



8<sup>th</sup> March 2017

## Co-op Business Leaders' Forum...family, sustainability & collaboration



A big thank you to everyone who attended our Co-operative Business Leaders' Forum held last Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at Fonterra's Auckland offices. It was such a great success with a good turnout and no less than 17 speakers on the day from across a wide range of Members and industries.

The address by our Minister for Economic Development, the Hon. Simon Bridges, *pictured*, provided the day's highlight when he paid tribute to the enduring contribution of NZ's co-operatives and mutuals.

Minister Bridges reported that while the New Zealand economy was performing well currently, the challenge was to keep it going over the long term and that consistency was required.

"You're a really big part of the economy and you've stayed very strong for a long time," he told Members. "You're responsible for 20 per cent of our GDP and those profits and value stay local."

Minister Bridges talked about the challenges facing Kiwi exporters, including co-operatives, with the risk of protectionism.

"As far as the importance of free trade is concerned, you get it really deeply. Co-operatives are the poster children for this," he said.

### For me I came away with 3 key words for the day:

- Family (and a sense of belonging amongst the co-op sector here in NZ)
- Sustainability (and a strong sense of endurance, determination and passion)
- Collaboration (and leveraging the key strengths of our Members).

In terms of the latter, there is no doubt that we can collaborate together as co-operatives even more strongly here in NZ and leverage on scale better. We have the opportunity to increase the speed and volume of trading within the “Family” which has the potential to deliver significant value to our Members (some at a cost and others at a revenue level), and to the broader NZ economy with income / returns remaining within NZ’s borders. This will become a greater priority of mine in the weeks and months ahead.

After all, if NZ’s co-operatives, which operate within the most co-operative economy in the world (c. one fifth of GDP), can’t collaborate effectively together as part of the “Family” then who can?

### Benefits of co-operatives co-operating more effectively would include:

- Growing the size of the pie with win / win outcomes.
- Mutually beneficial supply and purchase agreements between Members.
- Leveraging on combined volumes (sourcing products and services outside of the “Family”).
- Sharing of information and resources between Members.
- Avoiding duplication between Members eg. common support services.

Our media release in relation to this event can be found [here](#). A big thanks to Fonterra for hosting us in their state-of-the-art auditorium along with a tour of their offices before dinner.

## Corporate Associate Members

As advised to all Members via email yesterday, we have recently added a new Corporate Associate Member in Safe365. This type of membership is relevant to non-cooperatives who understand and support the co-op business model and who wish to provide their products and services to our Members.



[Safe365](#) is smart Kiwi software which is rapidly changing the game when it comes to workplace health and safety.

Launched in September 2016, the online application assesses your organisation, develops your personalised health and safety action plan and provides you with the support you need to improve.

- See [online profile](#).



Established in 1956, New Zealand-based [Baycorp](#) means a great deal to businesses – co-ops and mutuals included - as the go-to solution to help with non-payment.

Baycorp’s experience, processes and people help its clients to unlock debt, with robust credit reporting, in-house specialist legal action and field services options.

- See [online profile](#).



Total Utilities Management Group ([TUMG](#)), is an *independent* utility broker which manages utility contracts worth \$385 million annually on behalf of business customers.

There are big opportunities for Members by utilising TUMG’s advisory services to help lower electricity, gas, water and waste management costs.

- See [online profile](#).

## Worker-owned co-op helps soothe the world



**The tight-knit Tui community from Nelson is taking their soothing balms to the world.**



Based in Nelson's Golden Bay, [Tui Balms](#) is a 100% staff-owned co-operative which began in 1984 when Colin Isles, a beekeeper and a founding member of the company, gifted his Bee Balm recipe to the community to create a viable business.

Tui Balms now supplies more than 450 retailers throughout New Zealand with a full range of skin and body care products. The co-op also sells online directly to massage and physiotherapy businesses in New Zealand and Australia, and has a licensed franchisee, Songbird Naturals, in Britain which sells throughout the European Union.

I met Tui Balms' John Black while presenting to around 50 "co-operators" in Nelson last month. After learning more about Tui Balms, it got me thinking about the benefits in belonging to a staff-owned co-operative. I have published my thoughts on our [website](#).

## Co-op Governance Training. . . only 5 spaces left folks

We've got just five places left for our popular Co-operative Governance Seminar scheduled for Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at Foodstuffs South Island's offices in Christchurch.

**Please don't delay, you can still secure your place by [emailing me](#) today.**



Co-operative governance expert Richard Westlake, pictured above, will run the value-packed seminar from 10am – 4.30pm. The \$695 + GST cost is well below what the Institute of Directors would charge for an equivalent course. Lunch is included.

- **For more details, please refer to my last [newsletter](#).**

Thanks and Regards,

Craig Presland

**CEO**