

NEWSLETTER

April 2017



Meet The New Board Members

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Co-op Growth In Full Swing!



Welcome to the April edition of your newsletter designed to keep you informed about happenings across the Co-op housing sector.

I am pleased to report that the Growth Plan established in August 2016 to kick-start growth of Co-op housing is now delivering on the promise of a brighter future for the sector. Our new Board Members are settling into their roles and already making a valuable contribution. Check out the feature article on our new Board Members and their profile on page 6.

On the development front, contracts are in place to ensure the delivery of 56 new Co-operative properties and our growth agenda is being pursued in earnest. This is just the start but already represents a healthy 12% growth. The projects include Janalli (10 units by July 2017), Croydon (6 units by January 2018), Guildford (20 units by January 2018) and Cabramatta (20 units by December 2018).

Typically redevelopment projects take around 18 months from the commencement of planning until final construction and future tenants can look forward to high quality buildings and enjoying the benefits of Co-operative living.

There is also an extensive pipeline of further growth opportunities at various stages of planning (including in regional areas) and I look forward to reporting progress on these as they move towards the delivery stage.

There is keen interest from our member Co-operatives about growth and how we can collaborate across the sector to target specific areas of interest. I note that the next round of Regional Meetings in June will incorporate a workshop focussing on growth opportunities. This will give Co-operatives the opportunity for direct input to guide and inform Common Equity in pursuing growth projects to support the growth ambitions of individual Co-operatives and the sector.

I look forward to working closely with you in the time ahead as we share expertise and resources to build our collective strength.

In other news Common Equity continues to expand its engagement with other organisations and to advocate on behalf of the sector.

We are representing Co-operative housing on an advisory group to the University of Newcastle to support their establishment of a program for formal qualifications in Co-operative Organisation and Management, see page 14. We also advise a new organisation, Supporting Independent Living Co-operative (SILC), on projects to provide Co-operative housing solutions for people with a disability, read about SILC on page 12.

We continue to advocate at industry forums and via submissions to Government about the benefits of Co-operative housing. In particular we have offered to partner with Government to trial new innovative housing solutions. We also continue to advocate for greater security of tenure via long-term leases or title to properties. Any progress on these initiatives will be shared with the sector in due course.

James Brown, CEO



Working for the Sector

Common Equity continues to advocate and pursue initiatives on behalf of the sector to raise awareness about the benefits of co-operative living with key organisations and in contributing to important submissions.

NOTABLE INITIATIVES IN 2017 INCLUDE:

- Input into the Business Council of Co-Operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) submission to Productivity Commission Inquiry into Human Services by highlighting the benefits of Co-operative living and importance of choice. www.pc.gov.au/
- Offer to partner with Family and Community Services (FACS) to explore innovative and cost effective models to grow the supply of community housing through redevelopment that incorporates Co-operative living
- Submission to the City of Sydney for funding support of an innovative new inner-city redevelopment model to expand the supply of affordable housing incorporating Co-operative living. If support can be secured, this project would become a flagship project and generate significant media attention that would serve to raise the profile of our sector
- Ongoing support for Supporting Independent Living Co-Operative (SILC) including representations to government to foster the growth of disability housing Co-operatives for people given new opportunities under the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Advice and input to the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) undertaking a Co-Housing for Seniors project to articulate the health and social benefits of Co-operative living for seniors in the community
- Advice to the NSW Federation of Housing Associations submission on Strategic Commissioning of Social and Affordable Housing to influence Government policy and approach to engaging with the community housing sector in the design of housing solutions. In particular, the submission is intended to encourage engagement in the design phase so as not to inhibit the possibility of innovative and more diverse solutions (such as Co-operative housing) being developed.
- Facilitating access for several Co-operative tenants to participate in the Older Women's Studio Development Project led by the Sydney Women's Homeless Alliance. This is a high profile project using the experiences of older women facing homelessness to create design guidelines to support the particular needs of this group. Importantly the concepts of co-housing are specifically acknowledged and the relative cost effectiveness of this approach is reported. The report adds weight to the Co-operative housing model and continues to build on the growing evidence base. www.homelessnessnsw.org.au
- Active participation in the National Co-operative Housing Network to share ideas and approaches from other States of Australia. Currently, Common Equity is leading the project planning to establish a new research project in partnership with a University or leading research institution to build on the evidence base supporting the Co-operative housing model.

Advocacy And Initiative

Well it has been a very busy month or so for the Property Team, particularly with the consultations on the revised Asset Maintenance Plans for each Co-operative.

I have been meeting with the majority of Co-operatives over the past 4-6 weeks to discuss this important document, which is also an essential piece of the puzzle in relation to the rent calculation model for the new CCA.

As I have mentioned in my discussions with the Co-op's, each individual plan should reflect the needs of each individual Co-op. The core cyclical maintenance items, such as internal and external painting, pest control and smoke alarm servicing will appear on each plan, however other items such as landscaping, fencing and gutter cleaning will be included to suit each Co-operative. It is imperative that we gather the correct information for each plan, as these figures will be utilised in calculations for your maintenance

responsibilities in the new CCA. It is also important to remember that these plans will be reviewed annually to ensure that the maintenance required was completed, as well as confirming the works and budget required for the following financial year.

