

Living Towns Corporation

What is Living Towns Corporation?

Living Towns is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. This means that any money we make cannot be distributed to the members or directors and must be used to further the mission of the organisation.

Who are we?

Living Towns Corporation Ltd. has two executive directors, Greg Winning and Martin Graham and one non-executive director, Len Luxford. Biographies of the directors can be found on the Living Communities™ website.

What is our mission?

Our mission, as described in our constitution:

“Living Towns Corporation aims to facilitate the retention and development of communities’ financial and human capital, by fostering economic improvement that creates economic, social and environmental resilience in those communities.”

What do we do?

We facilitate the use of the community economic development program, Living Communities™ and coach communities that wish to become more economically, socially and environmentally resilient.

What are our aims?

The aim of the program is to identify, via community engagement and community participation, where the local economy is losing money (leaking). It then encourages the community to plug those leaks by enhancing existing businesses and creating new ones.

Why do we do it?

Living Towns founders, Greg Winning and Martin Graham are former advertising executives who became sick of the corporate culture in which they worked.

They set up their own marketing consultancy (which they still run) specialising in helping small firms and not for profits become more competitive organisations.

While working for a renewable energy firm, they discovered that communities were being denied the opportunity to own and run their own energy companies for the benefit of the whole town.

This thinking led them to look at ways to help communities who had been left behind by policy makers and economic rationalists. With the assistance of several academics, non mainstream economists, business people and community focused people from the regions, they developed the Living Communities™ concept.

Greg describes his prime motivation stemming from a personal trait of being suspicious of authority and always siding with the little guy. He believes everyone should have the opportunity to be able to start and run their own enterprise and entrepreneurial communities offer the best source of freedom and self-determination for people.

Economic rationalism, he believes, has failed the small entrepreneur in favour of the large corporation.

Martin says that his commitment to the Living Communities™ ethos stems from a desire to help people reclaim ownership and direction of their community's future, make it resilient, and, beneficial to all at the local level.

How are we funded and where does the money to fund the project go?

Living Towns Corporation is currently unfunded. At this point it has been propelled only by the personal financial and time commitments of Greg and Martin and some generous volunteering from several consultants and a volunteer advisory board who collectively believe passionately in the mission of Living Towns.

Primarily, at this stage, we are conducting pilot projects in Western Australia in order to test the program and to determine what amendments, if any, need to be made to its structure and how it is implemented.

We also need to gain funding from Government bodies, philanthropists, sponsors and donors, to allow us to devote our full-time efforts to promoting Living Communities™ throughout Australia after the pilots have been completed. To do this, funders require that we have concrete examples of Living Communities™ in action – the pilots.

So the pilot programs are imperative if the rest of the nation is able to gain the benefits of the Living Communities™ program.

These pilot programs have been developed in conjunction with highly regarded experts in their field and several of these experts will be involved in the delivery of the program itself in the pilot towns. A list of these experts and their biographies is available on our website: www.livingcommunities.com.au

The Pilot Projects are estimated to cost between \$60/80k and \$140k depending on the size of the town and travel requirements. Living Towns Corporation will help raise these funds along with the Living Communities Group in the town the pilot is conducted in.

Possible sources for this funding include; Lotterywest grants, corporate sponsorship, community grants, state government regional grant scheme funding, local government and donations.

Under contract, The Living Communities Group pays the funds raised to Living Towns Corporation at various milestones in the project.

Some corporations have indicated the possibility of sponsoring more than one pilot. If this were the case, the money would be paid directly to Living Towns who will reduce the cost of the pilot in each town accordingly.

Any money paid to Living Towns is used to pay the expert consultants that the community will need during the community engagement process with some surplus used to help the ongoing promotion of the Living Communities™ program in other towns.

These consultants include;

Community Engagement Team x 5 (lead by Mary Del Casale and members of her company MDC Places as well as Greg Winning and Martin Graham) – Estimated fees approximately \$40,000 over 3-6 months.

Economist x 1: to assist the community with economic issues when required and help write the economics analysis report – Estimated fee \$10k

Natural Resource Scientist x 1: required to assist the community with identification of natural resources available and works with the economist to recommend sustainable ways of using them – Estimated fee \$10k

Business Consultants x 2: Venture capitalists and successful Entrepreneurs available to coach community entrepreneurs when new ventures and existing ones are being developed to plug the leaks. – Estimated fees \$10k

We are estimating that the Living Towns team will spend roughly about 430 consultant hours on the project including contact and non-contact time and other costs (these include session planning, reporting etc. and travel and meal costs). Just over half of these hours will be time spent in the community itself.

Please note that these are all estimates. As the project unfolds it may become clear that the work of a certain expert, say the NRM Scientist, is not required. In this case, the project cost may be smaller.

At the same time it may be that the time spent on the project may be slightly more than estimated here. We intend to raise more money than may be required as a contingency. If these funds are not spent, then the Living Communities Group in town will be able to use those funds to further the mission of their constitution.

You can also see the biographies of our consultants on our website:
www.livingcommunities.com.au

What happens after the pilot program

After the pilot projects have been completed Living Towns Corporation will then seek funding from the sources mentioned earlier to fund the ongoing development of the organisation.

Immediate needs in this development process will include;

- development of a training program for practitioners around the country to deliver Living Communities™ to more and more communities.
- Promotion of the Living Communities™ program to other towns that may wish to benefit
- Development and implementation of after-engagement services to the communities that have conducted the Living Communities™ program possibly including;
 - Advocacy work
 - Supportive programs to local businesses (i.e. training and education)
 - Networking between communities
 - Marketing tools
 - Connecting to available experts

Further Questions

If you have any further questions about the organisation, the program or the people involved please call us on 0421 995 019 or email:

greg@livingcommunities.com.au