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## Members' Newsletter

October 2022

TERANG & DISTRICT  
CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

Established on the 2nd day of July, 1908

## GIVING TO OUR COMMUNITY

**THE CO-OP'S COMMUNITY CHEST FUND IS GIVING THREE LOCAL ORGANISATIONS THE CHANCE TO BENEFIT FROM THE GENEROSITY OF MEMBERS.**

During August and September, a special promotion has allowed supermarket shoppers to choose one of three charities to benefit from the Community Chest. Three boxes have been placed near the exit in the IGA supermarket, and customers spending more than \$50 in one transaction can donate tokens to the local good cause of their choice.

Riding for the Disabled, Terang Kindergarten Parents Group and Terang Community Park and Wetlands are the three organisations being supported. The Co-op will share the fund between the three chosen causes according to the percentage of tokens each organisation receives.

The Community Chest usually raises about \$1,800 for local organisations but this year it is expected to surpass that total. The fund is usually based on a rebate from sales of more than 350 Community Co green ticketed products. The Community Co sales will continue to accumulate until around November and the funds will be distributed early in 2023.

Co-op CEO Kevin Ford said the Community Chest was a way for the Co-op and members to unite to support a good cause. "We're all doing our bit to help our community," he said.

Next year, the Co-op plans to take it a step further by giving customers the ability to narrow down a broader field of potential recipients. "We intend to select a group of organisations that may be eligible for the Community Chest fund and then let customers decide who will be the recipients," Kevin said. "What the community wants is important to us and we want to reflect what our members are thinking."



## SUCCESS CONTINUES

**THE CO-OP'S SUCCESS HAS CONTINUED WITH ANOTHER NEAR-RECORD PROFIT IN 2021-22, BUT THE LOCAL MARKET SURGE IS SUBSIDING.**

The 2021-22 annual report revealed a \$821,835 profit from turnover of \$29 million, below the 2020-21 results which were strongly influenced by COVID-19 lockdowns. Members and the community also benefited from the success, accruing \$286,513 in rewards with \$72,721 distributed to community organisations over the past year.

Chairman Geoff Barby said the Co-op had worked hard to retain the business and customers gained during COVID-19 travel restrictions and lockdowns. "We set bold targets and our results were far better than we could have imagined," he said. "Our Co-op is only ever as strong as the support we are given from our members and community. We continue to look towards ensuring a sustainable future for our members and our Co-op communities," Geoff said.

CEO Kevin Ford said that so far, in the 2023 financial year, trading had returned to more normal levels. "It's more like business as usual; the cream has come off the top," Kevin said, attributing the reduction to the impacts of inflation, higher interest rates and the end of COVID-19 lockdowns. "During lockdowns, people had to shop close to home but now, with all the weekend sport and other activities are open, people have more opportunities to shop in other centres," he said.

The Co-op will continue to look for ways to reduce this "leakage". "We want to have all the essential items available at a competitive price that will make people want to do the bulk of their shopping in their home town," Kevin said.

*Giving back to the community since 1908*

# FEELING SAFE & HAPPY

## THE BEST THING ABOUT LIVING IN AUSTRALIA FOR CATHERINE OLIVIER IS THE FEELING OF SAFETY.

Catherine and her husband Brett moved from South Africa earlier this year and have quickly adjusted to their new environment. Brett obtained work as a dairy farm manager near Terang and was sponsored to move to Australia in January. Catherine got a matching visa and has now started work at the Co-op, undertaking two important projects.

She admits life was a bit stressful in South Africa. "We were under a lot of pressure," she said. "My husband was working two jobs, one in a town about an hour away, so from Monday to Friday he was in a different town. "We lived on a farm but, unfortunately, it's really just not very safe to live on a farm in South Africa. It was stressful for both of us. When he was working away, I was alone on the farm at night and did not feel safe."

In South Africa, Brett was working as a manager on a horse farm and at a carpet making factory while Catherine was working as a financial advisor in a town called Bethlehem. Catherine would need to study again in Australia to become a registered financial

advisor so has not pursued the same career here. However, her love of compliance has been beneficial in her Co-op tasks.

