

The Food Co-operative Shop



Title: Annual General Meeting - Statement of Affairs

Date: 30 August 2025

Membership, Board and staff

The Board underwent several membership changes throughout the year. Kirsty Goowin, Jordan Schultz, Alex Ford and Alison Wood tendered their resignations during the term, while Josh Viljoen, John Mavrogenes and Poppy Gorton joined the Board as interim Board Members. Sia Brook resigned from the Board to take on the Operations Manager role at the beginning of 2025, before leaving that role in May. Trish McEwan also joined for a brief period before stepping down. With Alex's resignation, the Chair position has been held on rotation.

We farewelled co-managers Naomi, Andy and Mohammad, welcomed Nadia and Sia (who later left), and we feel exceptionally grateful to have welcomed Khyati, who has been with us for most of the year, and Mahesh, who joined in May. We farewelled Saba and Maki as regular cooks (they have returned on occasion!) and welcomed KC into our regular cook roster. We also welcomed the efforts of kitchen stars Trish & Doreen who have been on-call to help cook throughout the latter half of the year.

Thank you, thank you, thank you: As employers and members, the Board would like to take the opportunity to thank our wonderful staff, on behalf of the membership, for everything they do for the Co-op - both seen and unseen - and wish them all the best as we move into 2026.

Co-op Statistics [as of 9am, Aug 30, 2025]

Members: The Co-op has **779 active members**. This compares to **664** members in 2023-24, and **748** members in 2022-23.

Volunteering: We have **117 Working Members** with an active 20% discount. We have had **233** individual volunteers contribute their valuable time to support the running of their Co-op, since the last AGM on Aug 30, 2024. They have contributed **3,404.5** hours in total during this time.

NB: *The number of hours and volunteers is less than the true figure, due to the number of volunteers who contribute but are not members, or do not record their volunteering hours.*

Programs and Projects

BUDGET REPAIR

Cost-saving measures:

- i. **Wages:** Reduction in the weekly waged hours from 106/week in 2024 to 63/week in 2025
- ii. **Ordering:** Consolidation of product offerings & tightening of ordering budgets
- iii. **Freebies:** Temporary reduction in cafe freebies - free lunches for staff/coordinators who receive store credit now receive half-price meals (to be reviewed by incoming Board)
- iv. **Utilities:** On-going review of subscriptions and services such as waste, electricity, payment terminals, and more to ensure we are getting a competitive rate
- v. **Store Credit:** store credit expiry project led by volunteer admin team, reaching out to former members with outstanding credit balances

Financial Oversight:

- i. Taking a whole-of-community approach to improving oversight by re-establishing the volunteer-run '**Great Lunch Log**' to track lunch sales and ensure that we break even. This document has been running for 5 years.
 - a. Also used for events like Thursday Night Dinners & Acoustic Soup; Market Stalls; cooking workshops and catering activities
- ii. Sought advice from **Frank Lo Pilato** of RSM Global, a financial administrator who specialises in business restructuring, solvency, and association risk.

REVENUE RAISING

Fundraiser: We launched the **Co-op2Fifty fundraiser** for the Co-op as soon as we became aware of our precarious financial situation, primarily for marketing purposes, but also to fund a new display freezer for our frozen products. The fundraiser has raised [almost \\$5k](#).

Grants: We were successful in receiving \$2290 in the latest round of [Volunteer Grants](#) from our Federal member Alicia Payne. We're very grateful to the support we received from her team, and those funds are going directly to covering our latest Volunteer Workers Insurance Cover, and new insurance cover for Association Liability.

OUTREACH

Letterbox Drops: With funds from the Co-op2Fifty fundraiser, we launched our 10,000 flyers campaign: designed new flyers advertising the Co-op and volunteers have letterbox dropped them across the Inner North. So far, **8000** flyers have been distributed!

Local Media: We were featured in a number of exciting media stories this year including:

[Region Canberra](#) (28 Sep 2024)

[Gardening Australia](#) (18 Oct 2024)

[ABC Radio Canberra](#) (15 Feb 2025)

[ACT Gov 'OurCanberra'](#) (1 Apr 2025)

[Region Canberra](#) (19 Aug 2025)

Community Radio: We are building relationships with cherished local Canberra radio networks 2XX and ArtSoundFM to find ways to mutually support each other.

PROJECTS

Community Garden: The Coop Rooftop Garden received a Canberra Community Garden Grant for garden improvement. As a result of the fund, we were able to expand vertical growing spaces, enrich the soil, increase vegetable harvest to some 50+ kilograms, supply vegetables and herbs for use in Coop lunches and have some for sale at the shop, trial exotic tropical roots (ginger, galangal, turmeric, lemon grass) and grow some fruit trees.

Membership Database: Our IT Working Group has been busily working to improve our custom-built member/volunteer management database. Having this resource saves us thousands per year in subscription fees that we would otherwise pay to an outsourcing company. This project is a testament to the ingenuity, know-how and passion of Co-op volunteers. We have big plans to upgrade it in 2026, and require the support of anyone with website development or coding experience.

Music streaming: A volunteer-led initiative to move away from Spotify streaming for [a long list of reasons](#) by installing a CD-player and CD library. We hope this will be an excellent opportunity to showcase local artists and encourage important education around the entanglement of the military industrial complex and the arts.

Planning the 50th: The Co-op turns 50 in **Spring of 2026!** We had drafted a timeline and proposal plan for our 50th Anniversary celebrations. We look forward to sharing these with the Co-op community as soon as the new Board is established, and encourage anyone willing to offer support to help establish a 'Co-op2Fifty Working Group'.

Government Support: The Board has secured meetings with both Thomas Emerson MLA and Alicia Payne MP in coming weeks to discuss how they can support the Co-op as it enters its 50th year of continuous operation. We plan to discuss outdoor space activation, support with our outreach campaign, grant support, and greater collaboration.

EVENTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Fundraising Events: 8 x Acoustic Soup events & 23 x Thursday Night Dinners. A heartfelt THANKYOU to all involved continuing the legacy of these fantastic and totally unique Co-op community gatherings.

Workshops: Hosted two ANUSA workshops that were overwhelmingly successful, with over 110 people involved. Thank you to Doreen and Lucy for hosting those.

Market Stalls: So far this year, the Co-op has held market stalls at:

- ANU O-Week (Feb)
- ANU Bush Week (Jul)
- Light Up Lyneham (Aug)
- Southern Harvest's *Winter Harvest Festival* (Aug)
- *Dragon Dreaming* Fyshwick (Aug)

Acknowledgement of Volunteers

The grass-roots, member-driven organisation of our Co-op is fundamental to its nature, what marks it out as something special. The Co-op simply would not exist without the work of our members, the time and energy they put into continuing a venture that's bigger than any of us. This Board acknowledges that work with the deepest gratitude.