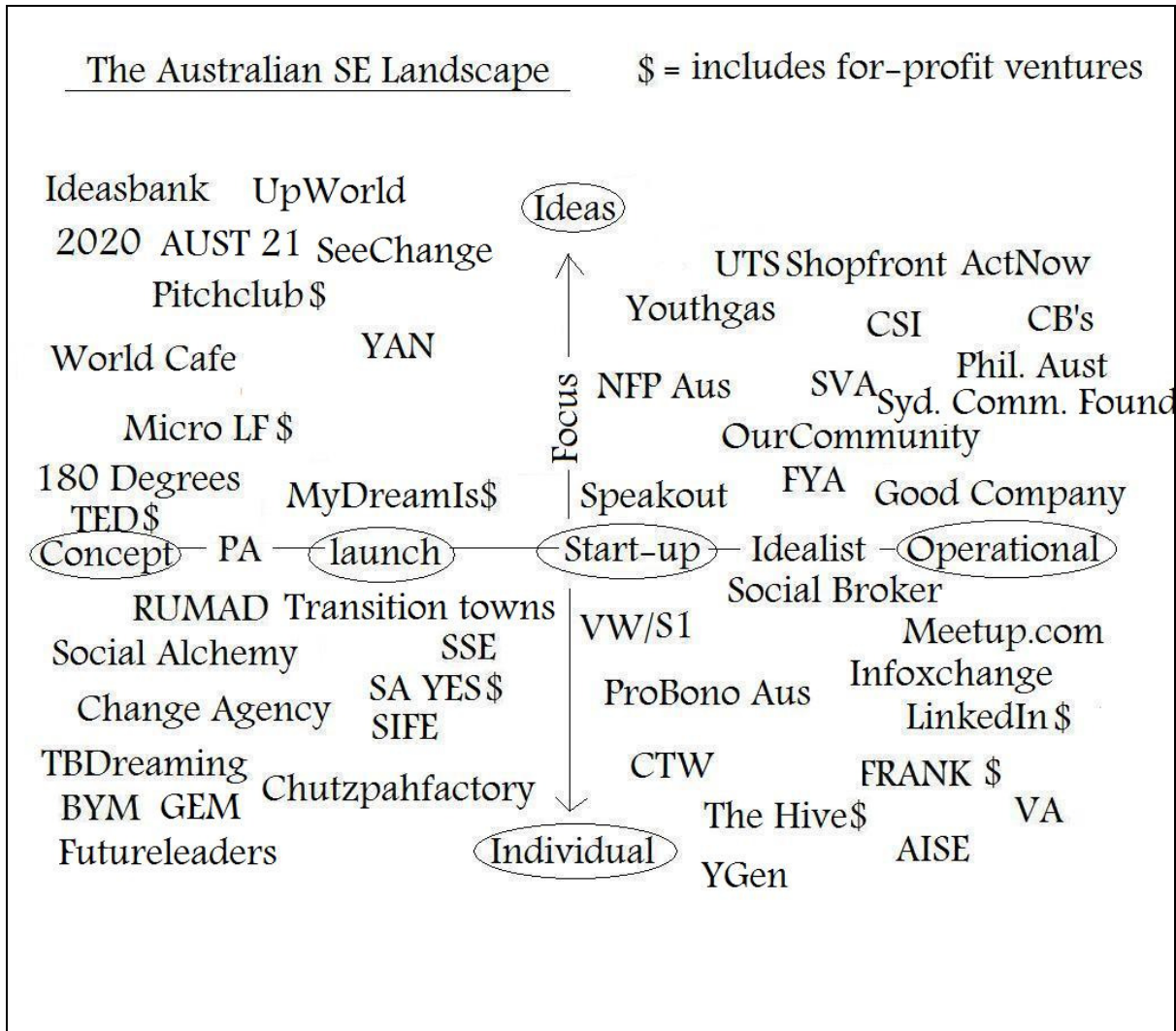


**Figure 1: Limited support for early-scale social innovation**

The increasing support provided to projects the further they venture along the phase of innovation, in part explains the cyclical nature of already well-supported projects receiving further support for spin-off projects (perhaps leading to a ‘staleness’ in social innovation?).

Project Australia operates in the highlighted space to on the left, supporting early scale social innovation.

Furthermore, many of the Australian organisations working in the field of social innovation would appear to be working independently, meaning a lack of overall cohesiveness. With a little more collaboration, who knows what levels of success we could expect in helping socially-focussed ideas reach their full potential! Below is Project Australia’s initial sketch of some of the organizations operating within the Australian social innovation space, mapped on two axes. The horizontal axis refers to the stage of the social innovation being supported. The vertical axis refers to the organisation’s focus in terms of whether, through its work, it more supports ‘ideas’ or ‘innovators’.



