Hello again, I'm Sue, Chair of Southern Flinders Staying in Place in South Australia.

In July 2025 when Golden North factory announced they were leaving Laura after 103 years, I started wondering how we could create local employment, so I randomly contacted Peter Kenyon, he didn't know me! I'd heard him speak a few times over the years and appreciated his experience. What he doesn't know about reinvigorating small towns just isn't worth knowing. In answer to my random email Peter came to Laura a week later and sat and spoke with a small select group of locals for about 2 ½ hours about ways to reinvigorate our small town after this major change. During that time, he spoke about the Staying in Place model amongst many other things.

The reason for his trip to SA was a planning trip for the upcoming Small Town Reinvention Conference to be held in Kapunda in September 25 so he came a day early just for Laura. 2 locals, both Councillors myself included and 3 council staff attended this conference. The best move I believe, we have made. At this conference Pingelly representatives spoke about them starting up this model and making it work for their community as Helen has done today. To us it sounded like a no-brainer for Laura. We also heard from Brad and Linda, once again this just reinforced this model was a no-brainer. I got business cards from both Pingelly and Mable and after the conference I contacted them. Mable's first visit to Laura was 11th November. I woke up that morning and thought if we got 6 people to each of the 2 sessions, I'd be happy. Over the 2 sessions we had around 80 people attend. This was no longer an idea it was obviously something the community wanted and

needed. The 80 people were a good mix of people needing services or wanting to convert to the local model and potential workers.

Like most small towns around Australia, we have an aging population. The Federal Government is trying to keep people in their own homes for as long as possible as the cost of specialist care in centres is astronomical.

Too many Aged Care package holders were paying out of their package for travel for service providers from too far away eg workers were travelling over an hour to Laura to do a couple of hours cleaning. So instead of paying for 2 hours cleaning the 2 hours travel had to be taken out of the package as well. Having local workers provide these services gives the package holder the ability to receive more services. And the best part of this model: it is eventually self-funding and can make money to put back into your community. Money staying in your towns.

Out of the Mable meetings in November, it became clear early we would need a start-up coordinator. Being the 11th November we took a break at 11am to attend the Remembrance Day ceremony at the Cenotaph. At this gathering a lovely lady who had been present in that first session came up to us and said she would like to take on this role. She was not looking for fulltime work and did not want to take the role away from someone younger, so Leanne became our Start-up Coordinator.

From this first gathering we had a list of around 40 people wanting to be clients either straight away or in the near future. We also had a

list of people wanting to be potential workers covering off on most levels of service that will be needed.

We decided the best way for us to make this happen was to become a subcommittee of the DA. Which meant we needed a committee. Each year Laura has a Christmas Party in the Park and by the end of this party we had a good mix of people wanting to be a part of the committee.

At the January DA meeting Helen Morton presented via Zoom where it was a resounding yes for their support.

Our first subcommittee meeting was on the 2nd February. The only human resource we didn't have was a Treasurer, but by the March meeting we had found a local willing to fill the role. Speaking of finances, we also discovered we would need some start-up funds, so we requested a $20k loan from the DA which was granted.

From our second community session with Mable in February, we also discovered there was a need from further afield than just Laura. We now have clients and workers from Wirrabara around 20 minutes north through to Gulnare 30 minutes south which is roughly 600 square kms.

Since Mable's 2nd information session in February, it's been an extremely steep learning curve for Leanne our Start-up Coordinator trying to get her head around the Aged Care system and its complexities. She had no previous experience in this field. Lots of other skills though.

Initially there is a lot of Compliance training required and the wonderful team at Mable and our Service Provider, HomeMade provide fabulous support for each and every step. So, a big shout

out to Linda, Brad and their team and our fabulous Support Partners at HM for helping Leanne become a competent Coordinator for our Community and me to be her reserve.

SFSiP hit the ground running and from our Attendees at the two Mable Sessions and the HM session, we had a data base of over 80 potential Clients and a possible 45 Workers. From the February Meeting, we had a client ready with a Referral Code to onboard onto our Platform and another Client who was ready to switch Providers because he immediately understood the benefits to Laura and the surrounding areas by joining. Leanne needed to learn quickly! Since then, we have triaged over the 80 potential Clients. Since March we kicked off and apart from just getting to know them, we have assisted them in the tricky navigation of: -

- Initially applying for MAC Assessment, if they haven't already done so
- Sorting out paperwork that they've received, and not necessarily, understood – understandable!
- Organising reassessments for people being left behind in the MAC system. Leanne had one client, whose comment when she first started helping him said "he'd be dead before any help came!" He has now successfully been onboarded by us, and his services have started and he's far from death!
- Leanne also assists with the Onboarding of Clients with SAH packages
- Once onboarded, the really rewarding work starts for Leanne, being involved in the Care Plans, Budgets and setting up the services for each Client and then the welfare checks and

monitoring the Package so that our client gets the most benefit from it.

- As of today, we have 8 clients on our Platform.
  A couple of weeks ago Leanne attended an online reassessment with a very positive outcome.
  In the coming weeks, she will be onboarding another Client (that I know of!), attending 3 more reassessments, with around 12 others waiting to hear from MAC with a date.

Leanne and I have triaged the potential Mable workers, and I'm pleased to say that we have 11 Workers on Mable, ranging from domestic, gardening, social support, transportation, a nurse and personal care. One of these workers is our pruning specialist who has his OBE – which is short for Over Bloody Eighty! But still keen to be active.
To date we have provided work for 7 of our workers and as our client base continues to grow, we will have more work to share to all. The quality of work that has been provided has been of such a high standard, our clients have all given very positive feedback.

The other person who travels occasionally with me when presenting is David, our first switching client. I asked him a couple of questions and what follows are his answers.

What were your reasons for switching from your long-term provider to this model?

The main reason David wanted to switch providers was to support his community.

He also wasn't getting good service from his previous provider. When workers were not available and because he was further away, he would miss out completely that day and that week. They also cut his gardening service completely because they couldn't source gardeners prepared to travel to Laura. He was always having left over funds at the end of each month out of his package whereas now he is getting services that expend the whole of his budget.

How would you compare this model to your previous experience?

Far better, he has contact with the coordinator on a regular basis whereas previously he would only hear from them when they wanted information from him.

What are the standouts to you of the SFSiP model?

He gets the same worker each visit, he can coordinate with them if the normal time doesn't suit one week, they can find another time which suits them both. He also now knows what time they will be arriving. Previously he had to sit around waiting for them to turn up.

He also gets to potter around his garden with his support worker which he thoroughly enjoys.

So, at a time when we needed to be creative to fill a void presented to us with GN's departure this model is proving to be just what was needed. Our elderly are being given the opportunity to stay in their community, workers are able to source employment without having to either travel distances for work or even leaving their community.

The workers can also choose the hours they work and who they work with.

We discovered by being creative we have filled a community need. And since starting we have found the community need has amplified past our expectation, we are now more aware of how dire the aged care needs regionally have been.

I still have more towns within our footprint to talk to as we know there are more people in our community who are in the same or similar boat to those who have already joined this model. Our business is set to grow!