Your Asset Maintenance Plan will also include Planned Schedule 3 works for each property. These items generally include Kitchen and Bathroom upgrades, as well as roof replacement, major tree lopping and major driveway repairs to name but a few. We must also keep in mind that these plans

are designed as a 10-year plan, taking us from the 2017/2018 financial year to 2027/2028.

I am working with each Co-operative to amend the plans as necessary, before having each Co-operative sign off on the plan, which will enable all parties to be on the same page with regards to maintenance and repairs.

The final quarter of the 2016/2017 financial year is upon us, and I am pleased to advise that only a small amount of planned jobs are yet to be completed. This is a positive result, and I believe the improved process around consultation with the Co-operatives and their members is a major factor in this success. We have begun preparations for the upcoming financial year, and I am looking forward to working with you to deliver positive outcomes for each Co-operative.

I have attached a few photos of our most recent Schedule 3 repair, a total roof replacement for one of our inner city properties. This project had been delayed for various reasons, however the end product is a great result for the Co-operative involved, as well as Common Equity. We were able to work with the contractor to have this job completed in one day, which was a huge effort on their behalf, and one that was appreciated by the tenant.

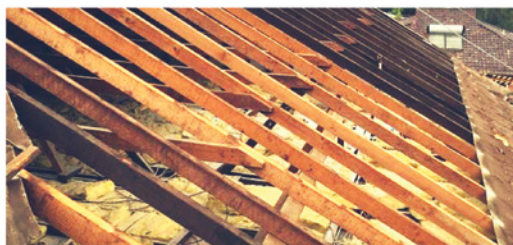
Andrew Stassen - Property Manager



2017

SCH 3 REPAIRS

INNER CITY ROOF



Meet The New Board Members

WAYNE STAMP



What made you decide you wanted to be apart of the Common Equity Board?

There have been many changes in the sector over the years, and I believe that this coming year will be another with much change; at a macro level with the LaHC (Land and Housing Corporation) re-leasing properties to Community Housing providers, to the more local with the new CCA currently under negotiation. I wanted to be a part of that conversation and implementation from a Co-operative Member perspective at a decision-making level.

2017 is set to be a big year for us, what do you hope you can contribute to the Board this year?

One of the things that I would like to draw Co-operative Members, Board and staff's attention to is the language that we use to speak and write about ourselves and our mutual work. The social housing environment, has moved beyond welfare language and provision, beyond co-dependency, to a standard business model. We're a member of BCCM (Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals) and it would be valuable to consider some of the language they use around mutuality and apply it to our Co-operative housing circumstance. We could approach this from an angle of the cultural business of literacy and practice, of Co-operation and mutuality.

What do you believe to be significant about housing Co-operatives?

In NSW, housing Co-operatives have provided long-term, secure, affordable housing for people on low to medium incomes for many years in a marketplace that has done little to address affordability. They have demonstrated their success in the provision of social housing and their contribution to the well-being of tenants and communities. Co-operation and mutuality, in which people participate in the decisions that affect their lives, are known to produce social capital and measurable outcomes.

How do you intend to ensure that the Board makes informed and soundly based decisions on behalf of Co-operatives?

I come with 25 years of history and experience as a member of Planet X Housing Co-operative. Knowledge and participation in the history and changing circumstances of the sector. I believe that this will inform my participation and contribution.

PHYLLIS SEQUEIRA



What made you decide you wanted to be apart of the Common Equity Board?

Living in one of the most expensive cities in the world has created a personal desire to be part of a housing program which addresses the needs of people who are looking for affordable housing. I am also very interested in promoting the Co-operative housing model.

2017 is set to be a big year for us, what do you hope you can contribute to the Board this year?

When new in a role there is always a lot to learn and understand, so I have modest aims for my first year which will revolve around providing good governance.

What do you believe to be significant about housing Co-operatives?

To be able to cater to both individuals and groups who have specific needs including those based on culture, age or diversity. It is a non standard caring approach which promotes diversity and multiculturalism within the overall umbrella of an affordable housing program.

How do you intend to ensure that the Board makes informed and soundly based decisions on behalf of Co-operatives?

The Board has a good mix of Technical and Member Directors as well as a good range of skills and abilities. This automatically ensures that decisions are representative and the experience and skills of all members are used in decision making.

A key issue for me is ensuring that the Board spend an appropriate amount of time and energy overseeing the various aspects of performance (strategy formulation and policy making) and compliance (accountability and monitoring), and not favouring one over the other.

ROSE WEST



What made you decide you wanted to be apart of the Common Equity Board?

As a long time advocate for the Co-operative model and affordable housing in general. I was also interested in contributing to the conversation around housing affordability from the perspective of a current Member / Director of a regional Co-operative.

2017 is set to be a big year for us, what do you hope you can contribute to the Board this year?

