



BUSINESS COUNCIL  
OF CO-OPERATIVES AND MUTUALS

## **A Comprehensive National Education and Training Strategy for the Co-operatives and Mutuals Sector**

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**May 2014**

‘It is important to the strategic development of all co-operatives that they invest in developing the human capital that makes up the whole co-operative and its supporting communities and networks. In doing so, co-operatives can position themselves uniquely to respond to, and to develop, their respective markets.’

(Davis 2006)

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# **1. Executive Summary**

## **1.1 The BCCM**

The Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) is an association of the chief executives of Australia's member and customer owned businesses and peak industry bodies. It represents a sector comprising a vast range of industries with a combined membership of thirteen million (BCCM 2014). The BCCM was established in 2013 and works to increase awareness of co-operative and mutual (C&M) businesses and their contribution to the national economy and community development of Australia. It intends to achieve this goal through advocacy, collaboration with the sector, and education.

## **1.2 This Report**

This report investigates the current chronic lack of education and training for C&M enterprises in Australia. Furthermore, it examines the strategic options available to meet the current and future education and training needs of the sector.

This report's recommendations for the BCCM's national education and training strategy are encapsulated by three key strategic objectives:

1. To develop an inclusive network that will allow the C&M sector to develop a forceful presence within the business community.
2. To facilitate a forum where prevailing issues that concern the C&M sector are raised and discussed and where best practice can be shared.
3. To promote collaboration of the C&M sector with independent training providers, tertiary education institutions and professional associations.

## **1.3 Disclaimer**

This report does not, and does not claim to, provide the BCCM with a final national education and training strategy for the C&M sector per se. Rather, it provides recommendations, which are based on and limited by the primary and secondary research undertaken by the project team, the findings of which are presented in the sections that follow.

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Background**

There has been wide consensus from the C&M sector in Australia that there is a chronic lack of education and training in the C&M business model. In comparison to other countries around the world, Australia has been very slow in addressing the specialist business needs of these organisations.

In recognition of this dire need, the BCCM commissioned a four-member team of Masters of Management students from the University of Sydney to investigate the current provision of C&M education and training and to map any gaps that need to be filled to meet the existing and future needs of the sector in Australia. It is expected that the results of this project will provide the BCCM with the crucial evidence base it needs to support its efforts in the development of a national education and training strategy for the sector.

### **2.2 Report Overview**

The values, principles and structures of C&Ms provide these organisations with their competitive advantage in the marketplace (Davis 2004). Failure to educate and train management, employees and the membership base in the C&M (Co-operative and Mutual) “difference” represents an untapped resource that can be strategically harnessed to enhance the growth and benefit to the membership and community of these types of businesses. This report establishes the strategic premise for future considerations regarding education and training. The report will take into account training and education needs within the Australian C&M business sector and will draw upon a comparative analysis of current Australian provisions with their UK and Canadian counterparts to develop recommendations for future education and training provisions.

## **3. Education and Training**

### **3.1 Importance of Education and Training**

Australia's C&M business leaders and researchers have identified access to high quality C&M education and training as one of the key areas in need of systemic improvement. It is more important than ever for organisations to possess specialist C&M knowledge (e.g. voting principles, board management, constitution, legislation, finance, participating in financial markets, tax, agility) if they are to successfully operate and differentiate themselves in an increasingly competitive commercial environment.

C&Ms are big business in Australia, and represent some of the country's most trusted and best known brands including the National Roads and Motorists' Association (NRMA), Royal Automotive Club of Victoria (RACV), Australian Unity, HCF, Credit Union Australia (CUA) and Murray Goulburn Co-operative (the Devondale brand) (BCCM, 2013). There are over 13 million members of more than 1600 co-operatives with 4.5 million Australians being customers of financial mutuals and customer-owned banks and over seven million being members of motoring associations (CERP, 2012).

Thus, co-operatives play an important role in many aspects of Australians' lives and remain an important solution to many of the economic and social challenges facing Australia in the early twenty-first century, particularly at the community level. It is also for these reasons that the education and training of people working in the C&M industry as well as the cultivation of a greater understanding and awareness of the C&M model within the Australian business sector and the wider community is essential to ensuring the sector gains the specialist expertise and recognition it requires to grow and reach its performance potential.

### **3.2 Role of the BCCM**

As the representative of C&M models of enterprise, improving the delivery of C&M business education is the primary strategic objective of the BCCM (BCCM, 2012). The BCCM recognises an articulated and relevant education and training system is critical to the future development of the sector in the economy in terms of the great extent to which it will help C&M to increase their resilience and flourish in the face of growing competition from other types of business. Furthermore, the BCCM believes that increasing awareness and understanding of member owned business in academia and the public arena will not only be of great benefit to C&M boards, management and employees, but to the whole of Australian society.

## **4. Comparative Analysis: Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom**

### **4.1 Current and Planned Provisions in Australia**

In order to understand the education and training of the C&M workforce in Australia, research was conducted on both the current and planned education and training provisions in Australia. This research was divided into the tertiary level, which covers education and training for tertiary education and training institutions, and the work level, which focuses on organisations that offer C&M training at the workplace level, and organisations that represent, promote and develop education and training for the sector. Further details of provisions can be found in Appendix I – Education and Training Provisions.

