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*\*Front cover is featuring the Alpha Co-operative band playing at the Co-op Picnic Day on March 19th. Left to right is; Liz Martin, Scott Leishman, Hugh Coffey and Nick Cassey*

# From The CEO



## **2016 is a significant year for CENSW. It is a year of change and a year for new opportunity and taking on new challenges.**

After a long wait, the NSW State Government has finally defined its approach to social and affordable housing and the relationship it is seeking with housing providers.

Some of the opportunities for Common Equity and the Co-operative sector in the new world of social and affordable housing include partnerships for development and growth through a variety of pathways. The Government is more interested in Co-operative housing than it has been for many, many years but it will want new Co-operative models that respond to a wider population of needs. It wants to work with housing providers to grow the volume of housing stock but that growth will come through capital solutions devised by housing providers and their partners and not through government grants or hand over of spare stock.

The strategic planning about to be initiated by the Board will be an important exercise that seeks to advance Common Equity and the Co-operative housing sector in this new world. In addition, a new CEO will take over the helm to advance the leadership of the organisation by the Board.

Common Equity is in strong shape and the positioning of the sector as a viable model for housing has been significantly advanced over the last eighteen months due to lobbying, paper presentation, the creation of a national Co-operative housing network and a productive relationship with the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals. There is always more work to be done but with a healthy balance sheet, effective internal processes and improved aspects such as an enhanced data base, Common Equity can energetically

look to the next steps in its story and the expansion of the Co-operative sector.

As this is my last newsletter report, I would like to thank staff and the Board for their support and significant efforts over the last three years and also acknowledge the warm welcome I received from many in the sector as a new arrival three years ago. I will watch the ongoing story of Common Equity and housing Co-operatives with great interest.

**Robyn Cahoun - CEO**

## **NEW CEO APPOINTMENT**



On April 13 the Board announced the appointment of our new CEO Mr. James Brown.

James comes to Common Equity bringing significant experience in aged care, the public health system and also Local Government. James is passionate about developing and growing successful organisations through collaboration and will bring to us considerable skill to navigate the changing world of housing. His success in leading key business functions such as strategy, finance, property management, communications, capital works and audit as well as a variety of direct service delivery areas will be valuable to our organisation.

A warm welcome is extended to James.

# Working for the Sector

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

This group of volunteers from various Co-operatives has worked on understanding some of the challenges in communication within Co-operatives, between Co-operatives and between Co-operatives and Common Equity. As well as understanding the territory better they have considered a number of recommendations to the Board regarding improving communication at all levels. Their report is due to go to the Board in by May and will most likely be reviewed at the June Board meeting.

One of their suggestions regarding the convening of a facilitated forum to discuss the future of the sector has already been put forward to the Board and the Forum has been scheduled for April 30. The forum is probably the most important date on the calendar for this year with a number of discussions to be had regarding how we have traveled over the last seven years, the new CCA and how Common Equity and the sector will need to change and develop in the new policy world of social and affordable housing.

One of the recommendations likely to emerge from the SDAG is regarding subscription to the fortnightly email Bulletin. Individuals tenants and members are encouraged to subscribe by emailing [enquiries@commonequity.com.au](mailto:enquiries@commonequity.com.au). Title your email Bulletin subscription and send us your name and email address.

The recent Co-operative picnic day was a planned function to assist Co-operative members to create networks with each other in a social rather than meeting environment. Hopefully, such social networking opportunities will remain an element of our future calendar.

The Sector Development Advisory Group has provided an energetic platform for discussion and new ideas and we are very grateful to all the members for their energy and interest.

## ADVOCACY AND THE SECTOR

The year has been off to a rapid start with a number of activities occurring to support the Co-operative housing sector and advance our internal dialogue.

## PAPER AT THE FINANCIAL MODELS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONFERENCE, SYDNEY

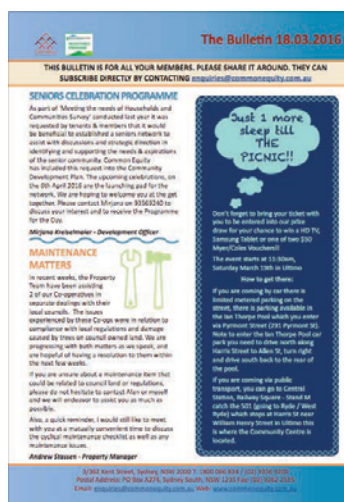
The CEO, Robyn Cahoun presented a paper on Co-operative housing at this February conference in Sydney. The ongoing invitations for paper presentations, regarding the Co-operative sector, highlights the increasing interest in the model within the housing sector and government.

## RE-DRAFTING THE COMPANY CO-OPERATIVE AGREEMENT (CCA)

The CCA is due for renewal with all Co-operatives in March 2017. To advance the development of a new CCA, we will be holding a series of consultations from the middle of the year. This is an opportunity to modernise and streamline the document that will have been in use for eight years at the end of its current term.

## CO-OPERATIVE FORUM

A forum of all Co-operatives is scheduled for April 30 and will be reported on through our fortnightly Bulletin and the next newsletter. The Forum is a facilitated session at which we hope there will be representatives from all Co-operatives to discuss the future of the company and the sector amid the changing policy environment for social and affordable housing. To help plan for the day a planning group comprising a number of members from various Co-operatives has worked together with CENSW staff to put together a great day of information, discussion and advancement.



