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Members' Newsletter

June 2023

TERANG & DISTRICT
CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

Established on the 2nd day of July, 1908

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

THE CO-OP IS ON TRACK TO REPORT ANOTHER STELLAR FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED FEBRUARY 28TH 2023.

While the figures await publication in the Annual Report, the preliminary results suggest a profit in the vicinity of \$1 million which compares favourably with the previous two financial years.

CEO Kevin Ford said the result reflected the success of improvements adopted across all businesses. "The preliminary result has exceeded our expectations and we thank our members and customers for their continued support, and our staff for their dedication in delivering the goods and services that local people need," he said.

The biggest improvements have been in the Mitre 10 businesses in Camperdown and Terang. For the first time, the combined profits of the Mitre 10 businesses exceeded the profit of the IGA supermarket, although the supermarket continued to

return an impressive result.

"Until a few years ago, the hardware businesses were profitable but not performing up to their benchmarks, but they now are reaching those marks," Kevin said. "That is thanks to better business controls and the management efforts of Michael Boote and Jo Bailey."

The formal financial results for the 2022-23 financial year will be published in the Co-op's Annual Report and announced at the Co-op's annual general meeting scheduled to be held on 29 June 2023. All members of the Co-op are welcome to attend the annual general meeting. Further details regarding the AGM will be displayed in the Co-op's stores in due course.

Kevin added that as a community organisation, surpluses would be reinvested into the businesses of the Co-operative which ultimately exists for the benefit and convenience of its members and community.

FOCUS ON RURAL SERVICES

A SERIES OF FOCUS GROUPS WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO HELP GUIDE THE FUTURE OF THE RURAL STORE.

This follows a survey of The Rural Store customers which sought to improve insight into the needs and preferences of its customers. The survey elicited a strong response and revealed many positive ideas and constructive suggestions, but more specific details are needed.

CEO Kevin Ford said focus groups would help to provide more guidance before any changes were made. "The survey results have been evaluated and shared with management and the Board and from there we intend to run focus groups to get more specific information," he said.

Kevin and Board Chair Geoff Barby thanked everyone who responded to the survey. "We were really pleased with the input which has set the scene for taking the next steps in further developing The Rural Store to meet the needs of customers," Geoff said.

Kevin said that they were very happy with the number of responses to the survey. "The vast majority were very positive with constructive ideas, and customers genuinely appreciate the business," Kevin said.

The Co-op plans to establish two or three focus groups that will discuss specific ideas for improving the store. Each focus group will have 8 to 10 participants involving customers, members of the Co-op and former customers.

In closing, Geoff said that the new CEO would be involved in any major decisions in relation to the store's future.

COMMUNITY GIVE BACK

THE CO-OP'S COMMUNITY GIVE BACK PROMOTION THAT WAS HELD IN THE IGA SUPERMARKET HAS GIVEN THREE LOCAL GROUPS A BOOST.

A special promotion that was held late last year allowed shoppers to nominate one of three charities to benefit from the promotion.

Three boxes were placed near the exit in the IGA supermarket, and customers spending more than \$50 in one transaction could donate tokens to the local good cause of their choice.

The resulting cheques were presented to representatives from the three chosen organisations:

RDA Glenormiston Branch (\$1,650),
Terang Wetlands Committee (\$1,058),
and Terang Childrens Centre Parents Group (\$1,523).



Chair of the Co-op Board Geoff Barby and CEO Kevin Ford are pictured presenting the highest cheque to the representatives of RDA Glenormiston Branch.

Giving back to the community since 1908



DELI DELIGHTS

WITH OVER 25 YEARS WITH THE CO-OP, LINDA FUGE HAS COME TO KNOW VIRTUALLY EVERYONE IN THE TERANG DISTRICT.

Her new role as IGA deli supervisor gives her plenty of opportunities to continue developing those friendships.

"The interaction with customers is the best part of the job for me," Linda says. "Being here so long, I know

everybody on a first-name basis and love having a chat with them."

Linda started her Co-op career in the deli 25 years ago. She later worked on the registers and ran the fruit and vegetable department before taking maternity leave.

She came back to the store as a casual "doing a bit of everything" after having children but is now settling into her new permanent role as deli supervisor.

"Deli is my passion because it's something you can make look pretty," she said.

Her job involves all the ordering, fitting out the cases, bringing in new products, and, of course, keeping customers happy.

The deli is well stocked with a large variety of items and Linda is constantly on the lookout for new products. "Whatever new product is available, we'll give it a try," she said.

"Every day in our bain marie we offer different hot foods and lunch packs. We have something for everybody."

GIVING BACK TO MEMBERS

With the Terang & District Co-operative having reported a good set of financial results for the financial year ended February 28th 2023, the Board of Directors has decided to distribute a portion of the profits back to active members, based on their shareholding with the Co-op.

The members' bonus is a gratuity or gift on each active member's shareholding. All shareholders who purchased goods and/or services from the Co-op's stores for the 2022-23 financial year will be eligible to receive the bonus which is paid in the form of loyalty reward points.