There's a number of significant projects underway this year, including exciting growth opportunities and the ongoing CCA negotiations. I feel grateful to be given the opportunity to add my voice to these important discussions. I will foreground the diverse needs and perspectives of members throughout the sector. I will channel feedback to our peak body and advocate for policy and project directions that reflect our members' best interests. I think it is vital that all stakeholders are heard and that important decisions and projects are shaped and informed by the membership and Co-operative principles.

What do you believe to be significant about housing Co-operatives?

I have seen first hand the tremendously positive impacts that affordable and secure housing can play in an individual's life, and the community more generally. I am fortunate enough to have lived in three very diverse housing Co-operatives. However, all three Co-operatives were effective in their capacity to create community in areas that were facing rapid gentrification and dislocation. I was raised in a Co-operative in inner city Brisbane that my late mother helped to establish. The ethos was that secure and affordable housing is a right, not a privilege. From this ethos our Co-operative created an inclusive and vibrant community who would have otherwise faced housing stress and dislocation.

How do you intend to ensure that the Board makes informed and soundly based decisions on behalf of Co-operatives?

I have worked with Board Members and Common Equity for many years. This has given me the understanding that the Board is well placed in terms of making informed decisions that reflect best practice, Co-operative principles and the interests of Co-operative members. I intend to ensure that this continues to be the case by remaining informed and critical. To date I have found the Board to be open to feedback, critique and scrutiny from its membership. This level of openness and accountability is welcomed. I am also open to hearing from other Co-operative members who may have concerns in this regard.

BILLIE-JO BARBARA



What made you decide you wanted to be apart of the Common Equity Board?

As the previous Chairperson of a Not-for-Profit organisation interstate I've seen the difference that organisations can make to their community. I have also previously worked for a State Housing Authority and understand the critical importance of having a place to call home.

2017 is set to be a big year for us, what do you hope you can contribute to the Board this year?

My most recent background has been in assisting organisation's to transform their corporate strategies (eg. People/HR), work practices and culture. I have also worked in mostly commercially focused government organisations, where we still needed to balance the needs of the community. I'm hopeful my skills will be able to assist the organisation to grow and transform, whilst still keeping at the front and centre its community.

What do you believe to be significant about housing Co-operatives?

I think the Co-operatives offer the housing sector a genuinely unique value proposition. With the government looking at different ways to re-purpose existing housing stock and how living in NSW will look in the future it's a great time for the organisation to sustainably grow and develop.

How do you intend to ensure that the Board makes informed and soundly based decisions on behalf of Co-operatives?

I think having Member representation is a fantastic way to stay connected to the current and emerging opportunities and challenges of the organisation and sector. I will also use (and have already taken up) opportunities such as the AGM and other events to get to know Members and other Stakeholders.

Profiling Our Co-Operatives

SWITCH Co-op

SUTHERLAND WOMEN'S INDEPENDENT TENANCY CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING LIMITED

SWITCH properties in Miranda may never have been built if not for an act of kindness by a local benefactor and property owner who wanted to provide affordable and secure housing for single women and their children.

He petitioned the Department of Housing to purchase his house and land at an agreed and fair price with the proviso that the existing in ground pool be retained and maintained for the benefit of the future Co-operative and the rear of the property be developed to provide additional accommodation.

The negotiations proceeded over 12-18 months with the department wanting to remove the pool, maintenance and liabilities that came with it. The benefactor was clear, the pool was a non-negotiable component of the project for the enjoyment of the Co-operative children. Eventually the deal was made and funds were allocated to build a 5 townhouses and a dedicated Co-op meeting room.

The original house on the property is divided into two separate tenancies. In total the Co-op houses seven households.

The Association to Resource Co-operative Housing (ARCH) advocated with the Department of Housing to bring this ambitious project to life and trained the foundation Co-op members in tenancy management, governance and finance. The Co-op incorporated and became a type 3 Community Housing Organisation after successfully completing the performance based registration system (PRRS).


The Co-operative was incorporated in 2000 and its members have successfully managed its houses, land and other facilities through participation in management and decision-making on Co-operative principles.

If it wasn't for the generosity and foresight of a benefactor 20 years ago, SWITCH may never have developed. How fortunate that there are people around who put people before profit.

Paul Simes, Field Officer

"I moved to SWITCH as a single mum of a 4 year old boy who had been staying with family and could not find any affordable housing. Having a stable long-term home gave me the opportunity to work mainly school hours and be there for my son, more than I would have if I were renting privately. My son has grown up with the other children that were living here at the time and always had a friend to play with. We have that sense of security and community, which I am truly grateful for."

"I have been living at SWITCH for the past 8 years. The residency was offered to my daughter and myself at a pinnacle point in our lives. We had been in a domestic violent relationship and had fled months before. SWITCH offered us independence, security and a place to call home. We will always be grateful that SWITCH came into our lives. Over the years the demographic of SWITCH has broadened and evolved. Once we were for women and their children experiencing difficulties. Recently we have had a grandmother and her grandson join our Co-op. Co-operative living certainly has taught me many things. At times it can be extremely challenging yet it's always rewarding. I look forward to many years with SWITCH."