#### **Current Provisions in Australia – Tertiary Level**

Current provisions in Australia appear to be limited, with only the University of South Australia offering a mutual focused workplace applied management project as part of the Australasian Mutuals Institute MBA program (UniSA Mutual Sector MBA).

#### **Current Provisions in Australia – Work Level**

Similar to the tertiary level, current provisions at the work level also appear to be quite limited. The various providers are categorised into the co-operatives sector, financial mutuals, employee-owned businesses and other service providers for analysis. Further details of provisions can be found in Appendix I – Education and Training Provisions.

##### **4.1.1 Co-operatives Sector**

Co-operative peak organisations including the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) and state co-operative federations provide some education and training for members. The main focus is seminars, conferences and information resources. The BCCM produces strategies to strengthen education and training

provision for the broader C&M sector and provides open access information resources for C&Ms and the general public. The BCCM offers business networking and peer support activities such as business breakfasts, roundtable events and leaders summits.

State and territory co-operative registries such as NSW Fair Trading and Consumers Victoria provide some information on co-operative formation and the regulatory and legislative requirements. The main function of the registries is regulation and compliance of co-operatives therefore education and training resources available online or in person depends on the level of departmental resourcing which is variable.

#### **4.1.2 Financial Mutuals**

The Australasian Mutuals Institute (AM Institute) and Customer Owned Banking Association (COBA) provide education and training to financial mutuals. In partnership they offer the annual [COBA/AM Institute Annual Convention & Trade Exhibition 2013](#). AM Institute offers continuous learning opportunities for individuals and mutuals and provides an appropriate recognition of achievement.

#### **4.1.3 Employee-owned Co-operatives**

The Employee Ownership Association Australia and New Zealand (EOANZ) provides education and training including conferences, seminars and online information for co-operatives that are employee owned.

#### **4.1.4 Other Providers**

In addition to the above providers, various organisations such as Borderlands Co-operative (Victoria) and the Co-operative College (UK) provide some education and training for the C&M sector. The Australian Institute of Management WA (AIM-WA) and University of Western Australia (UWA) Business School will offer a new program



on co-operatives and mutuals in September 2014. The Executive Leadership Program for Co-operatives and Mutuals (ELP-CM) aims to provide training for co-operative and mutual executives and managers.

### **Planned Provisions in Australia – Tertiary and Work Level**

The University of Sydney and Charles Sturt University both have a number of developments currently in the pipeline with respect to education and training courses. The BCCM had discussions with the AICD and other industry bodies regarding customised training provisions however these have not yet progressed beyond this stage.

### **4.2 Current and Planned Provisions in Canada and UK**

C&Ms have been well established in Canada and the UK, and so, an analysis of these countries' current and planned education and training provisions provides a good basis for improvement of provisions in Australia. Co-operative education and training has been defined as “a program that formally integrates a student's academic studies with work experience with participating employers” (CAFCE, 2005). This dictates the general framework under which education is provided at the tertiary level in Canada.

#### **Canada – Tertiary Level**

Education and training at the tertiary level is quite extensive in Canada, with universities such as Saint Mary's University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Waterloo offering courses in co-operative education. The areas in which Canada's tertiary level education and training excelled were in its work placement component of university courses, the internal partners within the University of Waterloo that cater for specific co-operative needs and the existence of The Institute for Research and Education for Co-operatives and Mutuals at the University of Sherbrooke (IRECUS). With many university courses incorporating a

work placement as part of the degree, students are able to gain real life work experience at a specific co-operative and apply concepts and theory learnt in class to real life situations. Further details of provisions can be found in Appendix I – Education and Training Provisions.

### **Canada – Work Level**

Similarly, current provisions at the work level also appear to be quite extensive in Canada. Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada (CMC) have a Co-op Development Program, which assists with issues such as starting up a co-operative or expanding or improving existing co-operatives. Part of this program is an online documentation centre that essentially provides a tool kit of information compiled by successful co-operatives within Canada and internationally. In addition to CMC, the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education (CAFCE) has established a national forum for professional co-operative practitioners, established national standards, and promoted the value of post-secondary co-operative education. The CAFCE also seeks to deliver opportunities for learning and sharing of best practice between co-operatives, as well as developing and capitalising on international partnerships/alliances. With the support of CAFCE and the CMC, a strong base has been created for employee education and training. Further details of provisions can be found in Appendix I – Education and Training Provisions.

### **UK – Tertiary Level**

As is the case in Canada, there are many tertiary education institutions in the UK that provide education and training to the C&M sector. One of the key institutions is the Co-operative College, which focuses on the purpose and values of co-operatives. In addition, universities such as Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Stirling offer short courses for students to develop their understanding of the purpose, value and practices of co-operative organisations. Further details of provisions can be found in Appendix I – Education and Training Provisions.