Based on the profit generated, management recommended that a bonus to the value of 20 cents per share be declared. A member with a standard shareholding of 25 shares would receive 500 points (worth \$5) on their 25 shares.

As there are over 3,000 shareholders, the total bonus to be distributed amounts to a significant outlay for the Co-operative. The undertaking to distribute a bonus therefore requires sufficient profitability.

Non-member customers of the Terang IGA+ Liquor store, The Rural Store and/or the Mitre10 stores in Terang and Camperdown are encouraged to apply for membership with the Terang and District Co-operative Limited. Applications can be obtained from any of the aforementioned stores (or online at terangcoop.com.au) and the minimum required shareholding for membership is 25 shares with a par value of \$2 each. A shareholding costs \$50 in cash, or may also be purchased in the form of 5000 points which can be accumulated by shopping at any of the retail outlets mentioned above.

NEW CEO TO BE CONFIRMED

THE CO-OP'S NEW CEO IS EXPECTED TO BE CONFIRMED SOON AFTER A SUCCESSFUL NATION-WIDE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN.

Current CEO Kevin Ford announced late last year that he would be retiring in mid-2023. He now expects to remain in the role for a few more months as the appointment of his successor is finalised. This arrangement will support a smoother transition, given the challenges of a major I.T. systems upgrade.

Board chair Geoff Barby said Kevin's flexibility had been greatly appreciated.

"We expect to finalise the appointment and know the new CEO's starting date within the next few weeks," he said.

"We are really excited about what the future holds for the Co-op and we are confident the new CEO will be the right person to lead us to a positive future."

The Board had shortlisted four candidates and is in the process of making an offer.

"It may take some time for the new CEO to be in a position to move to Terang so we will have a changeover plan to make sure it is a smooth process," Geoff said.

"We really appreciate Kevin agreeing to stay on to allow this to happen. The Co-op is in a very strong position and it's pleasing that Kevin can continue to steer us forward."

A date for the changeover has yet to be finalised.

From Kevin's perspective, delaying retirement for a few months isn't a big issue. "I'm happy to stay on and continue working with the Board when the new appointment is finalised," he said.

"Things are going well for the Co-operative and we all want to make sure it's a smooth transition."

Kevin has been with the Co-op for more than six years and will reflect on his time as CEO in a future edition of this newsletter.

COLOURING IN FOR MUM!

Chloe and Finley were the winners of our Mother's Day colouring-in competition. Each won a gift hamper for their Mums. Many beautiful entries were received, and we thank our youngsters for showing such wonderful support! We hope all Mums had a very special day.





THE GOOD LIFE

CAROLYN CVEK HAS LIVED MOST OF HER LIFE IN MELBOURNE. SHE HAS MORE RECENTLY DISCOVERED THE GOOD LIFE IN COUNTRY VICTORIA.

The Co-op's new administrative assistant has a long history of accounting work in Melbourne. However, Carolyn and husband Steve always had an inkling for country life and owned a bush block for many years.

The COVID pandemic was enough to convince them that it was time to leave

the city, and she's glad the tree-change has worked out so well.

After completing her accounting degree at Monash University, Carolyn worked in various accounting and bookkeeping roles with companies such as Safeway, Brivis and RACV.

The family had a stint in Queensland before returning to Melbourne to raise son Matthew, but the love of the country never left.

"We've had bush blocks for a few years and always wanted to get out of Melbourne," Carolyn said. "When COVID hit, it was unbearable. When our son finished his science degree, we knew we had to make the move, even though everyone was doing the same thing so prices went nuts."

They looked all over Victoria for their dream home and came across a house in Timboon on a single acre block across from the golf course.

"As soon as we saw it, we knew it was the one," Carolyn said.

"It has a beautiful view and we've even had a koala sitting on the fence post. Our dog has found his inner farm dog and the cats have settled in."

"We had the bush block but this is the first time we've lived in the country," Carolyn said. "We love it. It's so real and the people are so friendly and helpful."

After moving in July 2022, Steve has taken a hiatus from his construction management work while Matthew continues to live in Melbourne.

Carolyn was keen to return to the workforce and joined the Co-op in February.

Her part-time administrative assistant role mainly covers accounts payable, but she also helps with member points and a few other functions.

"It takes 25 minutes of traffic-free travel to get here and it's great to work for a co-operative that has a community feel about it," Carolyn said. "We're loving life here!"

DELIVERY SERVICE FEE

HOME DELIVERY HAS LONG BEEN A POPULAR AND IMPORTANT PART OF THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY THE CO-OP'S IGA SUPERMARKET.

Due to rising costs, a charge for this service was introduced from March 20th, along with other improvements that will streamline the process and improve services.

The fee will be waived for existing customers for the first six months, but new customers will have to pay the fee.

IGA Supermarket manager Paul Bailey said the Co-op would keep costs as low as possible for residents but that a fee was needed to cover the associated expenses.

"Other supermarkets have been charging for home delivery for many years and we needed to introduce a fee to cover the increasing costs of wages and fuel," Paul said.

"We understand that this will have an impact on people and so we've allowed a six-month delay for all existing customers, but it is something that was needed.