# Working for the Sector

## SUBMISSION TO THE COUNCIL ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL RELATIONS

*“Rewriting the Australian Dream, Co-operative housing’s role in delivering an effective housing system”. The submission is available on our website and discusses the opportunity for Co-operative housing to be part of the national solution for affordable housing”*

Common Equity NSW has collaborated with Common Equity Housing Limited Victoria to draft a submission on the value of Co-operative housing to the Affordable Housing Working Group, Council on Federal Financial Relations. The submission, submitted in March this year, is titled “Rewriting the Australian Dream, Co-operative housing’s role in delivering an effective housing system”. The submission is available on our website and discusses the opportunity for Co-operative housing to be part of the national solution for affordable housing. The Council on Federal Financial Relations specifically requested submissions regarding Co-operative housing. The submission argues that the Co-operative model is central to the affordable housing solution and discusses the comparative benefits of the Co-operative model which include:

- Offer flexibility and consumer choice in the housing system, building on considerable track record in Co-operative experiences and learning from international cases;
- Run a sustainable business model that builds housing market resilience;
- Provide affordable housing solutions to a range of household types and across income bands;
- Enable a sustainable social mix and mitigate issues associated with the concentration of poverty typical of contemporary social housing through mixed tenure developments;
- Deliver better alignment between housing preferences and outcomes;
- Guarantee security of tenure to meet the needs of different population cohorts, including older persons and young

families seeking permanency in communities;

- Negotiate service needs over time, including by working with service providers (e.g. disability, aged care) and through direct self-help and member-based care;
- Respond to special needs of members through a people-centered approach, for example in tailoring solutions for people with a disability in line with Government policy (e.g. NDIS);
- Bring efficiencies and cost savings to Government as one of the most effective forms of social housing (with low vacancy rates, low turnover, high participation in management, etc.);
- Reduce welfare dependency through the Co-operative model of self-help and community care;
- Improve social outcomes by offering human and social capital development, including capacity
- Building for improved labour market engagement; and
- Enable growth through mobilising capital investment and cross-subsidisation in mixed development models in an efficient way that optimise’s outcomes for tenants and communities.



# Profiling Our Co-Operatives



*Adrian Wolfin standing beside a plot of land which was to be developed.*



*Development of properties commences*



*Adrian Wolfin standing beside the finished property*

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF BRANCH CO-OPERATIVE

**B**RANCH was formed in 1993, here we take a look at how they came about and little of their history.

Located in "Gods country" in picturesque Bellingen, BRANCH functions as a small regional Co-operative with a vibrant history.

BRANCH is an acronym for Bellingen River and Neighborhood Co-operative Housing and comprises 9 properties. The Co-operative targets single people and families in need of safe and secure affordable housing.

Our goal and mission is for members to exercise control over their housing through participation in the management and the decision-making processes of the Co-operative.

### HOW WE STARTED

The Bellingen Neighborhood Centre initiated the Bellingen Co-operative Housing project with the help of Angie Corcoran, who at the time was undertaking a three-year degree Bachelor of Social Science course at Charles Sturt University. Her major subject was Welfare Studies. Bellingen Neighborhood Centre was only her second field placement. Roma Mulder, the co-ordinator at the Bellingen Neighborhood Centre suggested that Angie establish a housing project as part of her placement work.

Consequently, in February 1993 Angie arranged a meeting with Bellingen Shire Council along with the Department of Housing to discuss setting up a joint Council and Community Housing Programme. In May 1993 a public meeting followed to discuss local community housing issues. The following week on Ms. Pam Goodwin, a representative from ARCH (Association to Resource Co-operative Housing) spoke about the NSW Common Equity Rental Co-operative housing programme. ARCH was the peak body for Co-operative housing in NSW. It was established in 1989 and was

community based. This was the forerunner of CENSW.

After Ms. Pam Goodwin's visit, a local group held fortnightly meetings. A significant event was a visit from MASH, a Housing Co-operative in Kempsey, on the 30th August 1993 to share information on forming a housing Co-operative. On 18th October 1993 an inaugural meeting was held, office bearers were elected and BRANCH was officially launched. The original five members were Christine Palmer (now Filiamundi), Adrian Wolfin, Marcia Anning and Mark and Lyn Woodbury.

### THE NEED WAS GREAT

Bellingen Neighborhood Centre, Bellingen Shire Council, local Real Estate agents and other community groups agreed that affordable, secure rental housing was scarce in Bellingen and BRANCH was set up in response to this need. The Bellingen Neighborhood Centre was BRANCH's auspice body and provided it with consistent regular support for several years.

### WE STARTED WITH A SMALL GRANT

On 5th June 1995 BRANCH passed ARCH's Stage 1 assessment and received ministerial approval for a development grant of \$5,000 to develop the Co-operative in order to make an application for full funding. BRANCH also requested that the Department of Housing approve a consultant architect to provide the technical assistance necessary for the funding application.

BRANCH became incorporated and applied for Stage 2 capital funding in 1997/1998. ARCH worked with BRANCH to help it pass the Stage 2 funding submission while the Housing Production Division (a branch of the Department of Housing) did technical

# Profiling Our Co-Operatives



*Ariel view of Bellinger River*



**ABOVE: Yvonne, Jude, Adrian, Julie & Christine**



assessments and Costings.

BRANCH sought full funding of \$1,484,020 for nine detached dwellings in the Bellingen area. Four of the houses were spot purchased and five other dwellings designed and built. In 1999, after six years of preparatory work and training, the application under the Housing Co-operative Funding Programme was successful.

