

PRESS RELEASE

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Overdue Recognition for Australia's Outstanding Co-op Leaders

Australia's outstanding co-operative and mutual business leaders will be recognised with the country's first national awards in leadership, launched this week as part of Australian celebrations for the United Nations International Year of Co-operatives (IYC) in 2012.

"The IYC is raising awareness about the important role of co-operatives and mutuals in many sectors of the Australian economy. The Co-operative Leadership Awards will highlight the importance of leadership to the success of our businesses," said Greg Wall, Chair of the national IYC Secretariat and Steering Committee.

"Co-operatives are people-based businesses and they are highly collaborative. It is also important to acknowledge the hard work, often over decades, of people within the sector who have shown, through their drive and determination, a commitment to upholding and spreading the values and principles of the co-operative model of business," said Mr Wall.

There are two categories of leadership awarded. A 'legacy' award recognising the contribution of a longstanding co-operative practitioner; and a youth award (the Future Leaders Award) presented to a young person (16-30 years of age) who demonstrates excellence in co-operation making them an inspirational role model for others.

"Including a youth award was very important to the IYC Steering Committee, because the future of our sector is all about good succession planning," said Mr Wall. "Young people are the future members of our businesses and we must ensure that we are identifying and mentoring youth who show a passion and commitment to co-operatives."

Nominations are now open and close on 3 September. The winners will be announced at a gala dinner on 25 October 2012, on the closing night of the National IYC 2012 Conference, in Port Macquarie NSW. Celebrity foodie, Maggie Beer AM, a major award recipient herself (2012 Senior Australian of the Year) is a guest presenter at the National Leadership Awards ceremony.

The Australian IYC 2012 Steering Committee is a voluntary board of management formed to co-ordinate a national response to the UN declared International Year of Co-operatives. Read more about the IYC and the Awards at www.australia.2012.coop

Ends.

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Media Notes

International Year of Co-operatives 2012

Ban Ki-moon, United Nations' Secretary-General has declared "Co-operatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility". The United Nations declares international years as a way of bringing attention and action on major issues. In the case of 2012, it plans to raise public awareness of how co-operatives contribute to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration.

Australia – the land of co-operators

The Top 100 co-ops, mutuals and credit unions in Australia turned over \$AUD14.7b in 2011* Australia has the third largest mutual banking sector (credit unions, mutual building societies and mutual banks) after the US and Canada.

Australian mutual banking institutions hold \$83b in assets and serve over 4.6 million Australians.

At the end of March 2011 there were 22,546,300 Australian residents*** maintaining some 23 million relationships with member-based organisations across all aspects of their private lives and business needs:

Over 5 million Australians have superannuation investments managed by an industry fund (Industry Fund website).

Around 6.5 million Australian motorists co-operate through membership of the State automobile associations. (Top 100 List)

An estimated 5 million people have chosen to have their health insurance with either a member based enterprise or Medibank (a Government Business Enterprise). (Medibank website 3.4 million; HBF WA = 951k plus smaller funds)

Some 6.5 million memberships exist in other member-based organisations. (Top 100 List)

That's more than one member-based organisation relationship per capita.

Links:

www.australia2012.coop | www.socialbusiness.coop

*According to the latest Australian Shareholding study approximately 7.26 million people, or 43% of the adult Australian population, own shares; **Co-operatives Australia Top 100 List of Co-operatives, Credit Unions and Mutuals – www.australia.coop; ***ABS announcement 29/09/2011