

Transcript – Vanguard Laundry Case Study 2 video

Are you interested in how other for-purpose organisations measure their outcomes and impact?

Introducing Vanguard Laundry Services.

Vanguard is a social enterprise delivering commercial laundry services to Toowoomba and surrounding areas in Queensland.

Vanguard is led by a social mission to help people with a lived experience of disadvantage and unemployment find long-term work.

As a social enterprise, a substantial portion of Vanguard's income comes from the operation of the commercial laundry with any profits being reinvested back into the enterprise to help achieve its social mission.

After five years of operation, Vanguard are looking to grow their enterprise to help support more people transition to long-term employment. In order to do this, Vanguard made a strategic decision to focus on the financial sustainability of the commercial laundry as a foundation for supporting the whole social enterprise.

One of the key outcomes of this focus was increased clarity around the two aspects of Vanguard as a social enterprise and that both the social and enterprise functions have equal importance.

This helped Vanguard be clear in communicating the way they operate both internally, and with their external stakeholders, including funders with:

- the enterprise function providing competitive, high-quality commercial laundry service with the aim of operating at break-even or better and any profits being invested into the social function,
- and the Social function offering intensive internal support to staff throughout their time at the organisation to support them transitioning to other local employment options and with this function being funded through laundry profits and external grants.

This allowed Vanguard to develop a clear value proposition to funders around the dual functions of the organisation to support transparent reporting and provide a level of certainty regarding funding for the social function.

Through their improved financial sustainability, Vanguard have been able to invest in the development and implementation of a clear strategic direction for the organisation. This included working with all staff to develop a vision and mission to build a shared understanding of why the organisation exists.

This supported the development of a plan for the future operation of the social enterprise and clarity regarding what Vanguard should be focusing on, as well as what it shouldn't.

This plan for the future included looking at the leadership of Vanguard and identifying the right people to help run both functions of the organisation.

A Managing Director with extensive experience in running a commercial laundry brought a focus on continuous improvement in laundry operations and implementing the strategic direction. This allowed the Social Impact Manager to have an increased strategic focus on supporting employees and expanding the Social Impact Team to include personnel with knowledge in developing the employment skills of staff and helping them transition to other employment opportunities.

To find out more about Vanguard Laundry and their journey to grow and report on their social impact visit dss.gov.au for the full case study.