## **FLOODS ARE A PART OF LIFE**

We are very lucky living in such magnificent country. As many who know the north coast would understand, flooding of the Bellinger is a regular event. It has become part of our life to accept the rise and fall of this beautiful river. Our compensation is the surroundings of exquisite natural beauty and the wonderful climate.

## **BRANCH TODAY**

BRANCH has been meeting regularly since 1993 in order to achieve its aim to provide and manage secure, long-term, affordable and environmentally sensitive housing to people of low to moderate incomes in the Bellingen area.

Children have grown to adulthood with the Co-operative ideals in their blood and are now operating in the world with Co-operative intentions. We are proud of our homes and also, the Co-operative principles that glue us all together.

Branch members often speak of how happy they are to have housing that is secure and affordable and that they feel supported by Branch to take part in the administration work of the Co-operative.

Over the 19 years since the Co-operative was registered many have developed their administration skills and taken this on to wider work opportunities, university study, and community administration work.

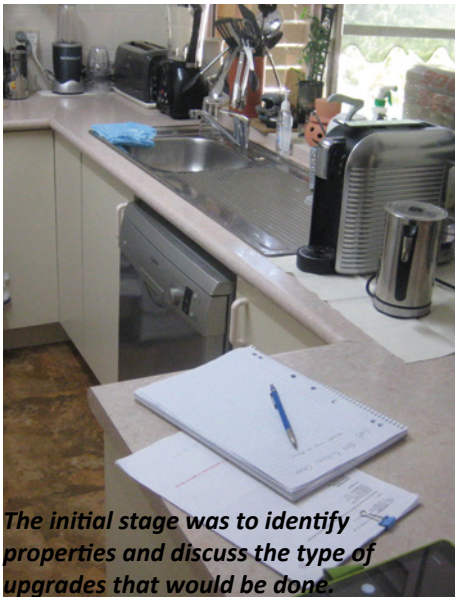
One of the things BRANCH members agree on is the importance of growth for the Co-operative sector. We need to see the development of more Co-operatives because it is a great model of social housing.

***Based on information and article from Adrian Wolfin***



**BELLINGER RIVER**

# Property Management



*The initial stage was to identify properties and discuss the type of upgrades that would be done.*

## ALBURY CO-OP RECEIVES KITCHEN UPGRADES

The Property Team within CENSW has a part to play in a range of maintenance types across the sector, working with Co-operatives on a daily basis to ensure maintenance is being completed on all properties as required. Our Property Team assist the Co-operatives in all aspects of maintenance, whether the job is large or small however, possibly the most important function of the Property Team is the repairs that are undertaken in line with the Schedule 3 requirements set out in the CCA.

For those of you that are unaware, Schedule 3 repairs are the responsibility of CENSW, and these items include such items as kitchen and bathroom upgrades, roof replacement and storm water pipe replacements just to name a few. Most of these jobs are planned for, identified during the Property Audit completed in 2014, while other jobs such as the storm water and sewerage pipe replacements can appear at any time, and are dealt with as quickly as possible.

During the 2015/2016 Financial Year, CENSW has begun grouping these repairs into small projects when there are several



*Work in progress with tiles being ripped out.*



*Walls being plastered and painted*

required for an individual Co-operative. This process has been an interesting one as CENSW has learnt a few lessons, allowing the Property Team to alter the process and how we handle these projects, ensuring that our tenants and Co-operatives continue to be involved from start to finish.

Currently we are upgrading five Kitchens for our Albury Co-operative. The initial discussions with Albury centered around the properties that had been identified, and then meeting with them on site to discuss the type of upgrade we would be undertaking.

As per our process, the Co-operative and tenant were invited to select colours for the kitchens, agree on a final scope of works and also have some input into potential for more cupboards. Ultimately, CENSW would like to maintain the functionality of the kitchen, and possibly improve it if the area allows.

Prior to commencement of the upgrades, CENSW will develop a project time-line with the Co-operative and contractor, making sure that there is minimal disruption to the tenants whilst providing a firm target to have the works completed.

These photos show they are a work in

progress. I am looking forward to being able to share photos with you all of the kitchens when they are completed, providing you with a better understanding on the repairs that we are completing.

**Andrew Stassen - Property Manager**

# People Power At Common Equity

*Daniel Jones*



*Joshua Collier*



*Elsbeth Cameron*



*Tanya Genske*



## ELEVATE PROGRAMME GRADUATES

The first round of the *ELEVATE* training programme was truly a great success. The majority of participants were either relatively new members or members becoming involved in their Co-operative and eager to increase skills and understanding of the processes and operations including a detailed understanding of the roles they're occupying. Interestingly, the group members developed positive connections with each other allowing them to share Co-operative stories and experiences in a confidential atmosphere and thereby supporting and shaping their understanding, skills & solutions to issues. The programme was run over 3 months, one Saturday per month. Every one of the participants gave testimonial evidence of the training's importance and relevance and especially the opportunity to develop networks across Co-operatives and thereby breaking their experience of each Co-operative operating in a silo.

If you would like to chat to one of the participants that have completed the first round of the training please call Mirjana to match you up.

### What are the three modules?

The *ELEVATE* programme is run over three days and comprises 5 modules in total. CENSW is inviting all participants to be aware that two full days and four modules will need to be attended to maintain continuity and to develop positive group dynamics. The last module delivered on the third day is about the operations and governance of Common Equity and its board. This module is voluntary and you can opt not to attend. The dates to run the programme will be negotiated with the participants to ensure suitability for everyone.