## **UK – Work Level**

The key underlying feature of education and training provisions at the work level is the Co-operative Code of Governance (the Code), which provides an official guideline for employee training, as well as providing the foundations for workplace training organisations, such as the Co-operative Enterprise Hub, Co-operative and Mutual Solutions, the Plunkett Foundation and Co-operative Business Consultants.

### **4.3 Similarities and Differences**

#### **Similarities**

Despite Australian C&M education and training provisions still being in the embryonic stages of their development, there are few similarities between Australia's current provisions and that of Canada and the UK.

Many of the education and training programs in Canada and the UK have a focus on instilling what C&Ms are, their values and purpose. A focus on these values not only assists with education and training, but also the promotion of the sector in general. This is because without an understanding of the underlying values and purpose of C&Ms, it is difficult to promote them.

The Fifth Principle of Co-operation is internationally accepted, and provides a basic guideline for co-operative education and training provisions. It has however not been implemented with the same effect in Australia as compared with Canada and the UK.

## **Differences**

One of the key differences between the tertiary level education and training of Canada and the UK is Canada's emphasis on work placements that form part of the programs. Canada has viewed this to be an integral part of their tertiary level education and training, as evidenced by CAFCE's definition on co-operative education. The UK on the other hand has not placed the same importance on this and as a result, few courses have a work placement component.

The existence of bodies and organisations such as CAFCE, CMC, IRECUS and the Co-operative College UK should also be noted due to their respective roles played in establishing education and training procedures and courses, education and training research, relevant knowledge dissemination, and the comprehensive assistance they offer to organisations and the sector in general. There are no equivalent bodies in Australia.

### **4.4 Gaps in Australia's Provisions**

Following the above comparison, it is evident that noticeable gaps exist in Australia's provisions, both current and planned. Some of these gaps have been delineated below:

1. Lack of focus on teaching the values, purpose and fostering an in depth understanding of what C&Ms are;
2. Lack of national industry bodies or organisations that focus on developing education and training programs, research, providing assistance to organisations as well as promoting the sector generally;
3. Not enough tertiary level education courses. Although there are a number of courses that are currently being developed and will be offered from 2015 onwards, the variety of courses is limited when compared to Canada and the UK;
4. Lack of work placement opportunities as part of tertiary level courses; and
5. No national code of governance (unlike the Code in the UK).

## **4.5 Analysis**

Australia lags significantly in its provision of C&M education and training when compared against Canada and the UK. As Canada and the UK are quite developed in this area, research has indicated that both countries have similarities, but concurrently also have differences, which appear to be central to the success of their respective education and training provisions. Australia is in a position to adopt what it views as beneficial and appropriate in developing education and training for its C&M sector.

Moreover, the gaps that have been identified assist in highlighting what has worked well overseas and what is currently lacking in Australia. However, it is unclear whether successful training and education initiatives abroad would also be effective in Australia. Nonetheless, by connecting the supply side (what exists and has worked successfully in Canada and the UK) with the demand side (what the current needs of the sector are in Australia, as presented in Section 5 below) the recommendations of this report (see: Section 6 – Recommendations) suggest the direction in which the education and training efforts should be heading.

## **5. Interviews with the Sector**

### **5.1 Research Framework**

The second major research task of the project team was to determine the education and training needs of the C&M sector in Australia. In order to do this, interviews were conducted with leaders and senior managers across the spectrum of small, medium and large C&M enterprises around the nation. The team set out to answer the following research question:

“What are the specialist co-operative and mutual training and education needs of the co-operative and mutual business sector? “

A standardised, open-ended/fixed response interview approach was selected to ensure the same minimum questions were asked of each interviewee. The structure of the interview questions was guided by Goldstein’s (2002) Organisational Training Needs Analysis framework. Organisational analysis emphasises ‘the study of the entire organisation, its objectives, its resources, and the allocation of those resources as they are related to the organisational objectives’ (Goldstein et al. 1989).

With Goldstein’s framework, the team was able to gather the requisite qualitative data it needed to form recommendations for the BCCM on how to direct their strategic efforts to support the development of education and training for the sector (see: Section 6 – Recommendations).

The sample for the interviews consisted of 13 co-operatives and mutuals of which, three were small, four were medium and six were large as per ABS (2001) classifications. Furthermore, the sample is representative of the industry diversity in the Co-operative and Mutual sector (ABS, 2012). Great care was taken to ensure the diversity and representativeness of the sample with respect to not only the organisation’s size, but also its industry classification. With the exception of the ‘Purchasing’ category, all other industries were represented in the sample. For further descriptive statistics, please refer to Appendix III.

## **5.2 Insights from Interviews**

This section of the report presents the main insights the team derived from their analysis of the interviews they conducted with the sector. These insights will help to guide the development of recommendations (see: Section 6 – Recommendations) for the BCCM by addressing the demand side perspective.

Firstly, the interviews showed strong consensus around the belief that there is a chronic lack of training and education in Australia focused on the C&M models of business.

