



Cultivating new jobs and opportunities for people of all abilities

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South Australia's largest employer of people with disability will create new jobs, skills and pathways into Open Employment, when it officially launches its first Social Enterprise today.

Operating as *Cultivate Food and Beverage*, the venture will service the state's growing food and beverage sector and employ at least 35 workers and trainees at a new commercial kitchen and food storage facility at Brooklyn Park.

Unlike Bedford's traditional model of providing Supported Employment for people on NDIS Plans, the new Enterprise will recruit people of all ability – including those who identify as socially disadvantaged.

Bedford CEO Myron Mann says the problem in Open Employment is that it's hard for people with disability to find meaningful work.

"Working in the open market can be daunting and often lacks the right level of support, which is why Bedford is drawing on its rich history of employment and creating a market for people who want to earn Award wages."

"We need to be bold and courageous in our sector. We will invest \$50million over 5 years to ensure our employees have a diverse range of opportunities and are set up for success and financial security," he said.

Aside from training its own workforce, Bedford will use the services of recruitment specialists CEG and the Adelaide Institute of Hospitality.

Within just two weeks of operations, Cultivate Food and Beverage has already secured commercial partnerships with local and national food producers and is open for business with investors who not only want a financial return, but also receive a social dividend.

"We want to give back to the community too and in fact some of the meals we make are for those experiencing homelessness." Mr Mann said.

"This Social Enterprise is the first of many at Bedford and will empower people of all abilities to achieve their life goals and become employable in any kitchen across Australia."

There will also be an official launch of Cultivate Food and Beverage tonight.
To attend or for media enquiries and interview opportunities contact Vassil Malandris on 0418 838 967 or vmalandris@bedfordgroup.com.au