A photograph of three women standing in a grassy backyard next to a swimming pool. The woman on the left is wearing a blue shirt and white pants, the woman in the middle is wearing a black shirt and grey pants, and the woman on the right is wearing a black shirt and dark pants. They are all smiling and posing. In the foreground, there are two inflatable pool toys: a blue and white one on the left and a blue and green one on the right. The background is filled with lush green trees and foliage.

"I moved to Switch Co-op 6 years ago when I was going through a very difficult time in my life. Being a small Co-op, I was always made to feel safe and that if I needed help, I could always ask. I'm not sure where I would be if I didn't move to SWITCH"

"The thing I like about living here is the safety and security. It is great to know that if I am not here my son can go to any one of the ladies for help if he needs it which he has done over the years. We have had some great time over the years with pool parties and BBQ's when the kids were all young. I have made a lot of friends and it has been nice to see ladies who have come in as a single parent and moved out as a family. I thank the lord every day for having a place that I can come home to after work and feel that it is my home and that I have the support and I am also there to support the ladies within the Co-op."

Janalli Development - Setting A New Direction

An update on the progress being made on the construction of 10 new units (one 1 bedroom and nine 2 bedroom) at the Janalli site. Construction started in early January and is expected to be completed by June 2017.

NEIGHBOURHOODS IN RENEWAL

Under its' Future Directions strategy the NSW Government launched The Neighbourhood Renewal Project in 2016. As part of the Communities Plus Program it offers viable development projects on a regular basis to private sector developers and not-for-profit community housing providers.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Project will play its part in achieving the Future Directions targets through the delivery of approximately 5,300 new private housing dwellings, 2,200 new and replacement Social Housing dwellings, and more than 500 affordable housing dwellings.

COMMON EQUITY'S ROLE

Under government award Common

Equity successfully tendered for the rights to develop a site at Janalli. The build for this commenced in January 2017 and is due to be completed by July 2017. It will be the first of the property developments to be completed under the auspices of this new program.

The complex consists of ten units in all. Nine of these are two bedrooms and one is a modified single bedroom unit to





cater for a tenant with a disability. The target residents will be single women and women with children. To start with the properties will be directly managed by Common Equity with the plan being to develop a self managed Co-operative over time.

Common Equity will independently manage all aspects of project development, ranging from site evaluation to completion, using a combination of in-house and consulting skills.

LOCAL AREA PROFILE

Jannali is an Aboriginal word, meaning the 'Place of the Moon', originating from the people of the Northern Territory. It is also used as a female given name.

The area began to be developed with the arrival of the railway line in 1884.

Shops and commercial businesses provide a broad range of services to the Jannali community. The residential streets feature many houses, townhouses

and units with a mix of residential and community housing. The many local reserves contain a diversity of flora and fauna. At the 2011 census, there were 5,955 residents in Jannali. The area is well connected by public transport and is 35 minutes to the City by train. It is bordered by National parks and reserves and is also a short distance from Cronulla beach. It is known as a clean and green suburb with great neighbourly spirit.

BUILDING TO DATE

As can be seen by the photos the build is going well and on track for timely completion. All wall and roof framing has been completed and almost 40% of windows have been installed. Brick working has commenced and is well on track despite recent weather issues in Sydney. Common Equity are working with neighbouring properties to finalise the fencing agreements, we have established a great working relationship with the neighbours, an excellent start to Co-operative living!

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Common Equity are excited by the progress of the development. In completing this development we will have proven we deliver a repeatable model which can be used to increase the amount of community housing available to multiple social groups. This is an exciting new chapter in our story, with many more to come.

Samantha Massey - Project Manager

Supporting Independent Living Co-operatives



SILC was established in September 2016, as a hub to support families to develop their own independent housing models under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

SILC is a newly formed Co-operative that has been established with the assistance of Common Equity to help provide information and advice to people with a disability navigating through the progressive roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

SILC was started in Sydney by a small group of families who wanted to assist other people with a disability under the NDIS, to live independently. SILC is now expanding into Melbourne and Barwon in Victoria, following the roll-outs of the NDIS.

SILC acts as a repository of helpful information, providing resources that will make it easier for families to establish Co-operatives or other legal entities and to start "life" as accommodation service providers for people with disabilities eligible for NDIS support.

SILC acts as a hub, by connecting NDIS

participants, families and carers to establish their own family-governed homes for people with a disability.

"SILC exists for its members and everything they do is about creating a better life for people with a disability to live independently in a safe and sustainable home"

SILC does this by:

- Hosting forums where members can share knowledge, ideas and resources;
- Providing information through the SILC website;
- Guiding families through the establishment and operation of family-governed homes for NDIS participants;
- Referring to other organisations that can assist, for example, housing Co-operatives; and
- Advocating on behalf of the SILC community about issues that affect you, for example, housing under the NDIS.

As a non-distributing Co-operative and operating as a charity (soon to be registered with Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission), SILC's purpose is to create great, sustainable homes for people with a disability, by connecting families and communities.

