

# Five Stages of Social Enterprise Development: Background

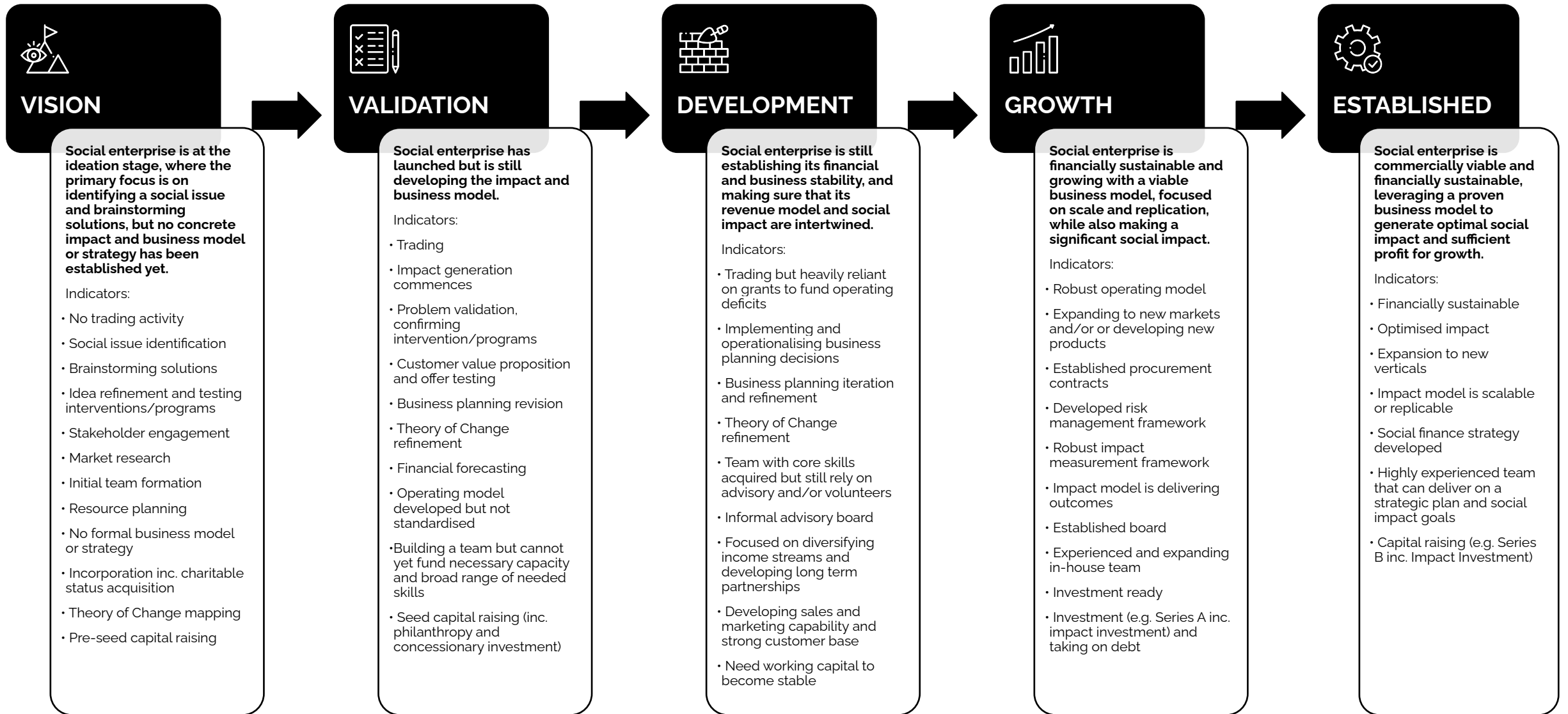
Establishing an agreed-upon and shared phraseology to describe the various stages of social enterprise development is crucial for enhancing collaboration among intermediaries and ensuring optimal support for social enterprises. A common language is also a powerful tool in enabling intermediaries to articulate their distinctive strengths and areas of specialisation, particularly in how they support social enterprises at varying stages.

Having a shared understanding and language also paves the way for social entrepreneurs to accurately gauge their enterprise's current level of maturity, allowing them to navigate better the often complex and unpredictable landscape of their entrepreneurial journey.

Recognising these critical needs, the Council of Australian Social Enterprise Intermediaries (CASEI) has developed the "Five Stages of Social Enterprise Development". Building on the work of Sefa, The Centre for Social Impact Swinburne, Westpac Foundation and Impact Seed, the resource represents an illustrative diagram equipped with a unified language that succinctly encapsulates the various stages in a social enterprise's lifecycle.

The "Five Stages of Social Enterprise Development" not only provides a universal language for those who support social enterprise, including intermediaries, government and philanthropy, but also offers a roadmap that can guide social enterprises through their growth and evolution. It is important to note that all social enterprises do not necessarily progress through these five stages; for example a social enterprise may intentionally and validly decide not to grow.

# Five Stages of Social Enterprise Development



*\*Indicators are not exhaustive. Not all indicators need to be met for an enterprise to be classified within a specific stage.*

This graphic was produced by the Council of Australian Social Enterprise Intermediaries (CASEI).

# More about the Council of Australian Social Enterprise Intermediaries (CASEI)

The Council of Australian Social Enterprise Intermediaries (CASEI) is a collective of like-minded organisations, all focused on the common goal of supporting social enterprises in their growth and development journey through increased capacity - ranging from capability building to investment readiness support and capital.

CASEI was established off the back of the Social Enterprise World Forum 2022 in Brisbane, where a collective sentiment emerged that there was a pressing need for a forum where intermediaries who support social enterprises are able to discuss matters of shared interest and build stronger relationships.

CASEI does not aspire to be a peak body, its objective is to elevate the awareness and comprehension of the role and importance of intermediaries to support social enterprises, particularly in relation to capability enhancement. This aligns with CASEI's broader aim of harnessing collective wisdom to identify opportunities, overcome challenges, and drive forward the social enterprise sector by bolstering the capacity and capabilities of individual social enterprises.

The organisations that comprise CASEI meet several criteria including, but not limited to, the number of social enterprises they support, operational track record and experience, function, offerings, and primary focus, which must be social enterprises rather than purpose-driven organisations in general. Adherence to these standards ensures that CASEI members are highly experienced, capable, and committed to advancing the social enterprise sector.

By bringing these organisations together, CASEI stimulates productive discussions, stronger relationships and, most importantly, creates greater impact. This is fuelled by the shared intention and willingness of CASEI organisations to collaborate for the benefit of the social enterprise sector as a whole.

By working together, we believe we can create a brighter, more sustainable future for the social enterprises we serve, and the communities they serve across Australia.

## **CASEI Members:**

ACRE  
Collab4Good  
Enterprise Learning Projects  
Impact Boom  
Impact Seed  
LendForGood  
Sefa  
Social Impact Hub  
Social Start-Up Studio (CSI)  
Social Traders  
Social Ventures Australia  
StartSomeGood  
The Difference Incubator  
The Mill House Ventures  
White Box Enterprises