



S O U R D O U G H

B U S I N E S S P A T H W A Y S

VISION INTO ACTION

The Sourdough Group - A Northern Rivers based group of business executives and an extended network of volunteers who are engaged in philanthropic work to contribute to the growth of the economy and jobs in the region.

We are committed to protecting the future of the region environmentally, socially, community wise and culturally. However we recognise that unless there are jobs, then the things that make this region special will seriously deteriorate over time.

To create jobs that last (are sustainable) it requires entrepreneurs who are prepared to take the risk of setting up and running businesses. To ensure businesses are sustainable they need to develop and grow. We are trying to assist such entrepreneurs, businesses and innovation.

We are fortunate to have in our broader group long standing residents and business people from the Region, and we also include many of the relative “newcomers” who bring with them sets of skills and connections which have been developed by working in the global economy, which can complement local business experience.

We are totally non aligned and informally structured.

Current projects:

Mentoring:

Business Pathways Mentoring Scheme (managed now by Byron Community College with a region wide remit and part funded by the Merchant Foundation). A group of mentors who can help businesses grow. A large number of businesses have utilised this service over the last few years and an evaluation report is available.

We also support acceleration projects. These are run for established businesses and organisations who are in a fast growth or change stage. We appoint a long term mentor who then brings in other expertise from sourdough. Using people with high levels of business expertise to help owners think through how to grow.

Large projects:

Many jobs are disappearing in the Northern Rivers so we take on the support of some larger projects. One of these is the Rail Trail and others are in the pipeline.

Rail Trail Development (Now the Northern Rivers Rail Trail Association inc.) A regional project to turn the rail corridor into a cycling walking and local community resource. We estimate this will create an economic boost of over \$50M per annum to the region and hundreds of new jobs. This initiative has over 5000 supporters and is a game changer for employment and innovation

Learning and collaboration:

The Sourdough Hidden Asset 6 monthly lunch. To very informally bring together people from all sectors who want to do big things to help the regions economy and job situation. We try to help such networking. There is also a LinkedIn group for discussion between these many people on major themes. We also arrange occasional meetings.

New Large projects:

accelerator support is being given to:

- Screenworks. For the creative Industries
- IRCHAL. Health Ageing global HQ being based here
- Horticulture/Agribusiness- Think tank stage
- Home Based/Web enabled business growth for the region
- Health education organisation working with GP's and utilising walking.

How do we work?

Sourdough group tries to facilitate by assisting others. We do not run anything ourselves. We get behind local leaders, innovators, people with ideas, businesses, to help them become successful. In this context we do not invest money in ventures

We prefer not to create the idea-but for people with passion to build the idea and its success-but we may be able to help them. We have limited resources so have to choose carefully those that fit with the skills of the group and that will have maximum impact on helping the Northern Rivers Community

How can you use us? (confidentiality of your work and concepts applies throughout)

You may need a mentor to help you build your business and employ more people. Contact Paul Jameson on paulj@byroncollege.org.au

You may need a few hours of consultations to help you really think through a new venture or the growth of an existing one. Contact Sourdough with a one page description of the venture plus what help you need

You may have a "big scheme" that you have been working on that you think should be created for the region. Send us your preliminary thinking / documents so we can understand it and tell us exactly what help you need from us and we can decide if one of us can assist or whether you should talk to a group of sourdoughers.

You have a business which could grow, or where you need to link to other businesses in new ventures ready for the Rail Trail if approved and built. Contact the NRRT on :www.northernriversrailtrail.org.au

What sectors:

For mentoring, strategic help and big scheme development we are interested in most sectors if they can provide new jobs in the region.

We are particularly interested where some jobs can be provided for young people, people with a disability, people with less education, females returning to work, mature age workers.

We work with and through others, and if projects are too large, we link them to existing organisations. In this way we add to existing initiative.

We get behind a small number of projects a year designed to produce more jobs in the Northern rivers.

In addition, we try to act as a “think tank” to recognise important innovation that is needed for our regional businesses to survive and grow at a time of immense global competition