SILC has partnered with Common Equity and other organisations, to draw on

cross-sector expertise across the Co-operative, legal, financial, accounting and housing sectors.

You can find out more on their website www.silc.coop

As of Monday 6th March we have Faen Burrows from SILC working in our Common Equity office two days a week. In the spirit of co-operation, James Brown has offered Faen access to office accommodation which will generally be on Mondays and Tuesdays. SILC only has 2 employees (one in Melbourne and one in Sydney).

During their infancy and whilst getting established, access to office accommodation until such time as they are fully established will assist their growth and also provide a valuable link into an organisation which we are seeking to build a strong partnership.

From time to time, some of the projects Faen will be working on will intersect with Common Equity's projects and her location in our office will facilitate good collaboration on these projects. We're sure that this is the start of a fantastic partnership.

Lucy Parseghian - Executive Assistant

Staffing Updates

Welcome

Joanna Wong



How are you settling into your new role as Finance Manager?

I am settling in quite well. I am certain that the transition into my role is made smooth by the team at Common Equity, who are just as welcoming and supportive as they were on my first day.

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my two young children. I like to try new things – recipes, restaurants, holiday destinations, etc. I am looking forward to our trip to a new camping spot over the Easter long weekend.

Where were you working before you joined our team?

Before joining /common Equity, I was Finance Manager at an independent girls school. Prior to that I was Financial Controller at a government agency. I have also worked in private and publicly listed companies as well as a bank.

What attracted you to this role?

I was attracted to the challenges this role has to offer, especially with Common Equity embarking on an exciting period of growth. This role is an excellent opportunity for me to utilise my skills and continue my professional development while enhancing my work-life balance. I look forward to contributing to the community in varied and fulfilling ways.

What experience & Skills are you bringing to this role?

I am technically skilled in accounting and other statutory requirements and have experience across all facets of the finance function.

I have managed and coordinated many annual audits for different organisations and also understand the not-for-profit requirements.

What does a typical day at Common Equity involve for you, and what is your favourite part of the job?

A typical day would involve work in preparation for monthly financial and statutory reporting. The end of the 2016/17 financial year is approaching and we just had our interim audit. The favourite part of my job is being able to work with a team who are passionate about what they do.

What are some of the more challenging parts of your role?

I have not come across any challenges that can't be solved because I am lucky to have Cindy and Willia in my team. They are both very skilful and supportive. The implementation of the new IT system may present some challenges.

Farewell

Lucy Parseghian



I can't believe that this is the last time I get to create the Newsletter! By the time the July edition comes out I'll be somewhere in the middle of South-East Asia wondering around temples, slurping on noodles and one dollar beer.

I've been at Common Equity since December 2014 starting out as a temp working for Robyn Cahoun as her Executive Assistant, by February 2015 I was made permanent.

I am really going to miss my colleagues; it's been so inspiring working along side such a great group of people who are not only fun but also very dedicated to the work that they do here. In fact, it was because of the people I work with being so lovely that I decided to stay on as a permanent employee. I am REALLY going to miss them all!

I have really enjoyed my time at Common Equity. I especially enjoyed getting creative designing these Newsletters, Bulletins and Annual Reports. My role also covered organising events for Common Equity, managing the CEO's time and providing office support in various ways.

I'm originally from the UK (yes, I'm the "Pom" who answers the phone - know who I am now?), I came to Sydney 6 years ago. I love Sydney but, it's time to try somewhere new so we decided to jet off on another adventure. We've put our stuff into storage and we're leaving armed only with a backpack and a one-way ticket. Who knows what will happen or where we'll end up, but it'll be an adventure!

Adios Amigos, it's been a blast!

Bye xxx



Want To Get Involved In The Real Sharing Economy?

Take the Graduate Certificate in Co-operative Organisation and Management at the University of Newcastle

Did you know that nearly eight in every ten Australians belong to a Co-operative or mutual? The Co-operative and mutual enterprise (CME) sector includes credit unions, superannuation funds, motorist associations and consumer Co-op's. Yet, surprisingly, very few Australians are aware that the sector even exists (The Australia Institute 2015). There is a huge need for education, training and awareness about the advantages of the Co-operatives business model that puts people before profit.

Millennials are questioning why we continue to encourage mass consumerism, unequal wealth distribution and environmental degradation. They may be unaware that Co-operatives are leading the way in the promotion of sustainable and equitable business practices, provision of services and building communities. The sharing economy has mainly been associated with extractive digital platforms like Uber and Airbnb backed by large corporations. But the digital platforms also has great potential for those who are interested in innovative new modes of business through co-operation, sharing and pooling resources that can provide employment and build communities.

As the public purse tightens, the Co-operative model may fill the gap to provide

communities with health services, child care and aged care. A positive example is the National Health Co-operative that successfully provides remote communities in ACT with GP medical centres. In Europe, Co-operatives provide aged care services, with innovative and mutually beneficial solutions for client's and employees. Co-op's may also provide a solution to the growing issue around affordable housing, such as in Sweden where 20% of the houses on the market are provided by housing Co-op's (BCCM 2016).