The first three modules discussed on the first training day include detailed information on governance and Co-operative management with the aim to increase substantially skills on financial procedures, maintenance management, tenant selection and how to conduct effective meetings including the various roles of the Co-operative Board. Meetings are the heart of Co-operatives, where all formal discussions and the Co-operatives decisions are being made.

The second day and the forth module is dedicated to conflict management,

prevention, positive communication techniques and effective questioning. This module will assists with understanding that your members have different ways of perceiving, thinking and structuring their perceptions and values and that it helps a great deal to apply that knowledge when dealing with differences and conflicts. It is an effective module to understand internal and external issues in more detail and what can be done to prevent issues from escalating over time. The quicker Co-operatives responds to issues and complaints the less likely for issues to escalate.

Interestingly, all participants felt captivated with the training content and completed the 5 modules over three full days. Participants received upon completion of the programme a voucher and a certificate. Thank you to Tanya, Elsbeth, Josh and Dan for giving up personal time and completing the *ELEVATE* programme. You have taught Robyn and me a lot about positive group dynamics with your natural flair to embrace everyone.

**Mirjana Kreiselmaier - Community Development Officer**

# People Power At Common Equity



***“Big thank you’s to CENSW for organising the event it was a lovely get together” - Alpha Member***

*Sedgwick Co-op performing a Filipino dance*

## CO-OPERATIVE PICNIC DAY

**O**n Saturday March 19, Common Equity hosted a picnic day for our Co-operatives. It was a chance for people to meet and mingle in a relaxed and social atmosphere and most importantly to have fun.

I started planning the event mid 2015. It took me a while to find a suitable venue with a mixture of indoor and outdoor space that could hold a lot of people as well as having disability access. Eventually however, I came across Ultimo Community Centre. The space was perfect. All on the ground level, a huge hall opening out onto a large courtyard, it even came with free Ping-Pong tables. We had at last found our space!

With the venue secured, it was onto the fun part of organising the day. The Field Officers rang around some of the Co-operatives scouting for talented performers who were willing to perform on the day. I had organised for a jukebox playing a range of music from the 60’s till today, a popcorn machine and a

photographer to capture the events of the day.

After much hard work the day had finally arrived.

The room filled with Co-operative members all smiling, laughing and mingling with one another, the day was going to be a success! Zio Ledoux from Alpha led the way with warm up games out in the courtyard. Everybody joined in and had a good time. It was a fantastic icebreaker and got everybody up and mingling.

Three long tables were set up with a beautiful array of delicious sandwiches, cakes and fruit platters. Music played in the background and the room was filled with the sound of chatter and laughter as everyone enjoyed lunch

together.

After lunch we kicked off with the first of our performers. Sedgwick Co-operative provided us with some very talented singers and even treated us to a Filipino dance. After they finished their set we had an impromptu harmonica player, the lovely Siba from Grandville. Meanwhile the Alpha band were setting up out in the courtyard. They played a fantastic set and have some truly talented musicians. Everybody came out into the sunshine to listen to the band. As children ran around and played the adults just sank into their seats and relaxed to the music. As I looked around everybody had a smile on their face and was enjoying the day.

The photograph entries for our photo

# People Power At Common Equity



**Mishko Desovski,  
Emoh Ruo won the  
Samsung Tablet.**

competition from Sedgwick and Kapit-Bahayan were on display for all to view and after the band had finished their performance we invited Jimmy Lopez from Sedgwick and Ruben Amores from Kapit-Bahayan to talk us through their photographs and tell us a little about their Co-operative.

As Robyn Cahoun was completing her term as CEO at end of March, we decided it would be nice to surprise her with a little tribute at the picnic day. Robyn was presented with a beautiful bouquet of roses and lilies and an indulgent box of chocolates. Jimmy Lopez, Board Member Director along with Jane Oldham, Board Associate Director gave a little farewell speech to Robyn thanking her for all her hard work over the past three years.

***"Sooo grateful! Perfect timing for use as a display in an exhibition in Melbourne" - Maia Sinclair-Ferguson & Tessa Dowdell from Dunroamin on winning the TV***

Robyn gave a small thank you speech. It was a sad moment in an otherwise joyful day.

Then came the moment we had all been waiting for, the prize draw. I commissioned the help of Scott Martin from Ningana to draw the lucky tickets out of the bag. With baited breath and crossed fingers the first number was drawn, for the \$50 Coles/Myer Voucher the lucky winner being Ganbold Lundaa from ALPHA, with a loud cheer and a fist pump Ganbold ran up to collect his prize. The winner of the second \$50 voucher was Liz Martin from Alpha also a vocalist in the band.

Now was time for the big prizes, the 7 inch Wi-Fi Samsung tablet, as the ticket was drawn and number announced the tension rose. Eyes darted about the room to see who had won, the number was called out again, but again no one rose to claim their

prize. As Scott put his hand back into the bag to pull out another ticket, Mishko Desovski from Emoh Ruo came running up waving his ticket, having been heavily engrossed in

a furious game of Ping-Pong he had almost missed out on his prize. Scott drew the final ticket of the day, for the biggest prize of all, the HD television. As he announced the number a scream from the back row and Tessa Dowdell from Dunroamin came running up delighted to have won the television. She was extremely grateful the timing was perfect, she needed it to help with her display for an exhibition in Melbourne.

The day was established to provide co-operatives with an opportunity to mix and mingle and generate new contacts.

