

**PRESS RELEASE**

21<sup>st</sup> November 2007

**Minister for Third Sector attends Novas' Social Enterprise Day event**

As part of the Social Enterprise Day celebrations and activities on 15 November, Novas welcomed Minister for the Third Sector Phil Hope to the Contemporary Urban Centre, London Bridge Bankside. Novas hosted a buffet lunch and tour of the Contemporary Urban Centre, followed by an evening of entertainment at the CUC's Café Arlington, where visitors enjoyed a live band from the local music college and listened to a panel of artists speak about their work.

The events featured as part of the official 'Make your Mark: Change Lives' campaign, for which the Social Enterprise Coalition attended a full day of social enterprise activity.

Minister for the Third Sector Phil Hope said,

"Novas has a very impressive record of reaching disadvantaged people and helping them to build better lives. They show just how effectively social enterprise can tackle some of the most difficult social problems."

Maria Donoghue-Mills, Co-Group Chief Executive/Founder of Novas and Social Enterprise Ambassador, says

'Through a social enterprise approach we deliver strong positive social impacts that transforms the lives of over 5,000 people experiencing disadvantage each year, as well as engage the wider public directly in issues of social change.'

**ENDS**

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## **NOTES TO EDITOR**

Novas is at the cutting edge of tackling social disadvantage through creating inclusive employment in social enterprises, providing flexible community based support services to vulnerable people and offering quality art and cultural programmes, which involve the wider community in understanding complex social issues.

Novas was established in 1998 and over the last three years the organisation has transformed itself from predominately a provider of large hostels for homeless people to be at the cutting edge of tackling social disadvantage through social enterprise, innovation and positive impact.

We aim to change lives through arts, enterprise and community support, developing opportunities for individuals and communities through community support, education, training, employment, art, culture and regeneration. We have developed a strong reputation for the delivery of quality community-based services, and for new and innovative approaches together with people who experience inequality, exclusion and discrimination.

We run a cutting edge designer clothes shop; contemporary urban centres offering integrated arts, performance, small business development and community activity; community support services working together with 6,000 people a year with customer input at every level; a translation and interpreting service utilising the skills of over 200 Black and Refugee people, and coffee shops offering fair trade and organic produce.

Our initiatives positively change the lives of people, including those experiencing homelessness, health issues, prejudice and isolation; and they all contribute to bringing communities together. All profits are reinvested back into Novas learning and development programmes for disadvantaged groups, and at least 50% of all jobs created are targeted for these groups.

We develop innovative community empowerment strategies that integrate our services and those that face deep exclusion to be at the centre of our communities, not on the margins. We are currently remodelling many of our large hostels to raise the living standards for people who are homeless, within buildings that will become a part of their local communities through business, market space, cultural quarters, performance spaces, retail and restaurants. These projects will also offer learning, cultural and enterprise space for a wide range of individuals and communities who experience exclusion.

We have many case histories of how disadvantaged people have successfully turned their lives around, and are successfully contributing to their communities. We can also set up media interviews with them.