



One of the ventures supported by the Angel Investor Network's pooled investment is Ganbina. This funding enables school children like Selena, Jemma and Emily in the Ganbina Jobs4U2 program to be exposed to a wide range of local career opportunities. Here at Corboy Fresh Fruit at Merrigum, west of Shepparton, participants are shown the entire operations, from picking and grading fruit to administrative roles and beyond.

A group of pioneering women are putting their money where their consciences are,
writes Lindley Edwards, CEO, VentureGroup

ANGELS, INVESTMENT AND

LAST YEAR Social Ventures Australia commenced a pilot Angel Investor Network in Sydney and Melbourne with a group of women who are pooling financial and strategic resources to support high-impact non-profit organisations.

The innovative approach emanated from forums that brought together 300 female business and community leaders to stimulate discussion about women as significant contributors to Australia's social, cultural and economic fabric.

The emerging themes were that women want to interact in society based on their beliefs and values, they want to know how they can genuinely contribute, and they have a desire to lead the change by understanding the issues and collaborating.

SVA took these on board and applied the principles of commercial angel investors, who typically provide capital to early stage businesses and to reduce their risk, contribute business expertise, mentoring and networks, which in many instances is as valuable, if not more valuable than the actual cash invested. They then pitched the idea of an Angel Investor Network to a hand-picked group of women who shared common ideals.

These ideals centred on our values: the desire to create a better world for future generations, including the importance of indig-

enous people taking their rightful place in society, care for the environment, education and encouragement of younger people and meaningful employment for marginalised Australians.

Our participants enthusiastically grasped the idea of drawing on the largely untapped power of female social investors. They understood the benefits of actively learning the process of engaged philanthropy and genuinely believe in the power of pooling resources with a group of like-minded women.

From this first wave, we have 17 members in Sydney and 12 in Melbourne, representing a wide cross-section of industries including professionals, community workers, entrepreneurs, investment bankers, company directors and lawyers.

Each member has contributed a small investment equally to a funding pool that the group decided should be directed to four ventures in SVA's portfolio: OzGREEN, Ganbina, Pathways Foundation and Social Firms Australia.

These were chosen based on the group's ability to use its business and personal skill sets to ensure they could collectively add value to each social venture's growth.

The groups currently meet bi-monthly over dinner to hear from their supported ventures and to participate in learning forums



LINDLEY EDWARDS

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SVA ANGEL INVESTORS ARE:

- A commitment to support non-profit organisations both financially and with in-kind support
- A willingness to walk in the shoes of another, to think and feel about what it is like for another
- An understanding that by 'pooling' their funds they are able to create more influence as investments are larger and can fund more capacity building
- A preparedness to be strategic and focused in their giving
- An appreciation that this is a social capital investment with 'earnings and interest' not from money but from a social return
- A need to be informed, educated and to make a tangible difference

SOCIAL CAPITAL

on key aspects of engaged philanthropy delivered by SVA. These include understanding the difference between cheque-book charity and engaged philanthropy, effective mentoring and how to measure a social return – all critical aspects of creating social change.

Some members are also interacting directly with their supported venture CEOs and, in some instances, gaining first-hand experience by participating in their programs.

From my experience with the Sydney Group, it has been a high-performing team building exercise, an educational experience and a chance to walk the talk of social change in step with others. It has been most enjoyable to meet other like-minded Angels and learn both from each other as well as the ventures we support.

I feel privileged to be associated with these adventurous women who have been prepared to invest time, money and effort into this 'greenfields' program. They have given 110% plus to an idea and got behind it to make it a reality.

I feel together we can use our collective power to create positive and powerful change and that Margaret Mead's comment is very true for our SVA Angel Investment Network: 'A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.' ○

SVA ANGEL INVESTOR MEMBERS

SYDNEY

Lindley EDWARDS, CEO,
The VentureGroup Limited (AIN Group Host)

Fiona ARCHER, Associate Partner,
UBS Wealth Management

Arlana BROWN, Director, *Arlana Brown & Associates*

Michelle CURRY, Associate Partner Strategy &
Change, IBM

Kaye DENING AM, Director, *Denning Group*

Robyn GILBEY, Executive Producer, *One Minute World*

Brynnie GOODWILL, Consultant, *Brynnie & Keith Goodwill Pty Ltd*

Sarah HATCHER, Executive Director,
Society for Knowledge Economics

Sally MANION, Director National Head Financial
Planning, ipac Financial Services

Karen MCGREGOR, Chief Financial Officer,
Mariner Bridge Investments

Emily MORROW, Executive Coach, *Stephenson Mansell Group*

Sam MOSTYN, Group Director Culture and
Reputation, Insurance Australia Group

Dr Melinda MUTH, Lecturer Adjunct Faculty
Leadership, AGSM

Lynn RALPH, Director,
Cameron Ralph

Emily SIMPSON, Private Investor

Ann TOUT, Consultant, *6e Leadership Coaching*

Suzanne WILLIAMS, Senior Client Partner,
Korn/Ferry International

MELBOURNE

Lynne JENSEN, Partner, *Allens Arthur Anderson (AIN Group Co-Host)*

Seri RENKIN, Private Investor *(AIN Group Co-Host)*

Carolyn CLARK, Private Investor

Libby DUMMETT, Private Investor

Julie FARRELL, Private Investor

Rhonda HOPKINS, Business Owner

Rebecca KING, General Manager, *Investor Relations, Coles Myer*

Josie RIZZA, Private Investor

Sarah SACKS, Private Investor

Sandra SCHILLING, Private Investor

Karen VESEY, Private Investor

Penelope WARD-AMBLER, Private Investor