

# Social Enterprise Means Business for O group

**What is social enterprise and what does it look like? These questions have been put under the spotlight in the last few weeks by visiting USA social enterprise expert Dr Dave Rendall, hosted by O group, one of Tasmania's largest not-for-profit (NFP) organisations.**

According to Dr Rendall, in the US, social enterprise activities are strong contributors to service delivery and social change. It not only has the ability to generate earned income to support a NFP organisation's mission, it creates huge opportunities for disenfranchised people in our communities to improve their lives through valued employment.

In Tasmania, O group has supported the positive application of social enterprise through its CHOOSE Cafes and Big Bickies commercial kitchen operations.

Supervised by qualified chefs, these successful businesses are staffed by people with workplace support needs who are employed under award wage conditions and encouraged to find their feet before entering the mainstream, local workforce.

Angela Wells spent just over two years with Big Bickies before finding her dream job in mainstream employment.

"I found a job working in Disability and Aged Care which was a career goal of mine" Angela explained.

When Angela was first referred to Big Bickies through CHOOSE employment, she only spent one day in the kitchen before being offered a job. "I was taught kitchen skills and with ongoing support, I have learnt many other general workplace skills."

Angela was part of the team that created the Big Bickies award-winning Melting Moments at last year's Fine Food Awards. "I made them and packaged them...and tried not to eat too much."

O group's two other social enterprises, CHOOSE Cafe at Inveresk, Launceston and Windsor Community Precinct, Riverside, also provide employment opportunities for people with support needs.

"CHOOSE Cafés and Big Bickies clearly show how when communities work together we can achieve more for people with disabilities and support needs," Andrew Billing, O group CEO said.

Or, as Angela emphatically claims, "It's no doubt that the ongoing support from everyone at Big Bickies helped me get where I am today".



*Angela and Kurt of Big Bickies display their award-winning Melting Moments.*

**For more information about social enterprise opportunities, contact CHOOSE employment, part of the O group. Visit [www.chooseemployment.org.au](http://www.chooseemployment.org.au)**



*CHOOSE Cafes provide employment opportunities for people with high support needs AND serve great coffee!*