"I'm busy with two projects, bringing the constitution up-to-date with the latest legislation and to make sure the rules are still relevant to the Co-op as it stands now. We are also updating our member register to ensure accuracy of details," she said. "We are comparing our rules to the latest model rules and the legislation and making sure the references in the constitution are not difficult to understand and are presented in plain language. A lot of people consider compliance boring, but I really love it, so these projects really interest me."

Catherine and Brett had never been to Australia before making the big move in January. "We thought we would like the culture and we wanted to go to a country with English as the main language and where the weather is similar to South Africa," she said. "I'm loving it and really digging into the work. I felt like it was time for me to take a break from the financial advisor role."

The couple are on a four-year visa and intend to apply for permanent



residency. "The intention is to settle and hopefully start a family here," Catherine said. They also hope Catherine's parents and Brett's mother will be able to visit soon.

Catherine thanked the Co-op and the local community for making them feel welcome. "It is a pleasure working here," she said. "The vibe in the office is so professional and it is a real privilege to be working with such incredible colleagues." They are living on the farm near Terang and enjoying their lives. "I feel safe and that's an incredible feeling," Catherine said.

## SYSTEM OVERHAUL

### THE CO-OP IS IMPLEMENTING A MAJOR CHANGE TO ITS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) SYSTEMS WITH A NEW WAY TO BETTER CONNECT THE SUPERMARKET, AND THE HARDWARE AND RURAL BUSINESSES, AND ALL CO-OP MEMBERS.

Finance manager Damien Ryan said the Co-op Board was committed to investing in a new membership program, specifically customised for the Co-op, as part of the system overhaul, that will connect the Co-op's large number of members with the Co-op's different stores. "At the moment the supermarket and the rural and hardware systems are segregated and do not integrate well with the membership database. This database will be central to the system going forward with

automated integration from store sales systems. Membership data will be central to everything".

Damien said there would be other advantages from the new system for customers and Co-op management. "One of the main advantages is that there will be a more robust loyalty points system with immediate points recognition across all businesses," he said.

The Co-op will also benefit from being easily able to access the integrated membership database. "It will help us to record what members like and purchase so we can make better decisions based on a better understanding of our customers," Damien said. "We will have quicker access to more accurate information." The IT business system revamp will cost over \$300,000.

## RULES REVIEW

### THE OFFICIAL TERANG CO-OP CONSTITUTION RULES ARE UNDER REVIEW FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN 20 YEARS TO MAKE SURE THEY REFLECT CURRENT LEGISLATION AND THE CO-OP'S ACTIVITIES.

Finance manager Damien Ryan said the rules are an important part of the Co-op's governance and provide a framework to service the membership and operate the businesses. "They were last reviewed in 1999 and there have been legislative changes since that time that need to be reviewed," Damien said.

The review is being coordinated by Damien and project officer Catherine Olivier. They are consulting the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals and also reviewing what other co-operatives have done in recent updates. Damien said the review would ensure the Co-op was up-to-date with all legislation. Potential implications of the update include allowing technological changes in the way meetings are attended and reinforcing the need for members to be active supporters of the organisation.

Damien noted that the Board, and its Governance Committee, have oversight of this review. Any suggested changes are expected to be tabled for consideration at the 2023 annual general meeting.

# The art of living outdoors

NEW CATALOGUE  
IN STORE NOW AT  
**MITRE 10**



## CONGRATULATIONS JO

**THE CO-OP'S HARDWARE DIVISION RETAIL MANAGER JO BAILEY IS THE TOAST OF THE INDUSTRY AFTER BEING NAMED VICTORIA'S EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR AT THE HARDWARE AUSTRALIA AWARDS.**

The award was presented at a gala ceremony in Melbourne in July in recognition and acknowledgment of Jo's dedication and achievement of high standards of excellence over the past year.

The honour was a pleasant surprise for Jo, who is also celebrating 20 years with the Co-op. "I was nominated the previous year but the awards were postponed due to COVID-19," she said. "I knew there was a chance because I was one of the finalists, but you never really expect to win."