Over the past two years we have observed the growing success of social innovation in the United Kingdom and an increasing interest in social innovation amongst Australians. The Internet now presents a unique tool by which to connect and coordinate everyday Australians seeking to create a brighter future.

### What we do: the detail

1. Free, informal consulting and networking for budding and existing social innovators

Project Australia will continue to provide varying levels of pro-bono assistance to budding and existing social innovators in ways including:

- Providing business and operational advice<sup>1</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> Within our capacity and the limits proscribed by law.

- Identifying marketing, funding and promotional opportunities;
- Sourcing relevant legal and financial advice; and
- Providing relevant contacts and leads

## 2. An online incubator for social innovation

In November 2009, Project Australia will launch a free, online space for people to identify, incubate and launch user-generated ideas that seek to create a brighter Australian future.

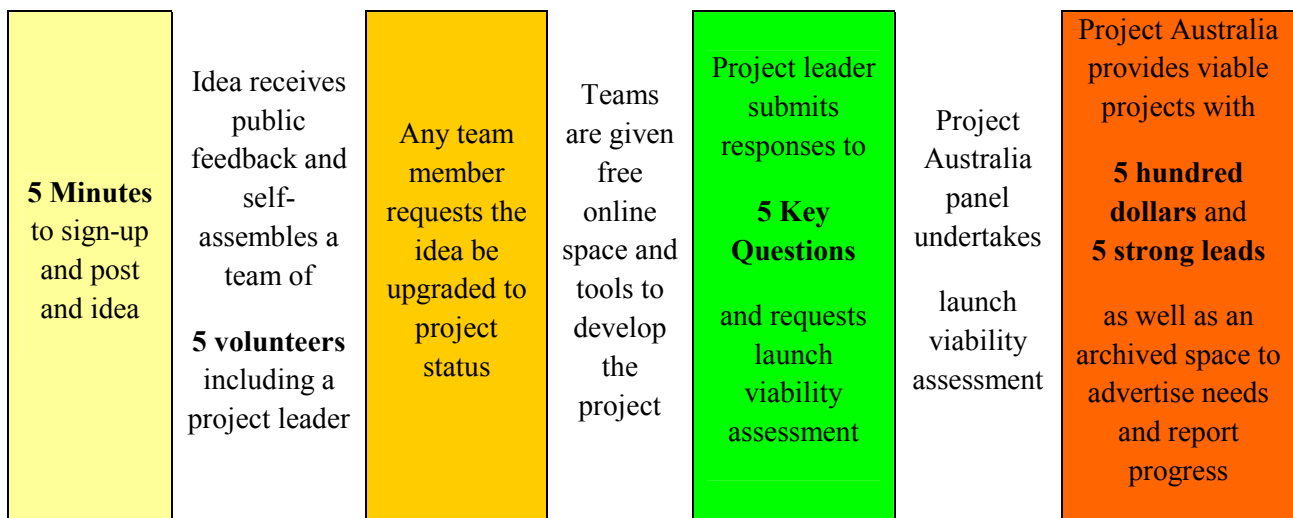
Ideas must (be):

- Early-phase,
- Not-for-profit,
- Actionable
- Utilising existing assets where possible
- Addressing domestic social needs
- Congruent with our Charter

We are calling the model that underpins user-engagement: ‘5 x 5’. The model proposes that, one way to get a needs-based idea off the ground is to incorporate the following five basic ingredients:

- **Five minutes** to set-up a profile and post an idea;
- **Five volunteers** to take the idea from concept to reality, including one leader;
- **Five questions** about the non-profit project: What is the existing situation and identified need? What is the innovative contribution to be made by the project? On what existing strengths and resources can the project build? How will the project be financially sustainable? What is needed and planned for launching the project into action? (Project leader provides)
- **Five hundred dollars** to launch the idea into action (Project Australia provides); and
- **Five strong leads or ideas** for the next phase of the journey (Project Australia provides).

This is then integrated into our proposed model for online incubation as shown below:



Our aim is to have launched 10,000 new projects by 2012.

### 3. Practically-oriented research about social innovation

We will continue to conduct research about our services, research that will support social innovation in Australia (including ‘how-to’ guides), and research that will contribute to the literature around social innovation. We will continue to present our work through conferences and workshops.

### 4. Australia's first, professional youth speakers' bureau

In September 2009 we will launch ‘uThinc’ ([www.uthinc.com.au](http://www.uthinc.com.au)), Australia's first, professional youth speakers' bureau.