In August 2016, the University of Newcastle's Business School launched a postgraduate program to address the gap in tertiary education on Co-operatives. The online Master and Graduate Certificate in Co-operative Management and Organisation program includes 6 specialised Co-op courses; Introduction to Co-op's, Legal Frameworks and Co-operative Governance, Social Enterprises and Cooperative Innovation, International comparisons, History and Future of Member-Owned Businesses and the Capstone course with an industry related research project on Co-operatives. General business and management courses make up the remainder of the 120 unit program.

The program provides students with a deep understanding of how Co-op's differ from the investor/shareholder business model and why this might be more sustainable. Students will be introduced to key principles of Co-operative governance and explore how the model is a natural home for innovation. It will compare and contrast Co-operative in other countries to inspire similar innovations in Australia.

The program is offered with a lot of

flexibility. The specialised Co-operative courses can be taken as one-off courses, as part of the Master or Graduate Certificate in Co-operative Organisation and Management or as electives leading to a Co-op specialisation in a mainstream MBA. An Industry Advisory Group with key representatives from CME Sector (amongst them CEO James Brown from Common Equity NSW) will ensure courses are relevant.

We currently offer enrolment into the Graduate Certificate of Co-operative Organisation and Management, but by the beginning of 2018 the remaining specialised Co-operative courses will be offered towards a full Master Programme. If you are interested in applying or reading more about these programmes please visit the websites:

<https://gradschool.edu.au/programs/overview/graduate-certificate-in-cooperatives-management-and-organisation-40034>

<https://gradschool.edu.au/programs/overview/master-of-cooperatives-management-and-organisation-40033>

Note that online applications for the 2nd Trimester in 2017 close on 8th May 2017. Trimester start is 22nd May 2017.

You can contact me, Sidsel Grimstad, Programme Convenor for the Programme, at Tel 49216271, or email: Sidsel.grimstad@newcastle.edu.au if you want to have a chat.

Sidsel Grimstad - Newcastle University

Community Development Plan

In principle Co-op development plans are an instrument for Co-op's to state what it is they want to achieve as a community and how they want to do that over the next 12-18 months.

The intention is to open up conversations between members on the 'ideal Co-op for its members'. This is not just about skills development in financial, administrative or maintenance matters.

Co-op development plans are flexible and adjustable tool for a variety of needs and uses. A Co-operative Plan can:

- Identify and incorporate the Co-op's community goals, including social and educational activities
- Focus on each Co-op community's unique make up in determining what the members vision is at different times of the Co-op's cycle
- Support a committed Co-op to work collaboratively with local communities, such as arts, culture etc.
- Create opportunities for those members that may not find a role in 'regular Co-op tasks', and thereby enhance cohesion within the Co-op
- Provide opportunities to focus on 'social causes' for example connecting with a local service providing information on social housing where members can participate in and supporting activities to minimise homelessness.
- Focus on a specific membership criteria, for example an ageing Co-op's challenges and creating solutions that fit the members, for example though an increased use of flexible Co-op practices, innovative

knowledge management and succession planning

- Identify leaders/mentors in Co-op's to develop skills in management and communication

It makes good sense to use the Co-op development plans to increase the diverse attributes of Co-op's and to strengthen a culture that values 'not one rule fits all'. Co-op housing members deserve unique consideration for their contribution to enhancing the quality of Co-op business and communities.

A Co-op development plan identifies those opportunities, as it recognises and implements personal and community

engagement activities that benefit individual members and the Co-op community over time as things change.

Below is an example of a 12-18 months plan for a senior Co-op using a model called Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to create their community development plan. The AI model (despite the fancy name) is just a strength-based model that looks at identifying the best of the Co-op, its positive core and to work with that instead of looking at fixing the bad bits first.

Mirjana Kreiselmaier - Community Development Officer

1. The Co-op members and the Board select a focus area of interest. Consider what is currently working well in your Co-op. The seniors Co-op members wanted to empower each other to be able to participate in modern civil life and to stay fit.
2. Talk to each other and conduct an interview with several questions to discover strength, passions and unique attributes of your members. Envision of what might be and how you all want things in the future. An example of the seniors was to learn and gain IT skills to stay in touch with family and friends. This can help with Co-op internal communication.
3. Identify patterns, themes and possibilities that your members have said in the interviews. Hold a kind of Summit (you can ask another co-op, Common Equity or an external; service to facilitate). Members decided to learn about using their mobile phones, and using social media and to surf the net. Members also wanted to learn in small groups at their Co-op so they could learn at their own pace and have fun.
4. Create statements that stretch the imagination into the desired future or activities and be willing to take appropriate risks. Members invited an expert speaker to the Co-op to talk on the newest discussions and ideas about getting older and staying fit and happy. What's out there in that space that we can learn from?
5. Co-determine what should be! Reach consensus on principals and plan practical steps. You can also liaise with other Co-op's or even plan activities with them. The Co-op asked Common Equity to help with the planning of those activities and with the invitations. The Co-op developed a budget and a practical plan and started implementing
6. Take and sustain action. Implement your steps but take time and create opportunities to reflect and to celebrate. The Members spoke a lot about what is happening and what is and is not working and how that creates sometimes tension but also good feelings between everyone. This created a shared sense of doing good things and celebrating the achievements. It was an invigorating experience and brought people together. Everyone also started to benefit from being able to use IT and people decided to continue on this path.