The day also proved to be a fantastic opportunity for staff such as myself that rarely get opportunities to meet and interact with Co-operative members. It was great to be able to put faces to names and I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know everyone. For the staff that do not have many opportunities to interaction with Co-operative members, it was a chance to do so in a relaxed and social environment.

I was delighted to receive so much great feedback by those who attended expressing how much they enjoyed the day.

**Lucy Parseghian – Executive Assistant**



**Winning the \$50 Vouchers, left: Ganbold Lundaa from Alpha, right: Liz Martin from Alpha.**

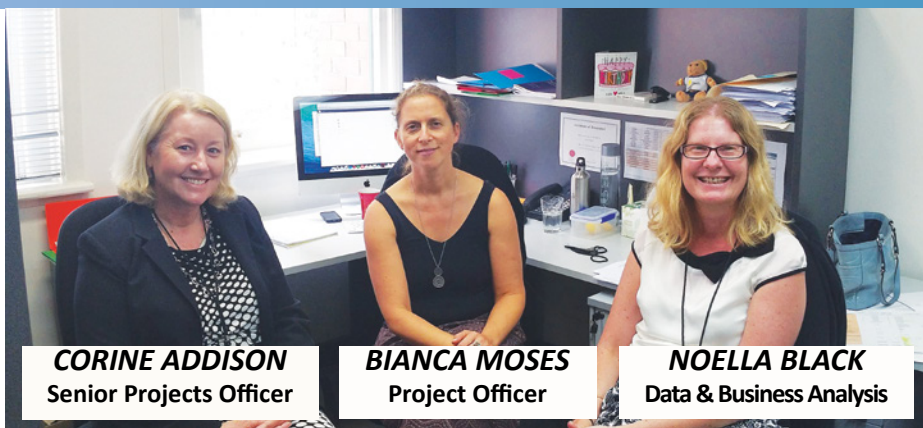


**Warm up games hosted by Zio Ledoux from Alpha**



**Winning the HD TV Left to Right: Maia Sinclair-Ferguson & Tessa Dowdell from Dunroaming.**

# People Power At Common Equity



**CORINE ADDISON**  
Senior Projects Officer

**BIANCA MOSES**  
Project Officer

**NOELLA BLACK**  
Data & Business Analysis

## MEET OUR PROJECT TEAM

**O**ur project team provide invaluable support to Common Equity, taking on various projects there isn't much that these guys don't know. Find out about the people who make up the team and what it is that they do.

### What does the Project Team do at Common Equity?

The Project Team handle a range of projects that regularly arise at Common Equity. Corine Addison, Noella Black and Bianca Moses make up this small team that keep the organisation's projects, data analysis, quality improvement and reporting up to speed.

### When did you join Common Equity?

**Corine:** I joined in March 2014, with my first project being the Registration of Common Equity under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing, by the beginning of May.

**Noella:** I joined in July 2015, to initially provide support for the Property and Tenants Management database, SDM.

**Bianca:** I joined in June 2015, to do research and write proposals for the CEO on strategic objectives of Common Equity.

### What projects are you involved with at the moment?

**Corine:** I am mainly involved in co-ordinating the Project team, to ensure we deliver our projects on time and with the required results. Most of our projects relate to improving systems and processes.

**Noella:** I am heavily involved in managing a project to ensure all our data relating to Co-operatives is up to date and accurate in our Property and Tenants Management database –SDM.

**Bianca:** Right now, I am finalising a project that streamlines our electronic filing system and makes sharing of files across staff easy.

### What do you enjoy about working on projects?

**Corine:** I enjoy seeing the improvements and results that occur when a project is delivered. I like to make a difference.

**Noella:** The variety and serenity.

**Bianca:** I enjoy having a target or end goal to work towards!

### What sort of challenges do you face?

**Corine:** People naturally don't want change, so you have to sell a project to get everyone to understand what the project will do for them.

**Noella:** Learning a new system.

**Bianca:** When you come across something that is uncontrollable, such as an important stakeholder that throws a curve ball meaning that the project will not meet a key time-frame.



## FAREWELL ROBYN

**I**t is with great sadness that we reluctantly bid a fond farewell to Robyn Cahoun, our much valued CEO. Robyn has been with Common Equity for three years. During her time here she has provided sound leadership and stewardship to Common Equity through many complex projects. After much consideration, Robyn has decided to explore other opportunities.

All of us here at Common Equity along with the Board and Associate Members will miss Robyn greatly and wish her all the very best in her new endeavors.

# People Power At Common Equity



**2016 SENIORS WEEK CELEBRATION**

**O**n April 6th we celebrate seniors week, the event was hosted at Care-N-Co Co-op in Minto. There was a great turn out of 24 in attendance.

The day was a great success and this was largely down to the preparations and labour of Jean and Les Gagen. The day was a great experience for everyone and can't be fully expressed but was certainly evident in the positive comments that were made during the day. Thank you to both and especially to Jean for all her initiative and long hours!

During the day we shared photos, sang songs, danced and shared stories of the richness of having a community to belong to and some shared stories of affliction that over time created personal strength. One tenant who couldn't make it in person wrote a poem for the day which was read out.

The day also provided the opportunity to launch a seniors network across the sector, which aims to invite members from Co-operatives and from directly managed sites to come together and to participate as a community with a shared aspiration. The conclusion on the conversations on the day overwhelmingly upheld that the formation of a seniors network is very welcome. It was agreed to firstly nominate a committee to meet and to develop a brief on the network's intentions. The committee will meet officially beginning of May 2016 to expand on the discussions and ideas that were promoted at the celebration. The participants also felt it important to reach other seniors in the

sector to join the network. It was highly emphasised that the opportunity to meet people that one usually may not cross each other's path is perceived as an opportunity for development of new ideas and activities.

