



BUSINESS COUNCIL  
OF CO-OPERATIVES AND MUTUALS

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Agricultural co-operatives to take centre stage at national forum

*29 August 2016:* Today marks the first day of a two day national forum bringing together the agricultural sector to provide providing farmers with knowledge and materials on co-operatives, collective bargaining and other forms of collaboration.

The national peak body for co-operatives and mutuals, the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals is playing a central role at the forum with Melina Morrison, BCCM CEO hosting a roundtable workshop discussing how the recommendations in the recent Senate inquiry report into co-operative, mutuals and member-owned firms can help create a level playing field for the sector to ensure the sector can continue to grow and prosper.

The forum, being held in Kingscliff, NSW is part of the \$14.9m [Farm Co-operatives and Collaboration Pilot Program](#) (FarmCCPP) which was launched by the Deputy Prime Minister The Hon Barnaby Joyce earlier this year.

[Commenting at the launch of the forum](#), BCCM CEO Melina Morrison said “the FarmCCPP is an unprecedented program with potential to deliver long term improvements for farmers and the agriculture sector as a whole.”

“This forum in particular is an important step in closing the knowledge gap for producers who want to use the co-operative business model.”

The FarmCCPP is a national two year program and will provide expert advice and information for up to 2000 farmers and 100 farmer groups across the country. The program is being run by Southern Cross University with some assistance from the BCCM.

“The FarmCCPP is in line with the BCCM’s aim of improving the environment for co-operatives to operate nationally and to increase the education and awareness of the co-operative sector in Australia”, added Ms Morrison.

Canadian agricultural expert Jack Wilkinson is the guest speaker at the event who will share first-hand experience in working with farmers, government and agribusiness and delivering an economic resurgence for rural communities across Canada.

Last year, the BCCM launched Get Mutual, an online self-help website to provide information and resources on setting up and running a co-operative.



BUSINESS COUNCIL  
OF CO-OPERATIVES AND MUTUALS

**For requests:**

Melina Morrison, CEO  
Ph: 0410 902 656

Pádraic Varley, Public Relations Manager  
Ph: 0456 558 680

**The Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM)** is the national peak body representing Australian member owned businesses. Formed in 2013, the BCCM is led by the chief executives of Australia's co-operative and mutual businesses in all sectors including agriculture, financial services, health insurance, retail, motoring services and human services. The BCCM works to promote the role of member-owned enterprises in the national economy. With an estimated 2000 co-operative and mutual businesses operating nationally representing a total of 14.8 million memberships, the BCCM highlights the contribution co-operatives and mutuals make to the economy and social development in Australia.

[www.bccm.coop](http://www.bccm.coop)