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A tribute to cooperative vision and guidance

The Board of ACCORD would like to thank **Uri Windt**, Chairman from April 2001 to February 2005, for his vision and guidance over the years. Uri made an outstanding contribution to the development of ACCORD's reputation as Australia's leading research and development centre. He also strengthened the centre's links in the cooperative arena worldwide.

Uri dedicated his time to ACCORD in a voluntary capacity and his work was greatly appreciated. We wish him well in his future endeavours and hope that he continues his important work in the sector.

Paul Fitzgerald, General Manager/Deputy Director, since August 2003, resigned in January 2005 due to illness. We thank him for his contribution towards developing a national focus for ACCORD, and stronger industry driven research. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Associate Professor and Co-director of ACCORD, **Dr Judy Johnston** is currently managing the centre.

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Welcoming cooperators from Brazil



*Lee Wilson of ACCORD
and Ronaldo Ernesto
Scucato*

ACCORD welcomed a delegation of co-operative leaders from the Organisation of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB) during the week commencing 20 February 2005.

Federation President, Mr Ronaldo Ernesto Scucato, and Vice-president Mr Celso Luiz Claro de Oliveira, lead a 19 member study tour from the Brazilian cities of Minas Gerais, São Paulo, and Goiás.

Co-operative leadership programs incorporating study tours and exchanges are an important part of professional development in the cooperative sector in Brazil. The group's primary objective was to look at new ways of doing things in the dairy industry in Australia and to exchange ideas on best practice with their Australian counterparts.

The tour included visits to dairy farms and meetings with professionals in the dairy industry in Melbourne and Sydney.

Robert Pettit, Dairy Australia, coordinated the program in Victoria. And a dinner was hosted by and Allan Burgess, Chairman Australian Dairy Industry Council and President Australian Dairy Farmers.

- Farm visit organised by Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co Ltd, and Dairy Australia included generic farm programs. Genetics, milk quality and other farm issues were main topics of discussion.
- A visit was organised to the Department of Primary Industry's (DPI) Research Institute, Ellinbank, followed by a visit to a supermarket at Cranbourne.
- In Sydney the group attended a seminar hosted by ACCORD at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).
[View the seminar program](#) (PDF 57KB).



*Priscilla Magalhães
Gomes Lins and Andréa
Mageste Damazio at
the ACCORD seminar*

- Keith Rosskelly organised a visit to Dairy Farmers Factory, Hexham in the Hunter valley, NSW
- Delegates attended a reception hosted by Ms Christina Talaco, President of the Brazilian Chamber of Commerce.

The Organisation of Brazilian Cooperatives (OCB) has 5.7 million members and the sector contributes 6% of GDP. Their website can be found at: <http://www.ocb.org.br> and is in Portuguese.

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Commentary

Perspective on UK social enterprise

Roger Spear, CRU, OPEN UNIVERSITY, UK says that the British government's bias towards small and medium size social enterprise could miss opportunities for a broader based reform of public service delivery.

"There is a strong orientation in UK policy support for social enterprise towards the community level. This raises questions about the place of larger co-operatives and larger voluntary organisations that are carrying out social enterprise activities through public service contracts."



*Roger Spear, CRU,
Open University, UK*

Read Roger Spear's Full paper - [Perspective on UK Social Enterprise](#) (PDF 25KB)

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An Exploration of Contemporary Meanings of Social Enterprise

Leo Bartlett from the Australasian Institute for Social Entrepreneurship explores some recent understandings of the meanings of social enterprise.

"While the topic appears jaded and well-worn as Charles King suggests, it needs addressing constantly if only to remind social entrepreneurs that the intrinsic attributes or elements in their understanding of the word in practice and in operational terms are themselves in a constant state of change; and that they need to continually self-evaluate their social enterprises and practices if they are to achieve their social goals and to effect real and not just nominal change in their enterprise projects."

Read Leo Bartlett's Full paper - [An Exploration of Contemporary Meanings of Social Enterprise](#) (PDF 172KB)

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ACCORD State of the Sector Report

ACCORD launches report into the co-operative sector

ACCORD's research into the developments and changes within the co-operative sector in New South Wales, during the period 1990 to 2003, has resulted in the publication of two comprehensive State of the Sector reports.