Secondly, in terms of the education and training needs of the sector, the team was able to derive some key insights from the interview results:

### **Future Employees**

- There was a common consensus amongst all interviewees that future employees would need to possess at least some knowledge of the C&M business model. However, due to the current limited availability of specialist education and training, interviewees thought it unlikely that they would be able to hire people with this knowledge unless they had previously worked in the sector. Thus, it was generally recognised that there is a need to develop general awareness through incorporating co-operative education into the secondary curriculum and including it in business courses at TAFEs and universities, for example.

### **Current Employees**

- Current employees at all levels of C&M businesses require specialist co-operative or mutual knowledge to differing degrees.
  - Top Management
    - According to interview results, it is most important for top management to have specialist C&M knowledge and expertise due to their capacity to influence lower levels of management and non-managerial staff and to affect the strategic development of the organisation.

- There was strong indication that workshops conducted by independent training providers may present a successful way to educate and train top management.
- Senior-Middle Management
- According to interview results, the acquisition of specialist knowledge and expertise is slightly less important for senior-middle managers. This is because many of these people, due to their seniority within the organisation or their experience working in the sector, are considered to already have the relevant specialist knowledge.
  - Similar to top management, there seems to be a strong indication of success in training senior-middle managers through specialist workshops conducted by independent trainers and providers.
- Non-managerial Staff
- Interview results showed that developing the C&M knowledge of employees working in a non-managerial capacity but in customer or member-facing roles within the organisation was another education and training priority for both C&Ms. Indeed, as one interviewee highlighted:
    - “Their (frontline staff’s) understanding of mutuals and what it means...that is what differentiates us as an industry. Being able to explain that to customers and potential customers will bring in more business, which [again] increases profitability”.
- Thus, particular attention needs to be paid to the specialist education and training of frontline staff working in any areas where the brand message needs to be explained or propagated and/or where staff have face-to-face contact with customers.



- Training programs developed in-house and delivered through induction seminars to non-managerial staff at the commencement of employment as well as on-the-job training show significant indication as effective vehicles for developing their specialist C&M knowledge.
- It was claimed that industry-specific conventions have been effective in educating new starters in mutual enterprises about the mutual model; for example, COBA and AMI's 'Mutuals Convention'.
- Informal training systems such as mentoring should not be discounted as mechanisms to promote specialist knowledge transfer within the firm, with more senior staff acting as role models for newcomers.

Thirdly, some interesting discussions were had during interviews about the need for specialist C&M consultants. Amongst all interviewees, there was particular emphasis on accounting and legal compliance, as areas of the business where specialist consultants are required most. However, evidence from interviews suggests there is an expectation that these consultants be professionally qualified in providing specialist advice. The reasons put forward for the current lack of consultant availability are twofold. The first is a lack of awareness that such specialised consultants exist. The second is the general belief that that the co-operative model is irrelevant, inflexible and antiquated in the current economic conditions. There appears to be less of a need for more mutual specific consultancy due to the existence of industry bodies such as the COBA, which already offers specialist-consulting services to its members.

Some other general insights gleaned from the interviews are listed below:

### **Engagement with the Co-operative and Mutual Model**

- Interview results suggest that the education and training of staff in the co-operative or mutual business model can positively impact these organizations' overall success. One interview participant privy to this idea, and with many years' experience working in the learning and development

team of his organisation, made the following statement: “I certainly think that there would be benefit in creating more engagement with the co-operative model”, referring to potential increases in sales due to staff being able to engage customers and the community on the benefits of the model.

## **Communications**

- The principles of co-operation and the concept of mutuality are essential parts of the C&M brand and competitive advantage. It is the capacity of the organisation to effectively communicate this advantage to its member-owners that will ultimately determine how successful the co-operative/mutual is vis-à-vis other industry players. One interviewee made an important point regarding effective communication: “The way you communicate with member-owners is different to the way you communicate with shareholders. Their hearts and their minds sit in a different place”.

## **University Education**

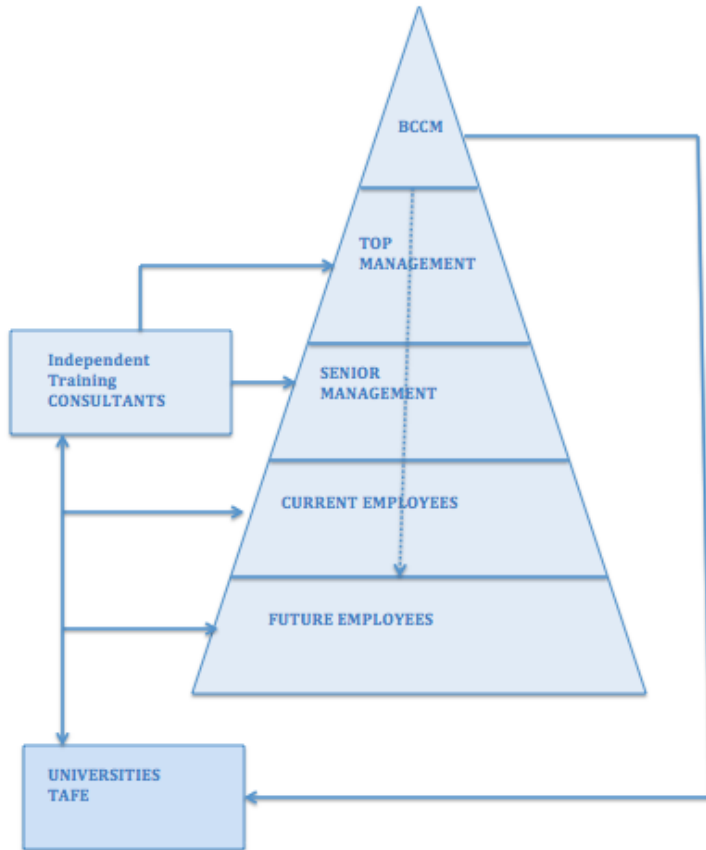
- Most C&M placed a great deal of value on specialist university qualifications as something they will be looking for in future employees. One interviewee even said “We’d be willing to support scholarships; we’d be willing to support all sorts of opportunities, not only just cash but other support services...even down to providing executives for training to help with education” to illustrate the organisation’s deep commitment to supporting the development of future co-operants.
- Nonetheless, at present, “no university courses that are accredited by the various professional accounting organisations require any education on not-for-profits, let alone co-operatives”.