After moving from Western Australia in her early 20s, Jo has worked in various roles at the Co-op over the past 20 years. She started in the IGA supermarket before moving into administration, firstly for the supermarket and later for the overall



business. She also worked in the Rural Store for a while before moving to hardware in a sales role and later being promoted to her current role as retail manager.

In her current role, Jo is determined to give customers in Terang and Camperdown what they need.

"We've tried lots of things," she said. "We've brought in new ranges and increased options for customers. We work with Mitre 10 to make sure

we have the right range and we're competitive in the local market."

Jo's job involves a mix of management and customer liaison. "Even though I have lots of other work in the background, I do enjoy customer service and talking to people about what they're doing and how they're doing it," she said. "I enjoy bringing new things into hardware and watching the sales grow."

Working through the pandemic added to the challenges for Jo. "We had to close the doors a few times but we were open for click and collect."

The job is constantly evolving and constantly challenging, but it's paying off. "People are liking what we do," Jo said. "We get a lot of positive comments from people who recognise the positive changes we're making."

But Jo won't be resting on her laurels. "I'm always walking around thinking how we can move things around to make sure we have the best displays and the best range within our space."

TERANG MITRE 10  
STOCKS OF

ADVENTURE  
**KINGS**  
GEAR REPLENISHED  
INSTORE

**DON'T MISS OUT!**





# A TOAST FOR EBONY

## EBONY DILLON HAS MOVED UP THE RANKS SINCE JOINING THE CO-OP IN AUGUST 2020.

After starting work on the registers in the IGA supermarket, Ebony was promoted to the role of liquor supervisor the following May.

Ebony was previously an assistant manager at a shoe store in Warrnambool but when COVID hit and the store closed, she was left without work. Instead, she looked for an option closer to home in Terang that would not be subject to COVID lockdowns. "I was out of work and supermarkets never close so it was a good opportunity," she said. "My work history was in retail and hospitality and both those areas closed."

Ebony moved to Terang when she was 13 so she was well and truly familiar with the Co-op. She quickly came to love her new job and was eager to take on the additional challenge of running the liquor department. "The previous manager wanted a career change so they offered the position to me as a trial for six months." She's now passed that trial period and still enjoying the job. The position involves running the whole department, from orders, checking merchandise, organising specials, dealing with sales reps and helping customers.

"There's always something to do," Ebony said. "I wanted to be challenged and do something a bit different, but still be within the Co-op." One of her priorities has been to extend the offer to customers and to add more local wines. "We have extended our wine range quite dramatically since I took over," Ebony said.

Bottled spirits have been the most popular products since lockdown when people were not able to go out and had to mix their drinks at home. Ebony also likes an occasional drink; her favourite at the moment is Vodka seltzers, a blend of lightly sparkling water, smooth vodka, and natural lime.

# FRESH START

## STEPH GREGORY IS ENJOYING A FRESH START TO HER WORKING CAREER.

As a fresh produce assistant in the supermarket, Steph is enjoying the work, especially the interaction with customers. For the previous two and a half years, Steph had been working at a supermarket in Colac in the online department.

"It's completely different being in fruit and veg now compared to doing online fulfillment," she said. "This is much better. I can actually be there in person to enjoy the job and help customers."

The move to the Terang Co-op has also eased pressure. "I live just out of Cobden and the 40-minute drive to Colac wasn't really worth it," she said. "Here I work a full 38 hours and it's much easier to get to work."

Steph is also enjoying the atmosphere and philosophy of



the Co-op. "I'd sooner work with a smaller entity rather than a large corporation," she said. "I needed to step back and find something new and this is perfect. I love it here."

Her job involves keeping the fresh produce section full and fresh and taking care of orders and packing. "There's a lot of talking to customers about what they want, but I also love just talking to them about their day," Steph said. Out of work hours, Steph enjoys spending time with her three-year-old daughter Adaline.

# LOCAL SUPPLIER PROFILE

## BERNADETTE AND BARRY WURLOD ARE THE FOUNDERS AND OWNERS OF KEAYANG MAAR VINEYARD, ONE OF A GROWING NUMBER OF REGIONAL WINERIES NOW FEATURING IN THE CO-OP'S LIQUOR DEPARTMENT.

