



Eaglehawk, VIC

www.feo.net.au



'SVA assists you to look beyond your immediate field of work and supports you in new challenges through mentoring which has been very effective with sustaining FEO.'

Peter Cox

Chief Executive Officer
Future Employment Opportunities

How we came together

Future Employment Opportunities (FEO) won funding for its *TradeStart* program in the SVA Youth Boost! in 2004. *TradeStart* is a social enterprise dedicated to training young people who are not reaching their full potential at school but lack the requisite experience to start apprenticeships. Employers want to hire experienced young apprentices so *TradeStart* responds to this need and bridges the gap by offering students hands on experience in a workshop environment, giving them the opportunity to gain real skills which will prepare them for future employment.

Peter Cox, FEO's CEO, has over 30 years experience in community development and a firm belief that every community has underutilised assets and unemployed community members who are willing to work. When SVA began working with Peter Cox, other significant opportunities arose for collaboration between the organisations in the area of social enterprise. For example, the successful social enterprise model of the *Eaglehawk Recycle Shop* was to be replicated in other regional locations in Victoria through *Community Recycling Ventures*.

Mission

To create opportunities for people who seek employment by providing training and support, by establishing self-generated work enterprises and by contributing to building a vibrant and sustainable community.

Purpose

FEO provides training, employment placement services and enterprise activities for all ages, primarily in Central and Northern Victoria. FEO has a robust operational model that supports business start-ups and establishes social enterprises that are financially sustainable (75 per cent of all FEO expenditure is funded by its own revenue). A key factor in the model is to ask jobseekers to participate in the start-up of the social enterprise and to gradually receive wages as the business creates revenue. FEO provides a 'stepping stone' to further employment. It has a policy to give preference to those not in the paid workforce for all positions in its organisation.

Growth

- FEO formally rebranded in 2007 and implemented a new management structure, including the creation of a new position of Business Development/ Marketing Manager to assist primarily with growing existing enterprises.
- SVA supported FEO to replicate the success of the *Eaglehawk Recycle Shop (ERS)*, which significantly upgraded its facilities in 2007, through *Community Recycling Ventures (CRV)*. The first replications took place in Portland and Bairnsdale in Victoria.
- SVA assisted in the establishment of *TradeStart*, an out of school community enterprise for young people at risk of leaving school or currently unemployed, that teaches new trade skills in a workshop environment. *TradeStart* works with 35 young people annually and is in its fifth year of operation.
- FEO's established enterprises include *OnTrack* (training and employment service) which works with over 300 jobseekers annually, *Workspace* which supports 75 start-up businesses in seven enterprise centres and *Enhance IT* which continues to rebuild and service computers for people with a low income.

Initial SVA distribution	2004		
Total distributions from SVA	\$319,095		
SVA in-kind support	\$210,000		
SVA brokered support			
– Social Return on Investment (2005)	\$10,000		
– Boston Consulting Group – CRV documentation (2006)	\$20,000		
– Matrix on Board financial systems assessment (2008)	\$10,000		

	FY04	FY09	CAGR
Revenue	\$1,411,202	\$2,134,544	8.63%
Participants*	686	611	(2.29)%

* Includes FEO employees and volunteers, *TradeStart* participants, *Workspace* enterprise employees and *On Track* certificate recipients

Social impact

- *TradeStart* continues to work with up to 35 young people each year assisting them to undertake Certificate II in Engineering and return to school or seek employment. 70 per cent of funding is self-generated through manufacturing and sale of items and collection of participant fees.
- *Workspace* currently has 7725 square metres of business incubator lettable space in seven enterprise centres across central Victoria. The centres accommodate 75 small businesses employing 183 people. Occupancy is at 87 per cent.
- The *Eaglehawk Recycle Shop* had a turnover of \$520,000 in 2008/09 employing 12 staff and attracted over 40,000 visitors who purchased goods for re-use which assisted to extend the life of landfill by eight years.
- FEO had 45 employees at the end of 2008/09, with 19 full time, 24 part time and two sessional workers. Employees had an average length of service of 5.5 years. FEO also has approximately 40 volunteers.

Why FEO is graduating

After almost five years of engagement with SVA, FEO continues to demonstrate evidence based social impact, while growing social enterprise revenues and partnering with a high performance board and support networks. SVA continues to engage FEO as advisors and supporters in the employment and social enterprise space. SVA holds FEO in the highest regard and has learnt much from Peter and his team throughout the partnership.

Looking ahead

FEO is working towards building its annual income to \$4 million by the end of 2011, with 60 staff and 350 employment and educational outcomes annually. FEO will establish an Industrial Recycling Centre at Eaglehawk after receiving an Australian Government grant through the Jobs Fund. This will double FEO's recycling income and staff numbers. In partnership with *Workspace*, FEO will expand its business incubator space with 15 businesses graduating into their own premises annually. FEO will also maintain *TradeStart* as an alternative learning program for young people exiting school early.