

# Foresters find the real value in impact investing

**F**ORESTERS Community Finance chief executive officer Ashley Hood believes there is enormous potential for social impact investment in Australia to drive higher quality and better performing deals.

“As the social impact investment sector continues to gain momentum in Australia, so does the potential to develop a pipeline of higher quality deals and cultivate a market of diverse investors and investment opportunities,” Mr Hood said.

He said impact investment was designed to support the growth and development of organisations and offers investors a range of social impact outcomes, as well as a financial return.

“Initiatives supporting the growing demand for alternative sources of capital are diverse, but are rooted in sustainable financial solutions for organisations to pursue their long-term sustainability,” Mr Hood said.

“For these organisations, accessing capital fills the growing gap between funding demand and supply. Meeting investment demand can mean support for business start-up activity, continuity, or expansion resulting in both social and financial outcomes for organisations and the communities in which they work.”

Mr Hood said social impact investing was on a growth path in Australia, judging by the level of interest and demand Foresters was experiencing with clients.

“As the Australian market continues to develop, specialist financial intermediaries, such as Foresters Community Finance, are well placed to mobilise investment capital to generate social impact and leverage industry expertise to improve the prospects for



*Ashley Hood.*

organisations seeking investment opportunities,” Mr Hood said.

Mr Hood said education was also critical to impact investment.

“In addition to the work of intermediaries, there needs to be a better understanding by all stakeholders, including governments, as to why there is value in the impact investment market and what it can bring to the task of social, cultural and environmental change, and improving the prospects and capacity of our communities,” Mr Hood said.

“Foresters is a socially-focused financier and fund manager. We believe impact investment products are part of a growing global market trend delivering investors with an opportunity to use their capital to generate social, environmental or cultural outcomes, while generating investment return.”

Foresters is a Queensland Leaders Alumni Member.

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