## **Internal Constraints**

- One of the biggest challenges for the sector is keeping staff engaged and wanting to find out more about the C&M business – this is particularly true for staff working in regional areas.

- There was a strong message coming through from the smaller co-operatives being interviewed that training resources (both technical and value-based) also need to be made available/accessible to smaller organisations like themselves and not just to those who can afford them. To this end, it was suggested that the BCCM should in the future provide a network where issues and best practice can be discussed and content shared within the sector. Furthermore, pro bono specialist consultancy was considered to be a means for smaller organisations to overcome the financial constraints around accessing consulting services.

Finally, the interviews demonstrated unanimous support of the BCCM's efforts. The interviews also validated the team's hypothesis that a national education and training strategy is required for the sector – one where the BCCM can play a central role as the leader and co-ordinator of efforts to develop education and training resources across Australia. This is illustrated by the following diagram, which shows the anticipated flow of education and training within the C&M sector.



**Figure 1:** Anticipated flow of education and training within the co-operative and mutual sector

This diagram broadly encapsulates the views of interviewees taken as a whole. The BCCM, as the chief representative body of the sector in Australia, was largely viewed by those interviewed to be responsible for leading efforts to lobby government as well as TAFE, universities and registered training organisations to provide specialist C&M education and training. Thus, it is positioned at the apex of the pyramid. With greater provision, it was thought that this would then flow into developing the future and current staff of C&M businesses. In addition, it is expected that the BCCM's efforts would also (as a result of growing awareness and recognition among the business community) increase the numbers and develop the knowledge and expertise of specialist C&M consultants, who would work with the top and senior middle management to inform their business practice in areas such as accounting, finance, legal and governance.

## 6. Recommendations

Interview results established that a gap does exist within the education and training provisions in the C&M sector. This gap permeates all levels of the organisation (top management, senior management and non-managerial staff) and also the external resource pools that the organisation accesses (external consultants and future employees).

### 6.1 Root Causes

Three root causes of this gap in education and training within the sector surfaced as recurring themes when the survey results were thoroughly investigated.

The first root cause is lack of awareness of the C&M business model as a successful, contemporary business practice. As one respondent aptly said, “The co-operative (and mutual) business model is seen as a thing of the past; we are regarded as a dinosaur.” This argument is furthered by the fact that although the UN recognised 2012 as the “International Year of Co-operatives”, little has improved in terms of public awareness and perception of the business model as a commercially successful and sustainable business practice. Indeed, The Australia Institute (2012) report ‘Who knew Australians were so co-operative?’ revealed that while eight in ten Australians were members of at least one co-operatively or mutually owned business at the time of the survey, only 16 per cent were aware of the existence of these businesses. The gap between the social and economic contribution of co-operatives and their national visibility negatively impacts the capacity of the sector to access specialist education and training and to therefore grow and develop.

The second root cause is the fragmented state of the current C&M sector. “It’s time for us to circle the wagons”, said one of the respondents, when asked what were the major constraints on education and training in C&M business models. The respondents also believed that a united sector would facilitate discussions regarding key issues that the sector faces. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents believed that the sector’s interests failed to attract interest from the government, professional

associations and the tertiary education institutions (universities and TAFEs) simply because there was no united front to actively lobby on the sector's behalf.

The third root cause is the lack of access to relevant knowledge resources for the all of the sector's stakeholders. All of the respondents felt that one primary knowledge resource would help not only improve knowledge within their organisations but would also directly impact the knowledge of all the other stakeholders of their organisation. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents felt that one primary knowledge resource would eliminate repetitive efforts within organisations to create content that facilitates a rudimentary understanding of the governing principles and distinguishing features of C&M organisations.