Paul Bowman Completes His Climb

Common Equity has been supporting Paul Bowman from Care-N-Co Co-op in his recent climb from Charlotte Pass to the top of Mount Kosciuszko.

I interviewed Paul after the climb which took place on the weekend of 18th & 19th February. Paul told me there were 20 teams and team Paul were supported by his sister Maria Thomas, President Bryan Doyle and Sherrie and Danny Avalos from Campbelltown Rotary as well as Jessica Brown, Dalena Pangna, Damien Bartolo and Revathy Menon from WSU Rotaractor.

Paul said; People have been asking me whether or not I am nervous or scared about climbing the mountain. I always say yes, but not for me. I'm more worried about my support team as I heard that most of the injuries from the mountain come from the support team. It's not

about me, it's about the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, and I am very happy for the support of Campbelltown Rotary Club and the WSU Rotaractor as well.

Paul continued; We all got to the base camp in time to climb at 8am. The first challenge was the attachment of the free wheel onto my wheelchair. We almost didn't get to climb, but thanks to the efforts of Danny, one of the Rotarians, we managed to start climbing albeit 1 hour late.

The free wheel fitted to his chair kept coming off both on the way up and during the descent. Paul tells me they used John Farnham's 'You're the Voice' to set the mood.

Paul's sister, Maria Thomas had to return to base camp as she was unwell during the day, however she was able to wheel Paul over the finish line.

Paul stated; The excitement of us all making it to the top was incredible and the way back down was a challenge in itself, because I was one of the heaviest

participants.

I asked Paul how he felt after the event. He told me; will I do it again, no, but I'm glad that I did it with the most incredible people that I had ever met. I regard each of them as a friend and a part of my family. It was an accomplishment that I wouldn't be able to do if it wasn't for the WSU Rotaractor and the Rotarians from the Campbelltown Rotary club. If any of the Rotaractors or the Rotarians needs me to do anything for them all they have to do is ask.

I really appreciate the support and donations from the Co-op sector. In particular I want to thank Villa Alegre Co-op, Common Equity NSW Ltd and my own Care-N-Co Co-op for their generosity and donations to support the Cerebral Palsy Alliance and Team Paul. The event hasn't finished and we are still fundraising until the 30th April 2017. If you would like to donate please follow the link. <https://krazykosciklimb2017.everydayhero.com/au/paul>

Paul Simes - Field Officer

CCA Updates

At the time of going to press with this article the second round of consultation on the proposed new Company Co-Operative Agreement (CCA) had just concluded.

The focus of the second consultation stage was to discuss four key areas. These areas were identified in round one by Co-operatives who wanted more information, understanding and debate to inform the final version of the proposed CCA. The four areas discussed were:

- Asset maintenance
- Autonomy
- Financial Viability
- Use of pooled funds

The consultation occurred via the Regional Meetings during February and March and also via subsequent meetings with individual Co-operatives who sought to discuss particular details of interest to their Co-operative.

Importantly, the consultations provided an opportunity for Common Equity to provide assurance and explanation to Co-operatives in each of these areas that the changes will support and protect Co-operatives as well as facilitate future growth and prosperity. Equally important was the opportunity for individuals to enquire about the detail and give feedback on further amendments that would strengthen the proposal.

I am pleased to report that all sessions were very well attended and the quality

of discussion and debate was excellent. Even though we are all working towards similar outcomes, there are always differences in views about the best approach. It is only through dialog and consideration of alternatives that we can work towards a consensus that everyone is happy with and also serves to further the cause of our sector.

As with the first round of consultations, many positive suggestions were made and I am sure most of these can be incorporated into the final version of the CCA.

The next stage of progress to finalise the new CCA is for consideration of all feedback by the Board at its next meeting scheduled in mid April.

Whilst it may not be possible to accommodate every possible suggestion, the Board will now finalise the new CCA to deliver the best overall agreement for the sector for the next 3-year period.

As soon as the agreement has been finalised with the Board, it will be circulated to every Co-operative along with a summary of how each round two feedback item has been addressed.

I thank all Co-operatives for their active participation in the consultation, passionate and constructive contributions and I look forward to working with you in partnership under this new agreement over the coming three years.

James Brown - Chief Executive Officer

Money Saving Tips



SAVE MONEY

make your own cleaning products

CLEANING PASTE

HOW TO MAKE AN AMAZING CLEANING PASTE THAT REALLY WORKS:

So, you want a cleaning paste as good as Jif to use on your bath and sinks? Well this little number will clean your oven tops, sinks and basins beautifully. Add a bit of peppermint oil (or what every you fancy) to the mix to make it smell lovely and fresh.