"Upon expiry of the 6-month free delivery period, we will review delivery fee prices in the market and our fee will be based on a competitive market price at such time."

The revamped home delivery and click & collect services have been extended from five to seven days a week. Turnaround times have been changed and orders placed before 10am on a week day are now available for same day delivery or collection. Orders placed by 5pm on weekends can be delivered the following afternoon.

The current ordering method for existing customers is allowed, although online ordering is preferred.

Deliveries will use boxes where possible, but a 15-cent fee will be charged if plastic bags are needed.

Customers can continue to use the click & collect service at no additional charge.

Deliveries are made within a 50-kilometre radius of Terang, though deliveries beyond such distance may be done at an additional charge.

Paul Hay continues to provide the home delivery service.

To order online, go to <https://terang.myfoodlink.com>

I.T. UPDATE

THE TERANG & DISTRICT CO-OPERATIVE IS TRANSITIONING TO A NEW SOFTWARE SYSTEM. THE INSTALLATION IS UNDERWAY AND THE \$300,000 UPGRADE WILL IMPROVE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SUPERMARKET, HARDWARE AND RURAL BUSINESSES.

While the IGA supermarket will continue to operate from a different I.T system, a new connection is in development so that information can be shared across all businesses.

The new membership program is being specifically customised for the Co-op and will connect all existing point of sale operations.

Board Chair Geoff Barby said outgoing CEO Kevin Ford had been asked to stay on to oversee the software and I.T change. "It's a major project and even if the new CEO starts prior to its implementation, Kevin has agreed to continue to oversee the finalisation of such a significant upgrade," Geoff said.

"That's really good news because it is a major change and improvement."

The Board has also approved the upgrade of all the Co-op's servers, which are about eight years old, to support the new setup.

"It will be easier and quicker for staff," Geoff added.

We therefore urge members of the community to be mindful of the change as delays can be expected while staff are being trained on the new system. Please be assured we are doing our best!

Project management indicates that our new systems will start to "go live" in the last week of June.

LUKE'S EXPERIENCE PAYS OFF

LUKE VAN RIJTHOVEN WANTED TO PUT HIS EXPERIENCE TO GOOD USE WHEN HE JOINED THE TEAM AT THE RURAL STORE.



Luke has a decade's experience in rural merchandising and he has a life-long connection with the land and agriculture. His grandfather migrated to Australia from Holland and settled in the Orbest area before his father later moved to Timboon.

As a teenager Luke developed a huge interest in trucks and did a school-based apprenticeship as a diesel mechanic. "The economy wasn't good at the time and no-one was looking for an apprentice diesel mechanic," he said. "I was looking for a job and Parlours at Simpson were looking for a yard hand, so that got my foot in the door of this industry and it grew from there."

Luke later took on a position at Landmark Timboon, which also included relief truck driving on top of yard and store work. "From there my knowledge grew and grew," he said. "I had a huge interest in seed and chemicals. I couldn't find a local agronomy course but I picked up a lot of hands-on and practical knowledge along the way."

Landmark changed its name to Nutrien and Luke spent more than nine years with the company.

Luke joined The Rural Store in late 2022 as a senior sales consultant. "When this opportunity came up, I thought it was a good opportunity to put my knowledge that I've gained over the years to good use."

His role mostly involves helping customers but he also contributes with sourcing stock and with store layout and deliveries when needed.

"I'm loving it," he said.

It has been a big year for Luke. He was married to Jessica in March and they're enjoying raising their 15-month-old son, Charles.



CANDLES FOR A GOOD CAUSE

WHEN YOU BUY A KENSHI CANDLE FROM THE CO-OP'S MITRE 10 HARDWARE STORES, NOT ONLY ARE YOU GETTING A GREAT PRODUCT... YOU'RE ALSO SUPPORTING A GOOD CAUSE!

Kenshi is a proud member of the Make A Difference Community: a group of like-minded businesses that are dedicated to doing more by using profits to fund pasta and eradicate hunger in Australia.

Every candle sold funds 3Kg of pasta which makes 12 meals for homeless people and families in need.

A Kenshi candle is always hand-poured and contains the highest-grade natural soy wax and essential oils along with cotton wicks. The aroma lasts to the very last minute because it adds an average of 9% of essential oils to the wax, roughly double the big brands.

SETTING THE BENCHMARK

THE RURAL STORE HAS AN EXCITING NEW PRODUCT RANGE FROM BENCHMARK HORSE FEEDS.

Benchmark Perfect Mash has been designed to provide a balanced equine diet with high levels of essential nutrients, without relying on grains and grain bi-products. Highly palatable, Benchmark Perfect Mash is rich in natural antioxidants, amino acids, vitamins, minerals and electrolytes.



WINTER WARMTH

The Co-op's Mitre 10 stores in Terang and Camperdown stock a range of Jindara Woodheating heaters and fireboxes and can also order any item that suits your needs.

All Jindara fireboxes are guaranteed to last at least 10 years.

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www.terangcoop.com.au

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MIGHTY HELPFUL
MITRE 10