I want to say thank-you to everyone who took the time and efforts in making the journey to Minto to celebrate seniors' week and to launch the seniors network as part of CENSW's community development plan.

Please feel free to get in touch to give some feedback on the article and your thoughts and interest on the seniors network. Mirjana will provide you with the contact details of the committee members to share your feedback.

**Mirjana Kreiselmaier - Community Development Officer**



**Josephine Delos Reyes, Sedgwick Co-op and Peter Page, Member Director**

## BOARD STRATEGIC DISCUSSION DAY

I n February, the Board of Common Equity met to receive a briefing on the changes in government approach to social and affordable housing and to hold preliminary discussions regarding strategic issues impacting on the company and the Co-operative sector.

The Board will be conducting more formal strategic planning sessions later in the year but the discussion day provided an excellent platform to start the discussion about growth opportunities and how we might grow in the years ahead given that the State Government will no longer provide grants for housing in the way it previously has or, transfer empty stock to housing providers. In the future, housing providers will need to generate new stock through their own capital initiatives.

The Board will be seeking input and feedback about important future issues at the upcoming Co-operative Forum Day that is scheduled for April 30.



# Working With Members

## ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR (ASB) LEGISLATIVE REFORMS.

## INTERESTED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEXT ROUND OF THE *ELEVATE* TRAINING PROGRAMME?



There have been recent legislative reforms, which provide a new layer of tools and responses when managing incidents of antisocial behavior in social housing.

As social housing providers, Co-operatives have to work within the legislative requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW) including requirements landlords ensure that their tenants do not act in a way, which interferes with their neighbor's peaceful enjoyment of their premises.

Applying the new legislation requires a rigorous antisocial behavior management policy and a simple and transparent framework.

What is regarded as antisocial behavior may vary according to the degree of tolerance of difference within a community.

Noise caused by everyday domestic activities or noise caused by insufficient sound insulation would not be classed as antisocial behavior.

Generally personal arguments are best resolved by those involved and residents should be encouraged to try to resolve the dispute for themselves, unless there is a breach of the tenancy agreement.

### SUMMARY

There is a worry that the new legislation could unduly raise expectations among tenants of the landlord's ability to resolve ASB. The ongoing challenge for Co-operative landlords will be to manage these expectations and be clear on how complaints of ASB will be approached.

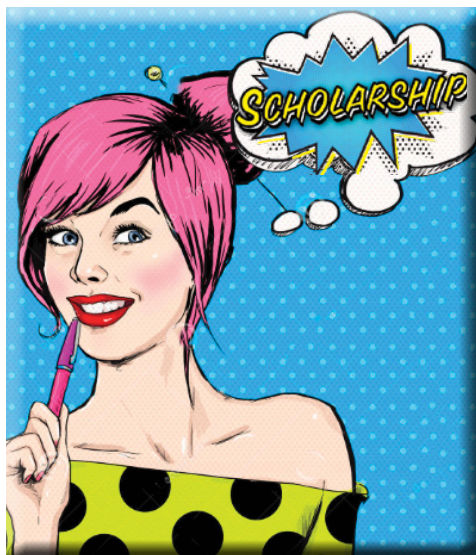
Common Equity has assisted many Co-operatives to manage ASB. If your Co-operative needs any assistance in navigating the new legislation please contact your Field Officer.

The training programme is a great pathway to assist Co-operatives and individual members to polish up skills and understanding of Co-operative processes and operations including the principals and values that underlie Co-operative activities. The history of the Co-operative movement began with the application of Co-operative principles to business organisation. It was not until 1844 when the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers established the 'Rochdale Principles' on which they ran their Co-operative, that the basis for development and growth of the modern Co-operative movement was established.

This is a great opportunity to receive practicable and capacity building knowledge to manage your Co-operative as a united membership working from a shared knowledge base, which promotes equality and shared values. Please contact [mirjana@commonequity.com.au](mailto:mirjana@commonequity.com.au) or call 9356 9240 for detailed training information and/or to enroll members in the next round of the *ELEVATE* programme commencing in May 2016.

Please add the upcoming training round to your next Co-operative meeting agenda to discuss your member(s) participation. It is great fun and the networking and stories from other members are enlightening in an atmosphere that provides the respectful confidentiality and privacy to feel supported in your learning.

# Working With Members



## **Why does CENSW call on tenants & Co-operative members to apply for the John Mant Scholarship?**

There are several reasons for Common Equity calling for suitable applications; to provide real financial support to those tenants that are aiming anyway to foster their career and education with the goal of gaining or improving their chances for paid employment. Common Equity can provide some means for tenants to achieve those goals and to assist positive developments and outcomes for their families. Seeking to widen personal and familial choices enables people to become pro-active and diminishes to some extent waiting for good things to happen from sources that may not be in ones control.

It has been documented that people fare often better if they are engaged in developing and investing in their future.

Secondly, the future Directions for the Social Housing paper was released last year and provides the anticipated blue print for social housing outcomes in NSW going forward. It helps housing providers to unpack how Government is thinking

## **CALL FOR JOHN MANT SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS**

and approaching social & community housing and the future relationship with housing providers. One of the new NSW Government programs is called the Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF).

