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Presentation of IYC Coin to Dame  
Pauline Green, Nov 18 2011 - Cancun

Buenas Dias

Good morning....everyone

President Dame Pauline Green, Director General Charles Gould, Members of the ICA Board, distinguished guests and delegates, it is an immense honour and it's with great pride that I stand before you this morning as a passionate co-operator.

I am here today in my capacity representing not only a proud ICA member in Capricorn Society, but more importantly as a representative of Australia's National Committee for IYC 2012.

Ladies and gentlemen this moment today marks both the end of a journey and the beginning of an adventure for the movement in Australia.

Let me start with what I mean by a 'beginning'.

In recent weeks I have had the good fortune to attend the ICMIF Conference in Manchester, the global launch of IYC 2012 at the United Nations in New York, this General Assembly and in a few days' time I will be at our Australian national launch of IYC in the seat of Australian democracy - Parliament House, Canberra.

What I have witnessed at these gatherings has confirmed a deeply held belief, namely that we are witnessing the beginnings of a global renaissance of the cooperative movement, marked by the International Year. I believe this renaissance which is being enthusiastically advanced by proponents within the mutual movement like

you, all of us here, is set to be irrepressible and effective.

And so this is an opportune time for the co-operative sector to get out there and make a stand for the legitimacy of the clearly different outcomes its business model creates.

In Australia - we have dubbed the international Year as "Our Time to Shine" and I am very excited about the opportunities that 2012 presents our Australian sector to reinvigorate itself.

.....I would like to go back to the 'journey's end' that I mentioned.

Fellow cooperators, I am here today on behalf of Australian co-operatives, the Australian government, the Royal Australian Mint, and the Australian IYC Secretariat to present the first minted IYC 2012 Commemorative Coin to Dame Pauline.....

and I have one for Chuck too.

This event today is the culmination of some 18 months hard work, and began with an historic meeting of the co-operatives sector in May 2010 to form a national working group for IYC.

Convincing the government to mint a commemorative coin is no easy task and I'm glad to say that our Committee was not dissuaded from its goal when we were told on several occasions that it was too late to initiate the process, or just too difficult.

Through the Steering Committee's efforts and two supportive politicians in particular in David Bradbury, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer and Senator Ursula Stephens, an IYC themed coin was confirmed.

In May this year – a year after we began - the Committee received the welcome news that our case had been put and won - The

Mint would produce a coin.

The coin's building blocks' design represents the role that co-operatives play in sustaining populations that might otherwise struggle in a fast-paced and global economy often indifferent to the needs of those whose labours it depends upon.

We're very proud that, to our knowledge, Australia is the only nation to have produced a coin celebrating International Year of Co-operatives.

We have also been successful in getting Australia Post to produce a stamp series and a pre-paid stamped envelope.

We hope these publically available items help to put the co-operative model of business 'front of mind' with the Australian community and public policy makers for not only next year but well into the future.

Australia has a healthy, but neglected co-operative sector with nearly 2000 co-op businesses including 103 credit unions, and a proud Co-operative history dating back to the mid 1800s. Despite this we continue to have a low public profile. Our sector does not publicise itself well or receive its deserved recognition for the role and contribution to social and economic life in Australia.

We have no government ministerial portfolio with responsibility for co-operative businesses - hence this is a 100% industry funded campaign, and I would thank our many generous industry donors including our fellow Australian ICA member, Co-operative Bulk Handling or "CBH", our largest coop – whose representatives have also been with us here in Cancun.

Without this collective spirit and support, we would not have achieved what we have and what we plan for in 2012.

Finally, in terms of the journey's end I referred to, Dame Pauline, if I might say personally to you, that it is with this presentation today that Australian co-operatives are honoured to have the opportunity to return the honour first paid to them in March 2010, when you delivered the inaugural address for our new mutual businesses body, Social Business Australia, at the Australian Parliament House, in the very same room where we will hold the National Launch in a few of days' time.

Dame Pauline, you hold a special place in the story of Social Business Australia.

In your address in 2010 you proposed that Australia, as with many other regions, was on the cusp of a co-operative resurgence that would be boosted by the IYC 2012 activities.

Your lecture, titled "Investing in Alternative Economic Futures", was very prescient of the need to diversify our economic

landscape with other models of business such ours.

In Australia - the word is slowly getting out to the political representatives that cooperatives are a sector of the economy deserving of support and attention and the sector is gaining the recognition for the role it plays in sustaining local economies, workforces and service delivery, and that it also has an important role to play in providing a competitive dynamic in the marketplace – I think of banks, supermarkets, agribusinesses, to name a few.

We, from Australia, are honoured, Dame Pauline, to present you with the very first minted IYC Commemorative Coin.

We go forward with excitement, enthusiasm and hope, that Australian co-operatives will emerge stronger and more unified at the end of 2012. We also trust that more coops in Australia will join the ICA when they

understand their place and relationship to the global sector.

In your words from your lecture, Dame Pauline, and I quote, “Mutuals are best for business and for social purpose. They keep the wealth local, they wash their face in commercial waters and they make profits. It’s what they do with the profits that makes the difference.”, and I can assure you those words resonate powerfully in the coop and mutual movement in Australia.

Dame Pauline if you could step forward I would like to present you with Australia’s IYC 2012 Coin.....

End.