ACCORD's Senior Research Fellow, Andrew Passey writes, "In Australia, people have used co-operative organisational structures to achieve many business and social objectives across a wide range of activities. They provide a means of pooling resources to reach a common goal for various groups of people."

**"In Australia, people have used co-operative organisational structures to achieve many business and social objectives across a wide range of activities. They provide a means of pooling resources to reach a common goal for various groups of people."
Andrew Passey, Senior Research Fellow, ACCORD**

Read the full [The State of the Co-operative Sector in NSW 2003](#) report (PDF 109KB).

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Co-operative Development and Mutuality

Innovation and scope for Employee buyout

acirrt and ACCORD co-hosted a seminar to explore options for Employee and Community Buyout in Australia. The Workshop was held on March 2 at the School of Business, University of Sydney.

The workshop was aimed at establishing an "Employee Buyouts Reference Group" along the lines of the "Delivering Employee Buyouts Group in the UK" to drive the EBO/employee succession agenda and to assist in setting up support services to facilitate that agenda.



Professor Ron Callus (acirrt) and Suzanne Henderson (ACCORD) opened the seminar and discussed cooperative approaches to succession planning, the lack of support within government and political circles, and the need to create greater awareness across all sectors.

Anthony Jensen (acirrt) gave a [presentation on the operation, activities and results of the Delivering Employee Buyouts Group in the UK](#) (PDF 108KB), which was formed in 2003.

Read a [summary of the presentations and future directions](#).

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Cooperative Profiles

Not a Furphy at all

While on the theme of EBOs and succession planning... Furphy's and Sons Pty Ltd is the well known "oldest family owned company in Australia" based in Shepparton, Victoria. They are makers of Furphy's water tanks and also the source of the term "furphy". The company has had "succession" over five generations, but has also been able to build a substantial "all employee" ownership stake for their 100+ employees in the business.



A Recent Furphy Engineering Project

The board of Directors is made up entirely of employees who have "come through the ranks". Apart from one non executive director.

See <http://www.furphys.com.au> for more about The Furphys' and on [the Furphy employee share ownership program](#).

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Good practice in Real Estate gets results

<http://www.eac.com.au>

Estate Agents Co-operative Ltd (EAC) was established in April 1960 to give members access to services that they would not have been able to afford individually. The services envisaged by the Co operative included purchasing premises in which to conduct public auctions; establish a combined listing bureaux of properties for sale, rent/lease or investment; and provide training for staff and members to raise the standard of service to clients.



"EAC has come along long way since we began in the 60's", says David Crombie, Technology and Development Manager. "Our members benefit from a wide range of

services including advisory services on office procedures, property management, and valuation. We also offer a listing management and marketing service that covers residential, rural and commercial property for sale as well as residential, holiday and commercial property for lease."



*The Realtor, EAC
Publication*

The co-op has an impressive range of publications produced in-house including ***The Realtor*** and **Homebuyer guides** covering every major centre from the far North Coast to Sydney and from the Blue Mountains to Canberra.

In 1996 EAC boasted the largest Internet site of its type in Australia. "Our focus is on keeping up with the very latest in electronic and information technology. Last year we were the second organisation in the world to release the latest in real estate technology in conjunction with WyldFyre Technologies from the USA", says David. "Our Red Square software continues to lead the market in the supply of the most accurate and up-to-date sales data available and along with the release of Red Square 6 we introduced Street Maps, the most advanced mapping product available to the real estate industry in Australia."

EAC hosts some 300+ websites for its members including a number of independent real estate groups. It is currently working on a range of new services for its members including a comprehensive property statics reporting service, electronic real estate forms and Pocket PC solutions. A quality assurance program containing best practice procedures, occupational health & safety and risk management will ensure compliance with the requirements of the new Act, hopefully leading to a reduction in insurance premiums for members.



Over the last few years the Board and management of the EAC have recognised the need to diversify from a purely multiple listing bureau to an organisation that provides a diverse range of goods and services to its members. Today the range of goods and services on offer includes state of the art technology services, publishing/printing capabilities, real estate publications, stationary, education, insurance products and a range of other member benefits.

EAC has around 400 members, approximately 80 employees, and has a total turnover in excess of \$9.5 million.

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Co-operative Education

In Victoria

The Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd is working with the [Co-operative College in the UK](#) to develop a co-operative education program.