They are the second generation on the family dairy farm where Barry grew up at Dixie south of Terang.

After retiring from dairy farming activities in 2005, the Wurlods developed an interest in grape and wine growing while travelling through Europe. Their experiment in growing grapes at home turned into a hobby and, in 2019, they welcomed their son Jerram and daughter-in-law Caitlin home to help them take the next step of

producing their wine commercially and opening the cellar door.

When they built their new home about 12 years ago to take advantage of the views, they retained enough land separate to the dairy operations just in case they wanted to try something different.

They landscaped the gardens and put grapevines in and they were so successful that Bernadette and Barry decided to make wine.

The vineyard is named Keayang Maar as the farm is on part of the original Keayang Station land and overlooks a low-lying volcanic crater or maar. Keayang Maar produces a variety of red and white wines.

# ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW

## THE IGA SUPERMARKET IS CONSTANTLY EVOLVING AND INTRODUCING NEW ITEMS THAT APPEAL TO CUSTOMERS.

Two of the latest additions have links to our region and have been proving to be particularly popular.

The supermarket is now stocking Clarke's Pies & Bakery goods. Clarke's Pies have

been a local tradition since 1949 when the Mortlake family owned and operated business started.

The supermarket is now also stocking the Otway Pasta Company's range of pasta and pasta sauces. The fresh range can be found in the dairy fridge and the dried range, centre stage, at the front of the shop.

# STORE ASSISTANTS BRING EXPERIENCE

## THE RURAL STORE'S MOST RECENT RECRUITS BRING DIVERSE BUSINESS EXPERIENCE TO THEIR POSITIONS.

Rural sales and warehouse assistant John Meade was formerly a plasterer and dairy farmer while sales assistant Shelly Gilbert ran her own cleaning business.

John started a casual position last November before moving into a permanent full-time role.

For John, the career change was a matter of necessity after he sustained a serious football injury. The former Panmure Football Club player dislocated his wrist during a practice game against Caramut that not only ended his football career, it limited his working options. "I was plastering and milking cows at the time but after I dislocated my wrist playing football, they told me not to do any repetitive work so I had to look for something new," he said.

John's wrist is still lacking full movement but he has no problem carrying out his duties in the Rural Store where he takes



care of the stock and customers using the drive-through service.

"My parents owned a farm in Garvoc so I know what local farmers need and I enjoy talking with them," he said. "It's good to get to see different people every day."

Shelly is now working five days a week in the Rural Store and also enjoys interacting with customers.

While keeping busy Shelly is glad she made the move. "It's nice to be able to help people," she said.

# STUDY ON THE MENU

## WHEN CAITLYN SCHRODER TAKES A BREAK FROM HER DUTIES IN THE IGA SUPERMARKET DELI, SHE HAS PLENTY TO FILL IN HER TIME.

After serving, slicing meat and helping with the cooked lunches during her full-time Co-op job, she's also completing her Master's degree.

It's a busy life, but Caitlyn is managing to balance the competing interests. In fact, life has become a bit easier compared to her last job where she did the night shift for a year at the Camperdown Roadhouse, working from 9pm-5am. "I like my hours now from 7am till 3.30pm. It's nice to finish early after doing night shifts."



Before moving to the region with her parents last year, Caitlyn lived in New South Wales where she worked in a café while completing five years of university study, emerging with a double degree in creative writing and English literature.

She is now doing her Master's in Writing and English Literature online at Deakin University. Her study was inspired by her love of reading and she has long-term plans to become a high school teacher, with the potential to do a PhD and move up to university lecturing. "Basically, the two days I have off I do uni study but that's all right, I enjoy doing it," she said.

In the meantime, she's enjoying getting to know people in her new home and her Co-op job is an ideal starting place. "It's a nice mix doing the work here and the study," she said. "I've met lots of lovely people here."

# COVID CHALLENGES

## THE THREAT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS MIGHT BE OVER, BUT THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO IMPACT ON THE CO-OP'S OPERATIONS.

Customers will notice there are still occasional stock shortages, which are usually caused by problems in the supply system. "We're doing the best we can, but like every retail outlet, we are subjected to the availability of certain products from our suppliers," CEO Kevin Ford said.