It is evident that all three root causes reinforce each other and need to be addressed in order to break the chain of causality. A lack of awareness exists because there is a lack of accessible relevant content. This relevant content is not available because the sector does not promote itself through a united front. The role of the BCCM as a representative body that addresses all three root causes is elaborated in the following section.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

The BCCM's national strategy needs to address the three root causes identified in 6.1 in order to bridge the education and training gap that is prevalent in the C&M sector. The findings from the interviews and the comparative analysis of current and planned provisions in Australia, Canada and the UK have been integrated into cohesive recommendations for the BCCM to action through three key strategic objectives.

## **Network**

The BCCM's first strategic objective should be to develop an inclusive network that will allow the C&M sector to develop a forceful presence within the business community. This objective would address both the root cause of lack of awareness and the fragmented sector through collaborative promotion of the sector's interests to government, professional bodies, tertiary education institutions and the general public. This strategic objective will enable the BCCM to bridge the education and training gap present among external resources (future employees and external consultants) utilised by the C&M sector. The Worker Co-operative Code of Governance, the Co-operative Enterprise Hub and Co-operative and Mutual Solutions are all serve to demonstrate how institutions can foster collaborative networks, in this case within the C&M sector in the UK.

## **Forum**

The BCCM's second strategic objective should be to facilitate a forum where prevailing issues that concern the C&M sector are raised and discussed and where best practice can be shared, thus re-generating the "co-operation amongst co-operatives" principle. The aim of this objective is to address both the root cause of a fragmented sector as well as the lack of knowledge resources. This strategic objective will enable the BCCM to bridge the education and training gap present within top and senior management regarding the wider issues that concern the C&M sector. Furthermore, it will enable the sector to identify and effectively take action on critical concerns through the BCCM. The BCCM should look to CAFCE and CMC, two institutions that represent the wide variety of industries that make up the C&M sector in Canada, as enablers in terms of providing access to best practice and knowledge of successful C&M organisations.

## **Collaboration**

The third strategic objective of the BCCM should be to promote collaboration of the C&M sector with independent training providers, tertiary education institutions and

professional associations. This collaborative effort should aim to engage all stakeholders in order to create and deliver relevant content on behalf of the sector. The specific nature of the content would be tailored to its intended recipients. For example, for the government it might be in the form of a petition; for tertiary education institutions grants, fellowships and industry placement programmes may be offered; for members, accessible online content that elaborates and explains the nature of the C&M business model and its various implications for them could be provided; for the wider community, news of the achievements and successes of the C&M business sector and their sustainability advantage over other business models should be propagated. This third and final strategic objective will address all three root causes; the lack of awareness, sector fragmentation and lack of knowledge resources. It is important to note that the success of this final objective hinges on whether the first two objectives have been successfully met. Furthermore, it will help bridge the education and training gap across all levels of the organisation as well as that among external resources (future employees and external consultants).

Effective collaborative efforts can be observed in the UK, where the Co-operative College effectively acts as a network institution that promotes the values and ideas of C&Ms both within the sector and to the wider community. It offers tailored training programmes to the various levels of staff within the sector and also assists tertiary institutions in setting up their co-operative education programs. The Co-operative College also disseminates relevant information through their website for the benefit of the sector. Similarly in Canada, CAFCE and CMC also function as enablers of co-operative collaboration.

A great deal can also be learned from Canada where a heavy emphasis on work placements has fostered a highly collaborative environment between employers, tertiary institutions, and CAFCE and CMC. Each player performs an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the overall collaboration, with the resulting benefits permeating throughout the sector.



## **7. Conclusion**

It is clear that the BCCM, as the C&M sector's representative body, can play a key role in improving the provision of relevant and effective education and training not only for the sector itself, but also the wider community. The strategic objectives proposed build on the strengths and ideas of the sector to meet both current and future needs. Moreover, the BCCM will need to develop a united network, promote an active forum and nurture collaboration amongst all relevant stakeholders within the C&M sector. Meeting these objectives will enable the development of a true learning community that will engage people and drive the visibility and growth of the sector.

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## **9. Appendix**

### **Appendix I – Education and Training Provisions**

#### **Australia Provision – Tertiary Level**

##### **University of Sydney – Co-operatives Research Group**

The Co-operatives Research Group provides a forum for research into and teaching about all forms of mutual organisations, including; consumer, social, worker, finance, producer co-operatives and other membership based democratic organisations. The Group aims to shape and inform public policy debate on the co-operative sector and the contribution it makes and has the potential to make to social and economic development. The Group provides regular seminars and hosts annual conferences.

The Co-operatives Research Group will be hosting a Co-operatives and Mutuals Research and Training Conference on 19-20 November 2014. The conference will focus on economics, management, finance, law, politics, social impact and the history of co-operatives and mutuals. The key aim of this conference is to set up a national organisation for training and research.

Link: <http://sydney.edu.au/business/research/co-operatives>

##### **University of Sydney – Co-operatives and Mutuals Course**

A co-operatives and mutuals course is presently being developed by the Business School and will be offered in 2015. It will be offered as a module as part of a wide number of postgraduate university courses that include MBA, Commerce, International Business, Management and Marketing. It will also be offered in all of the Master of Commerce specialisations as a compulsory or elective subject.