Co-operative education throughout Australia has been ad hoc and yet co-operative education should underpin the formation and development of co-operatives. Established in 1919, the college is a significant educational institution, recognised throughout the world as a centre of excellence for co-operative learning. It is currently working with the European Union and the UK Government.



From Australia.Coop Newsletter March 2005

<http://www.australia.coop>

australia.coop is published for the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd.

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Young Co-Operatives and Fairtrade

Young Co-Operatives is a practical introduction to fair trade and co-operatives working for young people. It helps children and young people aged 13-18 to set up and run their own businesses. The Learning Curve programme on BBC R4 considers how useful these schemes are and whether fair trade has a place in schools.

Journalist Libby Purves is joined by Kevin McGrother, the Young Co-Operatives National Co-ordinator and Aimee Pitcher, a 15 year old, who takes part in a Young Co-Operatives group at her school. Also taking part in the discussion is Felicity Smith, a Business Studies teacher at the Heritage School in Chester-le-Street, where Aimee is a pupil.

Listen to the full programme:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/learningcurve_20050308.shtml

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Co-operative Learning Centre

An exciting new cooperative service is about to commence. The Co-operative Learning Centre (CLC) is a collaborative online resource for co-operatives and cooperative researchers worldwide. It grew out of discussions within the International Co-operative Alliance, particularly the Human Resource Committee, chaired by Dr. Yehudah Paz.



The service has been developed collaboratively by the ICA, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the British Columbia Institute for Cooperative Studies (BCICS). BCICS is the ICA's designated project manager. The service has benefited from the advice of numerous individuals and

organisations, notably the Co-operative College of the United Kingdom.

BCICS is an institute at the University of Victoria, Canada dedicated to research, learning and teaching about co-operative thought and practice.

For details about the CLC see ICA weekly digest 38

<http://www.coop.org/ica/digest/38-digest.pdf>

Visit the prototype

<http://www.learningcentre.coop/>

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The Co-operative Advantage

Co-ops and mutuals fight on

By Jonathan Michie, from The Guardian, Friday March 18, 2005

"It would be easy to assume that cooperatives and mutuals - businesses owned by their customers - were on their last legs. The Co-op used to be one of Britain's great retail stores but lost out to the new supermarket chains from the 1960s onwards. The mutual sector remained strong because generations of homeowners used building societies for mortgages. But the demutualisation (effectively a form of privatisation) launched in the Thatcher era allowed building society members of mutuals to profit from the value built up in those organisations over years: a very Thatcherite coup.

Co-ops tip the scales

A survey conducted by Birmingham Business School, found that on average people were members of 2.6 mutuals or co-ops: in other words, there are around 19 million individuals who belong to at least one co-op or mutual. That compares with about 11 million shareholders - despite the huge boosts to share-ownership given by privatisation and demutualisation.

[Jonathan Michie's full article](#)

Many might doubt that there is any way back for cooperatives and mutuals in Britain - particularly as the American model of capitalist organisation appears to be sweeping all before it across the globe. But the mutual and cooperative sector is actually stronger in the US than Britain."

Professor Jonathan Michie is director of Birmingham Business School and co-author of *Mutuals and their Communities*, available from <http://www.mutuo.co.uk>.

Jonathan can be contacted by email: j.michie@bham.ac.uk

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Social enterprise and the rise of the 'pro-am'

Even as large corporations extend their reach, we're witnessing the flowering of Pro-Am, bottom-up self-organization." Charles Leadbeater (2004)

Pro-Ams are amateurs working to professional standards who are reshaping society, according to social enterprise thinker **Charles Leadbeater**. His new report documents the rise of 'serious leisure' as more people commit time, energy and expertise to a widening area of activities. Leadbeater explains why the spirit of collaborative problem solving by self-organising communities of

committed amateurs, appeals so powerfully. Pro-Am workers, their networks and movements, will help reshape society in the next two decades says Leadbeater.

"The 20th century was marked by the rise of professionals in medicine, science, education, and politics. In one field after another, amateurs and their ramshackle organizations were driven out by people who knew what they were doing and had certificates to prove it. Now that historic shift seems to be reversing. Even as large corporations extend their reach, we're witnessing the flowering of Pro-Am, bottom-up self-organization." *Charles Leadbeater (2004), The Pro-Am Revolution. Fast Company magazine Issue 87, October 2004, p31.*

Leadbeater's report "The Pro-Am Revolution" can be found at www.demos.co.uk.

