



Stuart Ayres MP
Minister for Fair Trading
Minister Assisting the Premier on Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

28 February 2014

JOINT RELEASE
NSW AND VICTORIA LEAD THE WAY IN CO-OP REFORM

NSW and Victorian Ministers responsible for co-operatives, Stuart Ayres and Heidi Victoria, said the launch of the Co-operatives National Law (CNL) on Monday 3 March would enable co-operatives to operate more easily across borders.

“The new laws will provide automatic authorisation to co-operatives wanting to carry on business across state and territory borders,” Mr Ayres said.

“This means a reduction in regulatory costs and simplified financial reporting and auditing requirements for smaller co-operatives.”

Ms Victoria said more than 600 co-operatives in NSW and 640 co-operatives in Victoria would benefit from the new law.

“Co-operatives make a big difference to regional and rural communities in particular, fostering stability and prosperity,” she said.

“Laws providing for mutual recognition and consistent compliance at a national level will go a long way to improve the efficiency and viability of co-operatives across the country.”

All states and territories agreed to the new laws when they signed up to the Australian Uniform Co-operative Laws Agreement, with the final jurisdiction signing in February 2012.

The remaining jurisdictions are also working on introducing the new laws in their state or territory.

CEO of the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM), Melina Morrison, said the commencement of CNL in NSW and Victoria was a landmark for co-operatives everywhere, marking the transition to a consistent legislative framework for co-operatives trading across state borders.

“Co-operatives are a significant economic sector and this new, national law recognises the importance of these businesses to our communities and to the economy,” she said.

“The introduction of CNL will help co-op businesses to simplify the administrative and cross jurisdictional issues that other corporate structures have never needed to worry about.”

John Power, the General Manager of the Batlow Fruit Co-operative, has welcomed the introduction of the CNL.

“The burden from the cost of registration in each state has been removed, along with the reduction of red tape,” Mr Power said.

“This is a very good outcome for nationally based co-operatives.”

Mr Power said under the previous state-based system, co-operatives had to handle multiple registrations to enable cross-border trade, with fees payable in each state.

“Now larger co-operatives like Batlow Apples will be able to carry on our business across state and territory borders.”

The Wine Society’s CEO, Peter Wheatley, said the CNL provided scope for more streamlined, less compliance-based operations for co-operatives with a national perspective.

“In today’s world, every commercial organisation – The Wine Society included - must face up to increasingly competitive market pressures to ensure survival,” Mr Wheatley said.

“The rationalisation of regulatory systems is a welcome move, allowing greater focus on achieving operational goals.”

For more information about co-operatives in NSW go to fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

For more information about co-operatives in Victoria go to consumer.vic.gov.au/cooperatives

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