Interestingly, the critically important aspect in the SAHF is that funding is being offered in the form of a service agreement, not a capital funds agreement like in the past. It seems very clear that the funding would be based on 'agreed key performance indicator's' (KPI's) in a service-based agreement. This suggests that housing providers may in fact be linked into not only meeting standard criteria in terms of rent arrears, numbers who are social housing eligible, building maintenance but also on other social aspects regarding tenant performance, and tenant pathways into education and employment for example. The Government is putting its emphasis on assisting tenants becoming more independent and pro-active with housing providers enabling tenants to access pathways to achieve their goals. This is a new concept but it seems to have landed on housing providers' doorstep.

### **Which outcomes have the first round successful applicants reported so far?**

The first round scholarship last year has seen 5 successful applicants gaining entry and all have said that education is contributed positively to their lives. Some are continuing with their education and have gained paid casual work; others have completed their education for now and managed to get paid work and some have really become 'addicted' and are planning to create a great career in the medium to long-term. All have said that their personal development and outlook in life has improved, that setting their priorities becomes much easier and that some are clearer on their objectives and can quickly

identify which task will give them the best result with the resources available. Improved focus and effectiveness comes with knowing and playing to your strengths, according to one of the former applicants.

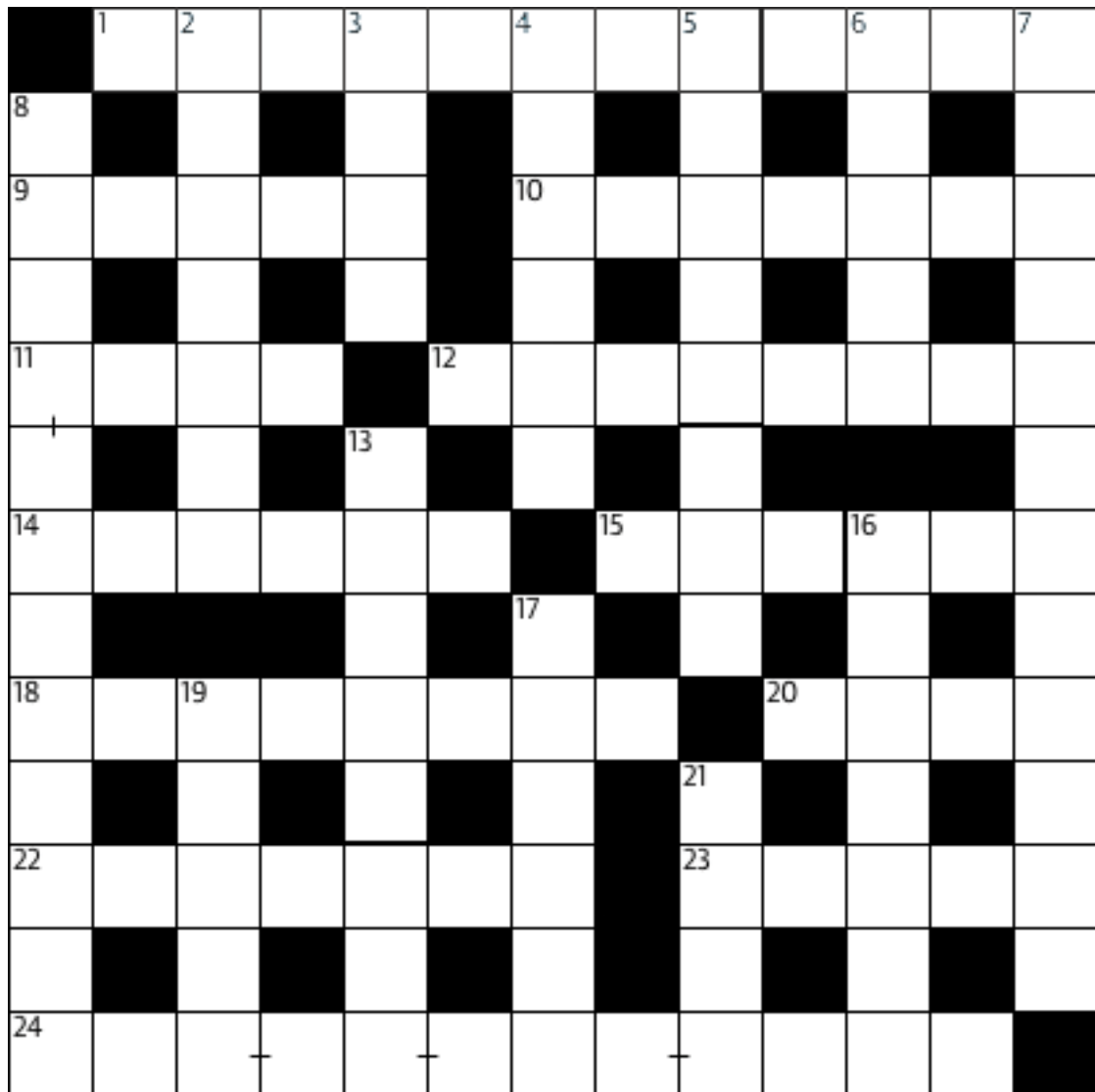
For 2016 the Scholarship round has opened but so far only two suitable applicants have applied. This is a call to tenants and Co-operative members to consider your interest to commence studies in 2016 or if you have already commenced studies with a registered organisation you may be eligible to lodge a scholarship application for financial support of up to \$1,000. Please get in touch with Mirjana to discuss on 9356 9240 or email [mirjana@commonequity.com.au](mailto:mirjana@commonequity.com.au)