The course will cover a wide range of topics, which include what co-operatives and mutuals are, their historical background, their current state of play in Australia and overseas, the legal and accounting framework as well as public policy and politics. The course aims to provide students with a general introduction for co-operatives and mutuals in all sectors, with students undertaking projects with industry partners.

The University will be offering an elective co-operative and mutual module that will run for a total of 39 hours. It will be part of the Master of Commerce program and will commence in 2015.

### **University of Western Australia**

The Australian Institute of Management WA (AIM-WA) and University of Western Australia (UWA) Business School will offer a new program on co-operatives and mutuals in the week 15-19 September 2014 and thereafter annually. The Executive Leadership Program for Co-operatives and Mutuals (ELP-CM) will focus on :

- Understanding the co-op and mutual enterprise business model;
- Governance and leadership in member-owned businesses;
- Marketing our competitive advantage – with a focus on identifying and delivering of value to members;
- Financing the co-op and mutual enterprise – including the design and use of co-operative capital units CCUs; and
- Legislative structures and their impact on co-op and mutual enterprises – focusing on Australian and international legislative and regulatory environments.

The program seeks to focus on action learning with an emphasis on real life business problems and processes, taught by managers and directors who attend the course.

This program is not formally accredited within UWA, however does have the option to be accredited.

Link:

[http://www.aimwa.com/Programs\\_Seminars\\_Events/Management\\_and\\_Leadership/Senior\\_Executive\\_Development/2014/015\\_ELP\\_Coops\\_and\\_Mutuals?sc\\_lang=en](http://www.aimwa.com/Programs_Seminars_Events/Management_and_Leadership/Senior_Executive_Development/2014/015_ELP_Coops_and_Mutuals?sc_lang=en)

## **Charles Sturt University**

CSU is presently working with the Co-operative Federation of NSW developing a co-operatives and mutuals course to be offered as part of their Graduate Certificate in Commerce in 2015. The course will be offered part time over two sessions, and by distance education and will focus on providing students with a clear understanding of the characteristics of co-operatives and mutuals and how they compare and/or contrast with other types of organisations. Students will also be versed in key business and management skills albeit within the co-operative setting.

The estimated cost of each subject is \$2,400, with a total of four subjects comprising the course.

It should be noted that the proposed course is still in the discussion stage and may be subject to change.

## **University of South Australia**

The Australasian Mutuals Institute (AM Institute) - has entered into a partnership to jointly sponsor the MBA program with the University of South Australia to eligible managers and supervisors working in Credit Unions, Building Societies, Mutual Banks and Friendly Societies.

This program equips participants with a range of skills required to become effective leaders and opens up promotional career opportunities in addition to personal development.

The UniSA Mutual Sector MBA consists of 12 courses, and is structured in three stages. The first stage of four courses makes up the Graduate Certificate in Business Administration. Building on those four with successful completion of another four courses means the participant achieves the Graduate Diploma in Business Administration. Successfully undertaking a further four means the participant will be awarded a Master of Business Administration (MBA).

Link: <http://www.unisa.edu.au/Business-community/Strategic-partnerships/Education-programs/Partnerships-and-Programs/AM-Institute-MBA/>

## **Australia Provision – Work Level**

### **1. Co-operative Sector**

#### **Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM)**

The Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals (BCCM) exists to promote the role of co-operatives and mutuals in the national economy and to provide leadership in the important areas of research, education and advocacy to build a strong sector.

The BCCM also provides a national networking platform for co-operative and mutual businesses to share best practice and to foster business partnerships and an enterprising culture through holding a range of conference and seminars for the members and public.

#### **Co-operatives of Western Australia**

Co-operatives WA offers the following services:

- Advice on Co-operative matters
- Contact with State and Commonwealth Governments
- Co-operatives Australia - Board Representation
- Training programs in co-operative practice
- Annual conference
- Information on Co-operatives Act 2009
- Assistance with the formation of new co-operatives
- Central point for exchange of information
- Register of members

Link: <http://www.co-operativeswa.org.au/>

#### **The Co-operative Federation of NSW**

- Represents and assists co-operatives and like entities in their relationships with government;
- Facilitates and provides assistance and services, including the Co-operatives Conference every 18 months;



- Promotes public awareness and understanding of the significance of co-operative structures;
- Promotes the exchange of information amongst co-operative entities; and
- Works with other co-operative organisations interstate and internationally.
- Full member of BCCM (Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals), the Co-operative Federation represents small Co-operatives at National Peak Body Level

Link: <http://www.coopsnsw.coop/>

## **2. Financial Mutuals**

### **Australasian Mutuals Institute**

The role of the Australasian Mutuals Institute (AM Institute) is to create and maintain best practice in mutuals' governance management and offer continuous learning opportunities for individuals and mutuals and provide an appropriate recognition of achievement.