Another key social enterprise thinker, **John Pearce**, discusses the rise of the social entrepreneur, the maverick outsider who makes things happen, albeit for social benefit.

"In the community era we started from the basis of a group or a community coming together to arrive at a vision, to agree what needed to be done and taking steps to implement that plan.

There was a sense of collective endeavour.... The emphasis in the contemporary social era appears to be much more on the individual and his/her capacity to make things happen to create change. The Ashoka Trust, for example, talks about "outstanding individuals who are already building on their own ideas of what their societies need" appearing to encourage doing things for communities rather than with them." *John Pearce from his paper 'Social entrepreneurship - old wine in new bottles?'*

"The emphasis in the contemporary social era appears to be much more on the individual and his/her capacity to make things happen to create change." John Pearce

See <http://www.cbs-network.org.uk/SocEntsp.html> for a copy of the paper.

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Co-operative publications & links

[Non-profit Sector in a Changing Economy](#)

This Report from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) covers new trends in the non-profit sector, reviews the sector in a number of countries and provides tools to finance monitor and evaluate the sector.

[Community Development publications - Dr. Jim Cavaye](#)

These publications cover a range of subjects including measuring social capital, community capacity building, building social capital in rural and regional communities, small town renewal, in the Australian context.

[Peak Bodies for Community and Social Services Sector](#)

An alphabetical listing of bodies, which represent the interests of those working in the community and social services sector in Australia.

[Can Do Community - showcasing community capacity building](#)

Find out about community building and development activities happening across Australia.

[Community Portal - community.gov.au](#)

Find publications at <http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/>

[New website for ICA - Asia & Pacific: http://www.icaroap.coop](#)



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News in Brief

Australia

[Golden Circle is spared rough end](#)

The Australian, Sydney, Australia 3/10/05

An international investment bank has injected \$50 million into struggling Queensland fruit processor, Golden Circle. The bailout marks the beginning of the end for the 57-year-old company's co-operative structure and is a step towards public listing. "(The) co-operative structure gave growers some control over what happened to their fruit after it left the farm, but it proved unwieldy in the modern global marketplace".

[Skim milk, regular, ethical latte, please](#)

Morning Herald, Sydney, Australia 3/9/05

Fairtrade coffee is the natural next step for the ideological foodie. Just as Australian consumers embrace organic produce and the Green Bag to save the environment, along

comes Fairtrade to rescue Third World farmers, growing gourmet products for the rest of the world.

[Business backs Queensland.NET](#)

Computerworld, 3/9/05

Two major players in Queensland's software industry have thrown their weight behind a new industry cooperative and its plans to improve commercial opportunities for locals.

[Co-op on diet before floating](#)

Morning Herald, Sydney, Australia 3/18/05

Dairy co-operative Dairy Farmers is gearing up for a public listing with a savage cost-cutting campaign and business review that will rationalise its brands and boost profits.

[Dazzling treasure in trash](#)

The Mercury, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia 3/21/05

A business set up to reduce landfill and waste has become a thriving collectables outlet with internet sales and up to 20 employees.

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UK

[Co-op's campaign for better communities](#)

Co-operative News, Manchester, United Kingdom 3/7/05

The Co-op and the Scottish Executive have launched an awards scheme that recognises people who are standing up to anti-social behaviour. The scheme is to raise awareness of the commitment of people who tackle anti-social behaviour and make a difference in their area.

[Co-op Action funding to get £1m CFS boost](#)

Co-operative News, Manchester, United Kingdom 3/10/05

The Co-operative Action loan fund has been topped up to £1 million, extending its support for emerging co-operative, mutual and social enterprises.

[Our mutual friends](#)

Guardian, London, United Kingdom 3/18/05

New evidence underlines the benefits cooperatives and mutuals bring to their members - but also to the wider economy and community.

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Other territories

[10 000 job losses predicted if co-ops Bill passed](#)

Legal Brief Today, Durban, South Africa 3/15/05

Pietermaritzburg-based NCT Forestry Co-operative Limited has warned MPs that the Co-operatives Bill could result in up to 10 000 job losses on the plantations of its mainly small growers if it went ahead with plans to give all co-operative members equal voting rights.

