



BUSINESS COUNCIL
OF CO-OPERATIVES AND MUTUALS

MEDIA RELEASE

Banking customers urged to take action with #switchnotbitch challenge

6 October, Sydney: A playful social media campaign “#switchnotbitch” has been launched to prod consumers to shop around for alternative trustworthy banking choices.

Peak industry group Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) CEO Melina Morrison urged Australian consumers to proactively take matters into their own hands on the issue of banks profits and culture.

“What we often don’t hear is the idea that Australians can take matters into their own hands and switch to an ethical provider, like a customer owned bank, with lower credit card fees and a highly competitive mortgage rate.”

Ms Morrison agreed with recommendations emerging from the current bank inquiry to increase banking competition, such as the account portability recommendations, but added that these kinds of reforms would not be enough in themselves to combat customer inertia.

“The Australian mutual institutions collectively make up a \$98.7 billion sector that represents the “fifth pillar” of banking in Australia – the fifth largest holder of household savings deposits in Australia.

“With more than 4 million members already, this sector sees growth of 6.6% per year,” Morrison said.

“We call it the Ninja economy because it’s hiding in plain sight.”

Ms Morrison describes the #switchnotbitch social media campaign as a cheeky, fun poke at consumer apathy to move Australians to actively choosing who they do business.

“#switchnotbitch campaign aims to move beyond the ‘he said, she said’ debate about bank profits and culture and encourage all of us to make an intelligent choice about the institutions with which we choose to do business.

“We’re asking consumers to share their ideas and examples of switching on social media with the simple hashtag #switchnotbitch.

The BCCM represents the co-operative, mutual and member owned business sector which has an aggregate 15 million Australian member owners.

“There are more than 80 customer owned banks and no one is forcing consumers to bank with any particular provider. Australians were free to choose.

“Today more Aussie families are taking out home loans with customer-owned institutions than ever before, with customer-owned loans growing at more than double the rate of the Big 4 ([Customer Owned Banking Association \(COBA\)](#) as of March 2016).”

Ms Morrison said consumers do the same shopping around with almost any service or products from health insurance to banking to retail and food purchases.



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“We all know about Fairtrade products for example. More than 75% of Fairtrade labelled products sold today are produced by co-operatives. There is almost always a co-operative alternative.”

“Co-operatives and mutuals are businesses owned or run to benefit their members rather than shareholders. In that way, customers always come first because they own the business – and the sector has a 98% customer satisfaction rating.

“It’s a traditional idea, the original ‘sharing economy’ of mutual benefit and one that has shown it still works in the modern age,” Ms Morrison said.

In response to queries about where consumers could access information about mutual alternatives, Ms Morrison said the Council is now looking at setting up a website.

For requests:

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