**Mirjana Kreiselmaier - Community Development Officer**

***This is a call to tenants and Co-operative members to consider your interest to commence studies in 2016 or if you have already commenced studies with a registered organisation you may be eligible to lodge a scholarship application for financial support of up to \$1,000***

# Something Fun

## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

1. Vulnerable point (8,4)
9. Upper room window (5)
10. Repository for post (7)
11. Refute (4)
12. Momentous (8)
14. Altitude (6)
15. Air travel fatigue (3,3)
18. Universality (8)
20. Porch (4)
22. Deform (7)
23. Grating (5)
24. Everyday (3-2-3-4)

### DOWN

2. Italian wine (7)
3. Unoccupied (4)
4. Clear (6)
5. Button on keyboard for capitals (5,3)
6. Glowing cinder (5)
7. The compilation of dictionaries (12)
8. Treat with indifference (4-8)
13. Dismiss as unimportant (5,3)
16. Verbatim (7)
17. Pain in the side (6)
19. Norwegian dramatist (5)
21. Counterfeit (4)

# Something Fun

## WORDSEARCH

ACUPUNCTURE

AMINO ACIDS

BACH FLOWERS

CURATIVE

DE STRESS

DRUG FREE

ECHINACEA

FLOAT TANK

GINSENG

GOWN

HERB

MASK

MASSAGE

MEDITATE

MUD

REFLEXOLOGY

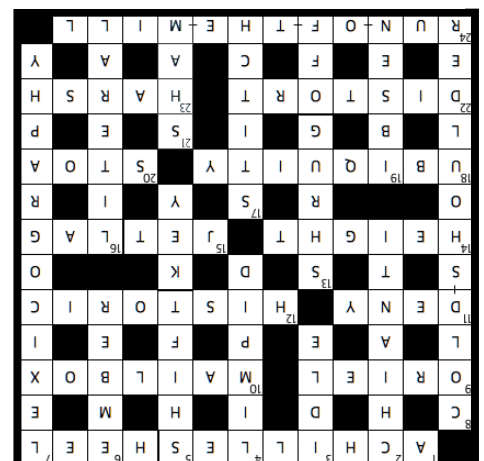
REIKI

ROBE

RUB

Y	S	E	B	O	R	M	A	K	K	S
G	R	D	O	M	A	H	N	A	S	R
O	N	A	I	S	T	A	E	E	A	E
L	W	E	S	C	T	C	R	R	M	W
O	O	A	S	T	A	T	H	E	B	O
X	G	E	A	N	S	O	D	I	R	L
E	A	O	I	E	I	I	N	K	D	F
L	L	H	D	P	T	G	Y	I	U	H
F	C	U	R	A	T	I	V	E	M	C
E	R	U	T	C	N	U	P	U	C	A
R	B	E	E	R	F	G	U	R	D	B

ANSWERS



# Banoffee Milkshake

## SOMETHING SWEET

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon popping corn (you can always use caramel popcorn if you don't want to make your own)
- 1/3 cup caramel sauce
- 100g dark chocolate, melted
- 2 ripe bananas
- 2 scoops vanilla ice-cream
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- Canned whipped cream, to serve
- Plain and chocolate pretzels, to decorate
- 20g dark eating chocolate, grated



### Step 1

Heat oil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Add popping corn. Cook, covered, shaking pan, for 3-4 minutes or until popping sound stops. Remove from heat. Sprinkle with salt and add 1 tablespoon of caramel sauce. Stir to coat. Set aside to cool.

### Step 2

Pour melted chocolate down inside of 4 x 300ml glasses and lightly brush around edges of glasses.

### Step 3

Blend banana, ice-cream, milk and 2 tablespoons caramel sauce until smooth and frothy. Pour into prepared glasses. Top with whipped cream. Arrange pretzels around top of glass. Sprinkle over caramel popcorn and grated chocolate. Serve immediately

# Potato & Cauliflower Rogan Josh

## VEGETARIAN

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 brown onion, finely sliced
- 1/2 cup (150g) rogan josh curry paste
- 2 tomatoes, finely chopped
- 2 cups (500ml) vegetable stock
- 500g cauliflower, trimmed, cut into florets
- 500g baby potatoes, halved
- 200g green beans, halved
- Steamed basmati rice, to serve
- Natural yoghurt, to serve
- Coriander leaves, to serve



### Step 1

Heat oil in a large heavy-based saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring, for 5 mins or until light golden and caramelised. Add curry paste and tomato to the pan and cook, stirring, for 2 mins or until fragrant. Add stock, 1 cup (250ml) water, cauliflower and potato. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 40 mins or until cauliflower and potato are tender.

### Step 2

Add beans to the pan and cook for a further 5 mins.

### Step 3

Serve curry with rice, a dollop of natural yoghurt and coriander leaves.

# USEFUL LINKS AND CONTACTS

## HOUSING NSW

Phone: 1300 468 746  
[www.housing.nsw.gov.au](http://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](mailto:registrar@housing.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.rch.nsw.gov.au](http://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](http://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au)  
Phone: 1300 006 228

## TENANT UNION ADVOCACY SERVICES

[www.tenants.org.au](http://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](http://www.communityhousing.org.au)  
Phone: 02 9281 7144  
Fax: 02 9281 7603  
Email: [nswfha@communityhousing.org.au](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:info@ncoss.org.au)  
[www.ncoss.org.au](http://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](mailto:hac@dhs.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.hac.nsw.gov.au](http://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 counseling, information and referrals for people who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence. It makes referrals to women's refuges and family support services, counseling, 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