[The Open Veins of Venezuela](#)

Venezeula Analysis, Caracas, Venezuela 3/18/05

Government support for *cooperativas of mineros* (mining cooperatives) is welcomed but the concessions awarded to huge international mining companies threaten local jobs and the environment.

['We expect liberal views towards co-operative banks'](#)

Afternoon, Bombay, India 3/17/05

India's fastest-growing scheduled co-operative bank has ambitious plans to embrace new technology for its technology savvy customers.

[GAIDA members urged to embrace co-operative credit union concept](#)

Ghana Homepage, Accra Ghana 3/20/05

Business communities and associations have been urged to pool resources and raise capital for the establishment of credit unions. The co-operative credit union concept is seen as an important tool in the socio-economic development of the country.

More stories at <http://www.wisc.edu/uwcc/archives/c.html#i>

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What's On

In Australia

Co-operative Attitudes and Institutional Innovation in Australia Thursday 14

April 2005, 4pm to 6pm

ACCORD seminar

Seminar presenters:

Andrew Passey, Senior Research Fellow, ACCORD

Dr Mark Lyons, Adjunct Professor, ACCORD UTS.

Details, download: [Seminar Flyer](#) (PDF 17KB)

[International Year of Microcredit 2005](#)

The UN General Assembly has designated 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit (resolution 53/197) stating that the Year will be an important opportunity to give impetus to microfinance programs throughout the world.

[Membership Bootcamp Roadshow](#) - 19 April 2005

An intensive day of strategies for improving member recruitment and retention.

Membership Bootcamp is a valuable educational experience for organisations with a membership base.

[Professional Development Short Course for Community Practitioners](#) - 03 May 2005

A comprehensive 3 day professional development program for community and economic development practitioners working in local government, community organisations, community centres, and state or federal agencies.

[Corporate Social Responsibility in Focus](#) - 7 and 8 June 2005

A unique case study led conference that brings together a group of leading CSR practitioners and experts who will share their experiences with respect to CSR & Public Policy, CSR & Business Alignment and Successful CSR Partnerships

[Engaging Communities - International Conference 14](#) - 17 August 2005

An initiative of the United Nations and the Government of the State of Queensland, Australia, this unique event will explore all issues related to community engagement and address the experiences, challenges and research which effect all citizens, governments and organisations alike.

[Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia Conference](#) - 5 September 2005

Sustainable Regional Development: getting down to business

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Overseas

Cooperative Congress

20th-22nd May

Royal Concert Hall Glasgow

www.co-op.ac.uk

Annual meeting of co-operators from all sectors of the UK movement. Various speakers, fringe meetings and workshops.

Contact: 0161 246 2908

email: rita.butler@cooperatives-uk.coop

ICMIF conference in Singapore

16-18 November 2005

<http://www.icmif.org/singapore>

The conference agenda under the slogan "changing times, constant values" is being put together and will focus on three key areas of regulation and risk, mutuality and solidarity, and best practices, one key focus area for each day.

Learn more about the last conference in Paris 2004. View the presentations and hear the speakers in four languages: <http://www.icmif.org/video>.

Call for papers:

Two conferences on Social Capital and on Economy and Community

The Social Capital Foundation invites all interested persons or organisations to present a paper to one or both of its upcoming international, interdisciplinary conference that will be held respectively on September 21-22, 2005 and September 23-24, 2005 in the beautiful island of Malta.

[TSCF international conferences](#)

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Announcements

Iain Macdonald, Director-General of the International Co-operative Alliance, was elected President of Co-operative Congress in Glasgow in May 2005.

The international forum "**Co-operative Strategy**" takes place from 16 May at the Co-operative College in Manchester followed by attendance at Co-operative Congress in Glasgow.

Early booking is essential. Details of the programme can be found on the website, www.co-op.ac.uk, in the international programme section. For more details, contact Jenny de Villiers on jenny@co-op.ac.uk.

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About this Newsletter

We welcome your comments on our newsletter and any suggested topics or items for inclusion in the next issue, due for publication in May 2005. Please forward any items of interest including news and events, case studies, profiles, reports or commentaries to suzanne.henderson@uts.edu.au by 15 April 2005.

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