"Things are improving, but there are still challenges and we ask customers to be understanding and patient," he added.

COVID-19 and other winter bugs have also impacted on staff, as has the nation-wide shortage of experienced workers in many fields. Many staff

members have been forced into isolation for seven days after contracting COVID-19 and the Co-op regularly has vacancies to fill across all departments.

"We have always been able to operate, but the shortage of labour is affecting service opportunities," Kevin said. "It is difficult for every business to get people and we are not immune from that."

In addition to its regular advertising and social media posts, the Co-op has turned to recruitment agencies for help. "They are telling us what we already know – that it's difficult to get people," Kevin said. The Co-op also attended the Warrnambool Jobs Fair which proved to be a productive venture leading to the recruitment of two new staff members.

# MORE LUNCH OPTIONS

## A NEW DEEP FRYER WILL ADD TO THE TASTE SENSATIONS ON OFFER IN THE IGA SUPERMARKET DELI.

Although the menu is yet to be finalised and will likely change from day-to-day, supermarket manager Paul Bailey said the deep fryer would expand the daily hot box offer. "At the moment we cook a lot in the oven, having it fried will give a different and

crispy taste option, letting us expand our range and offer more variety for customers," Paul said. "A lot of IGA supermarkets have been putting them in and they are doing quite well."

A new bench is being built to house the deep fryer in the deli and the new offer is expected to start in mid-October.

# CEO RECRUITMENT STARTS

**THE CO-OP HAS STARTED THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR A NEW CEO WITH KEVIN FORD PLANNING TO RETIRE IN MID-2023.**

Kevin has informed the Board that he plans to retire by the end of May, taking his service to over six years.

Co-op Board chair Geoff Barby said Kevin would be missed but it was pleasing he had given long notice to allow the Co-op to find a suitable replacement. "We're hoping to have someone appointed by early next year to allow time for the new CEO to work with Kevin to ensure a smooth transition," Geoff said. "We're well into the process of determining the skills mix needed for the new CEO and we're fairly encouraged that we should have a good pool of candidates to choose from. The Terang Co-op is a very attractive business and it's doing very well at the moment, so we expect there will be a lot of good applicants."

Geoff said that Kevin was leaving with the Co-op in a strong and stable position. "Under Kevin, it has been about stabilising and setting ourselves up for the future," he said. "Kevin has done an outstanding job and will be continuing to drive the business until his retirement. He's retiring, otherwise we wouldn't be letting him go."

Geoff said Kevin had successfully steered the business through the turmoil of the pandemic. "He set the business up for a challenge we didn't know was coming in the form of COVID-19," he said. "His leadership helped us to get through COVID really well and not suffer like some other businesses did during that time. The way that he did that was by developing staff. One of the hallmarks of his time as CEO has been his ability to build a strong, skilled staff and to work with our suppliers for the betterment of the members."

The Co-op Board will work with the same consultant who helped to recruit Kevin. "We're working with the consultant to take us through the process of developing the job criteria and the skills we want the new CEO to have," Geoff said.



Geoff said the Co-op was looking forward to exciting times. "We're in a good position to increase and change our business. There are changes coming up across Terang retail that we're very excited about, with other business opportunities around Terang and the way we provide services to our members. We're gearing up to meet those challenges."

Kevin will reflect on his time as CEO in a future edition of this newsletter.

## RURAL REVIEW

**THE CO-OP IS ABOUT TO START A MAJOR REVIEW OF THE RURAL STORE AND WANTS YOUR INPUT.**

A process is being developed to research the needs of Rural Store customers to make sure they are getting what they need when they need it. CEO Kevin Ford says the store

continues to fulfil a vital role in the community but it could do better. "The feedback we get from some farmers is that we don't have the right stock at the right price at the right time for them," Kevin said. "We want to make sure that we address all those issues and the best way to do that is to hear it directly from customers."

A sub-committee of the Board is working with consultants to develop a survey which is expected to be available before Christmas. "We're looking for ways to grow the business and to better engage members," Kevin said. "By surveying the needs of customers, we should be able to know in advance what they need and when."

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