Grab a bowl and mix together your baking soda (1 cup) along with the cream of tartar (1 tablespoon). In a jug mix 10mls of liquid Castile soap with 5ml of water. Slowly pour the powders and mix with a fork until you have a paste. Add more water if you need to. Add 1 ml of peppermint essential oil and stir to combine. You may need to use a little more water to get a paste. Store in an airtight container and use to clean your kitchen and bathroom sinks, baths and toilets. Now, whose excited for housework.... anyone?...no? Just me then!

SHOWER CLEANER

YOU NEED THIS HACK IN YOUR LIFE

How much do you spend on cleaning your shower? There are so many choices when it comes to cleaning products, but how well do they really work and why pay so much for something that you can *EASILY* make yourself for such little cost which works just as well. I've personally made and used this on my shower at home, and I can honestly say that it worked.

When I walk around my local supermarket the shower cleaners range from about \$4-\$8, this may not seem like much but in a space of a year that will cost you approximately \$192. I know there are heaps of other things I'd much rather spend \$192 on rather than shower cleaner!

For just \$1.20 you can make 4 bottles of shower cleaner (*yes, you read that correctly a dollar twenty can get you four bottles of shower cleaner*) plus these cleaners are not full of harmful chemicals.

To make this all you need is 500ml of water and 500ml of white vinegar (you can pick up a 2 litre bottle of this in *Coles* for \$1.20 that will make 4 bottles of cleaner). Mix the ingredients together in a spray bottle. Spray on to your shower and leave for 5 minutes, then simply wipe off. ***It's that easy!***



Asia Quiz

1. Where did the Vietnamese defeat the French, thus securing their independence?
2. What important Asian river forms part of the eastern boarder of Thailand?
3. What is the most important mineral found in Thailand?
4. What is the largest city in India?
5. What is the name of Singapore's international airport?
6. The Indonesian flag is similar to the flag in what other country?
7. What is the highest peak in Laos?
8. Denpasar is the capital of which Indonesian island?
9. In the largest temple Angkor Wat, north of Siem Reap, what do the five main towers represent?
10. The city previously known as Saigon is now known by what name?



1. Dien Bien Phu
2. Mekong
3. Tin
4. Bombay
5. Changi International Airport
6. Monaco
7. Phou Bia
8. Bali
9. Mt. Meru
10. Ho Chi Minh City

USEFUL LINKS & CONTACTS

HOUSING NSW

Phone: 1300 468 746

www.housing.nsw.gov.au

Delivers 24/7 a wide range of services

REGISTRAR OF COMMUNITY HOUSING

Phone: 1800 330 940

Fax: 02 8741 2522

Email: registrar@housing.nsw.gov.au

www.rch.nsw.gov.au

Responsible for regulating community housing providers in NSW under the National Regulation System for Community Housing.

NSW CIVIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL (NCAT)

www.ncat.nsw.gov.au

Phone: 1300 006 228

TENANT UNION ADVOCACY SERVICES

www.tenants.org.au

Phone: 1800 251 101

Provides free, independent information, advice and advocacy to tenants throughout NSW.

NSW FEDERATION OF HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

www.communityhousing.org.au

Phone: 02 9281 7144

Fax: 02 9281 7603

Email: nswfha@communityhousing.org.au

GREATER SYDNEY ABORIGINAL TENANTS SERVICE

Phone: 02 9698 0873

Covers Sydney, Blue Mountains, Central Coast, Hawkesbury, Macarthur areas. Provides free, independent information, advice and advocacy to Aboriginal tenants.

HOMELESS PERSONS INFORMATION CENTRE

Phone: 1800 152 152

7 Days / 24 Hours

Information and referral service for people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness.

LEGAL AID NSW

Phone: 1300 888 529

www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Provides services to disadvantaged people.

LAW ACCESS NSW

Phone: 1300 888 529

Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE OF NSW (NCOSS)

Phone: 02 9211 2599

Email: info@ncoss.org.au

www.ncoss.org.au

The peak body for the social and community services sector in NSW.

HOUSING APPEALS COMMITTEE (HAC)

Call: 1800 629 794

Phone: 02 8741 2555

Fax: 02 8741 2566

Email: hac@dhs.nsw.gov.au

www.hac.nsw.gov.au

An independent avenue of appeal for social housing clients in NSW.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LINE

Phone: 1800 656 463

7 Days / 24 Hours

It provides telephone counselling, information and referrals for people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. It makes referrals to women's refuges and family support services, counselling, police and courts, lawyers and hospitals. It helps with transport, emergency accommodation and other relevant support.

AFTER HOURS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION LINE LINK2HOME

Phone: 1800 152 152

7 Days / 24 Hours

Takes telephone referrals evenings and weekends from agencies that assist people seeking shelter for the night. Accommodation is booked until the next working day.

AFTER HOURS EMERGENCY

Should there be a major maintenance issue outside of business hours, CENSW is able to assist by calling or texting **Andrew Stassen on 0432 664 486**

3/362 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000 T: 1800 066 834 / (02) 9356 9200
Postal Address: PO Box A274, Sydney South, NSW 1235 Fax: (02) 9262 2535
Email: enquiries@commonequity.com.au Web: www.commonequity.com.au