Typically, speaker’s bureaus in Australia pitch to the ‘high end’ of town, engaging public celebrities, mostly over 35, with a range of messages. The bulk of their speakers charge \$5,000 to \$20000 for one-off presentations and are often required dramatically tailor messages to what the audience wants to hear.

Our speakers’ bureau works differently. We pitch to all sectors, engaging under-exposed leaders, 18 – 35 years of age, connected by a progressive message. Our speakers charge \$1000 - \$5000 for one-off presentations and can customise their presentations in order to provide the messages they believe audiences need to hear.

The following 12 speakers have been selected to form the initial bureau. Each will speak on a wide range of topics but is loosely linked to one of Project Australia's 12 theme areas:

Matthew Clayfield:	Journalist, The Australian
Alischa Ross:	CEO, Youth Empowerment Against HIV/AIDS
Ebony Allen:	Graduate lawyer, Native Title Services Corporation
Ellen Sandell:	Youth Climate Advocate
Miriam Lyons:	Director, Centre for Policy Development
Ben Eltham:	National Affairs Correspondent, NewMatilda.com
Jessica Kiely:	CEO, The Frank Team
Adam Smith:	CEO, Education Foundation and the Foundation for Young Australians
Aleem Ali:	CEO, Speakout
Simone McMahon:	Executive Director, Organ Donation & Transplant Foundation of WA
May Miller-Dawkins:	Research Manager, Oxfam Australia
Eddie Harran:	Independent digital and social media strategist

The bureau distinguishes itself by providing:

- Exclusively younger and progressively-minded, highly experienced speakers;
- Fresh content and fresh perspectives we believe audiences need to hear (not just want to hear);
- Tech-savvy, yet personable, approaches to speaking;
- Accessible fees;
- Links for audiences to platforms for action; and
- A direct stream of revenue to Project Australia that will support the launching of new, socially-focused projects

As a profit-for-purpose initiative to help fund Project Australia's work, the bureau is to be a program run within Project Australia's operational mandate. Fifty per cent of the speaker fees will go to Project Australia, providing a regular stream of income that will be used to fund operations as well as providing new ideas with small-scale finance.

Despite not having launched, uThinc has already overseen two well-received professional talks for the Wodonga Council and the National emerging Leaders

Summit convened by Outward Bound. Two further talks are already booked for 2009.

### **How we will be governed and run**

We have recently become an incorporated Association (NSW), named Project Hub Australia, and registered with the NSW Office of Fair Trading the business names Project Australia and uThinc Speakers' Bureau.

The following Board of Governors has been elected:

President	Larissa Behrendt	Professor of Law, University of Technology, Sydney
Vice President	Jeff Prentice	Chair, National Education and Employment Foundation Australia
Treasurer	Les MacDonald	CEO, NSW Meals on Wheels
Secretary	Stephen Couling	Consultant
Member	Violeta Braach-Maksvytis	Independent Executive Office Professional
Member	Martin Stewart-Weeks	Chair, Australian Social Innovation Exchange

At their inaugural meeting, held August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the Board of Governors endorsed this strategic plan.

Provisionally, Project Australia will be audited by Grant Thornton Pty Ltd.

<b>EXECUTIVE</b>	
Ideas	Donnie Maclurcan
Operations	Kalpana Vignehsa
Marketing and Communications	Melinda Poole
Web	Anette Loudon
Research	Nerida Lennon
uThink	Rachel Beaney
 <b>OPERATIONS</b>	
HR Management	Birdie Gurlie
Accounts	Ann Hong Bai
Legal	Phillip Roberts
Contracts	Adam Moulton
 <b>RESEARCH</b>	
Research	Ehon Chan
Research	Julian Waters-Lynch
Research	Natalia Radywyl
Research	Yasmin Johnson
Research	Kelly Smith-Holbourn
 <b>WEB</b>	
Programming	Laurie Tuch
Programming	James Hiscock
Strategy	Crighton Nichols
Programming	Mojzis Stupka
Documentation	Arturo Montero
User Interface	Nikash Singh
User Interface	Nick Agnew
Programming	Cris Stringfellow
 <b>MARKETING AND COMMS</b>	
Project Management	Caroline Nguyen
Project Management	Zahrah Imtiaz
Creativity	AJ Tennant
Design	Veronique Houlet
Database Management	Rosanna Wong
Design	Stephanie Patel
Database Management	Sally Scott
Strategy	Ravi Prasad
Fundraising	Amrita Dasvarma
Design	Victoria Bolton
 <b>UTHINC</b>	
Business Development	Kristin Drakenberg
Marketing	Helen Skinner