Definition of social enterprise and social business
The Big Issue’s working definitions of social enterprise and social business will be those which students work towards in their Big Idea projects. Students will be able to enter the competition with either a social enterprise or a social business plan.

A commercial enterprise directs its resources to create products and services that generate commercial incomes.

A social enterprise must:
- Operate as an Not For Profit, seeking to generate a surplus for the purpose of reinvesting
- Deliver an activity or function that creates social outcomes
- Be financially sustainable in the mainstream marketplace – whilst seed (or start-up) funding may be sought initially, ongoing funding or donations should not be relied upon.
- Be scalable – Have capacity to grow significantly and provide opportunities to a large number of disadvantaged people, even if it is small in its startup phase
- Be legal – Be a legally compliant enterprise, including by meeting all relevant legislative requirements, for example, applicable award rates would be paid to all employees.
- Generate direct and meaningful work opportunities (with low to no barrier of entry) for homeless, marginalised or disadvantaged people within the enterprise

A social business will fulfill all of the same requirements of a social enterprise, but may not generate direct employment for disadvantaged people.