

media release



For immediate release: 31 October 2012

Co-ops serve up leadership feast with Australia's best known foodie

National awards recognising outstanding leadership in the field of co-operative business development were presented at a gala dinner fronted by celebrity cook Maggie Beer in Port Macquarie last Thursday 25 October. The awards were the highlight of a two-day national conference celebrating the role of co-operatives in the Australian economy capping off the United Nations declared International Year of Co-operatives.

Joyce Clague MBE, a prominent leader in Indigenous co-operatives for more than half a century was awarded the 2012 Leadership Ambassador Award for outstanding contribution to the advancement of Indigenous peoples' lives using the co-operative model.

In the mid-70s, an appointment by former NSW Minister for Co-operatives, Syd Enfield, to advise on Aboriginal co-operatives, was endorsed by then Premier Neville Wran. She is patron of Woolitji Co-operative in NSW which she helped form in 1976.

Retired Labour MP, academic and author, Dr Race Mathews, received the 2012 Lasting Legacy Award in recognition of his intellectual leadership and sustained advocacy for the co-operative movement.

Receiving his award, Dr Mathews said co-operatives are the work of many and praised the other leaders in the sector with whom, he said, "I share this award".

In the youth category, Steven Lynch, the National Community Banking Manager of Australia's first customer owned bank, bank**mecu**, credited his employer of the past decade for providing the environment to thrive as a young leader. Lynch received the 2012 Future leaders Award. He will front the co-operative sector's national youth campaign in 2013.

Also recognised for their outstanding work in the Future Leaders category were Kristy Walters, a director of Friends of the Earth Co-operative in Brisbane, and Sarah Taylor, founder of White Circles Global Trading, a social enterprise that markets the craft products of remotely located Nepalese women.

"I'm passionate about food democracy and I work within a co-operative model because it values everyone's opinion equally," explained Walters after the awards.

Shirley Faram, Chairperson of South East Housing Co-operative in Victoria, received a highly Commended Certificate for outstanding leadership in the field of co-operatively managed affordable housing over 25 years. Faram credits the co-operative structure as the catalyst for a lifelong journey from social housing tenant to chairing the largest rental housing co-operative in Victoria.

Maggie Beer praised her local consumer co-op, the Community Co-operative Store in the Barossa Valley. The co-operative established in 1945 runs a successful commercial precinct including its famous supermarket that supplies locally produced foods.



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Awards judge, Cheryl Kernot, Director of Social Business at the Centre for Social Impact, said the high calibre of all the nominees had made the task of deciding on the final recipients particularly tough, but it demonstrated the depth of talent and skill in the sector.

Lawyer and co-operative legal specialist, Tony Addison and Dr. Jo Barraket, Queensland University of Technology, were also judges of the Awards.

The Future Leaders Award was supported The University Co-operative Bookshop.

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For more information on the National Co-operative Awards visit: www.australia2012.coop/awards

For more information on the National Co-operatives Conference visit: www.iyconference.com.au

MEDIA CONTACT: Melina Morrison 0410 902 656 melina.morrison@socialbusiness.coop

Full list of award winners:

Future Leaders Award

Steven Lynch, bankmecu: Future Leader of the Year Award

Sarah Taylor, White Circles Global Trading: Highly commended certificate

Kristy Walters, Friends of the Earth Brisbane: Highly commended certificate

Co-operative Legacy Award

Dr Race Mathews, former politician and author: Lasting Legacy Award

Joyce Clague MBE, Woolitji Co-operative: Leadership Ambassador Award

Shirley Faram, South East Housing Co-operative: Highly Commended Certificate

Australia – the land of co-operators

Australia has 1600 co-operatives and 108 mutual banking institutions

Industries with a co-operative presence in Australia include agriculture, consumer goods, financial services, purchasing and marketing, manufacture, automotive, childcare, renewable energy, housing, healthcare, transport, insurance and education

The top 100 co-ops, mutuals and credit unions in Australia turned over \$17.8 billion in 2012*

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

*Co-operatives Australia Top 100 List of Co-operatives, Credit Unions and Mutuals: www.australia.coop

International Year of Co-operatives 2012 - <http://social.un.org/coopsyear/>