Objectives:

- Promote excellence, professionalism and integrity for members working in mutuals; to improve their knowledge and skills with respect to their rights, duties, roles and responsibilities;
- Facilitate the education and professional development of Members at both a national and a regional level;

AMI also offers a range of courses to facilitate the training and education provision for co-operative and mutual members:

- AM Institute Program Offerings
- Prime Time Training Workshop
- CBT / Psychology for the Workplace
- Coaching & Mentoring
- Australian Securitisation Forum

Link: [www.aminstitute.org.au/](http://www.aminstitute.org.au/)

### **3. Employee-owned Co-operatives**

#### **Employee Ownership Association Australia and New Zealand (EOANZ)**

The EOANZ holds an annual conference and awards program. The conference program explores employee ownership issues in Australia with reference to company stories in Australia and globally. Link: <http://www.employeeownership.com.au>

#### **Fifth Co-operative Principle – Education, Training, & Information**

Context:

In October 2012 in Manchester, UK, delegates to the International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly awarded a mandate to the Principles Committee to create Guidance Notes for the 1995 Co-operative Principles.

The Fifth Principle from the Co-operative Principles Guidance Draft highlighted the education and training provision for their members. Here are few main points highlighted.

- Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operative. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of co-operation.
- Member education needs to be an important focus for co-operatives, and means more than simply informing co-operative members about the business and encouraging trading loyalty, albeit it must do those things as well. It must also provide avenues for members to learn about co-operative identity and values and the global co-operative family of which their co-operative is part.
- Member education should help members understand the rights and responsibilities of membership including their need to exercise their democratic rights. Member education can help secure an active and informed membership and ensure that elected representatives and leaders are ones who share their vision and aspirations for the success of their co-operative, and have the necessary skills to carry out their responsibilities.

It has provided co-operative education for the wider public. Further and in addition to providing for co-operative members and employees, co-operatives should promote education and information programmes that help raise awareness of the role and potential of the whole co-operative sector and challenge the way the sector is ignored by the mainstream media.

- [International Co-operative Alliance, Co-operative Principles](#)

### **Centre for Entrepreneurial Management and Innovation (CEMI)**

The Centre for Entrepreneurial Management and Innovation (CEMI) developed the Co-operative Enterprise Research Program (CERP) to conduct research into C&M business models. As part of its efforts CERP is conducting a 'Sustainable Co-operative Enterprise Research Study', which seeks to determine the drivers of the co-operative business model along with the factors that make them unique and competitive.

Despite their significance there is relatively little research available on drivers of the co-operative business model and what makes it both unique and competitive. This study addresses these issues and assists Co-operatives WA to prepare for the introduction of new State legislation and provide research of benefit to co-operatives at the national level. Funded under an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Grant between the University of Western Australia (UWA), Co-operatives WA, Co-operative Bulk Handling and the Capricorn Society, the project will address five interrelated research questions:

- What causes a co-operative to abandon its principles, values and business mode and transform into an investor-owned enterprise?
- How does a Co-operative measure and communicate the true value of membership?
- Are there best practice examples of Co-operative Boards that provide lessons for future business models?
- How does a Co-operative successfully participate in financial markets without compromising its principles, values and business model?

- What are the alternatives to the "one-member-one-vote" principle normally associated with Co-operatives and how do these alternatives strengthen or weaken a Co-operative's ability to operate in a sustainable and competitive way over time?

Link: [www.cemi.com.au](http://www.cemi.com.au)

## **Canada Provision – Tertiary Level**

### **Saint Mary's University**

Saint Mary's University offers co-op education through a wide number of university courses. Many courses offer a co-op placement, where students are able to learn about co-ops and then apply their knowledge in work placements. The following courses offer co-op placements: Bachelor of Arts, Commerce, Science and Master of Science in Applied Science.

There is an emphasis on working and studying at the same time, which not only allows students to apply what they learn in class and see how co-ops work in the real world, but also allows students to earn an income and pay for their studies.

The courses are structured where academic terms are alternated with co-op work terms, after the second year.

Saint Mary's also offers Master of Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions, which is to be completed within three years and includes a 10-day international study tour. The course seeks to enhance management skills of current and future co-op leaders and is offered online.

There is also the Graduate Diploma in Co-operative Management, where is a 16-20 month course that is run online. It was newly introduced in 2013 and focuses on the history and evolution of co-operatives, as well as teaching governance, strategy, leadership and people skills. There is also a focus on getting students from various countries to interact and share their experience as part of a co-operative learning community.

The Bilingual Certificate in Co-operative Management Level 1 and 2 is run in partnership with IRECUS (The Institute for Research and Education for Co-operatives and Mutuels at the University of Sherbrooke). Level 1 courses run for 30 weeks with courses requiring a commitment of 10 hours per week. Level 2 courses are also 30 weeks and require 20 hours' commitment per week.

For all the aforementioned courses, there is an emphasis on building networks to expand the co-op network.

Link: [www.smu.ca/academics/coop-education.html](http://www.smu.ca/academics/coop-education.html)

### **University of Waterloo**

The University of Waterloo offers the largest post-secondary co-op program in the world, with a combination of academic and work experience being the outcomes of their programs. Students are expected to obtain two years' worth of work experience following completion of their programs. The co-op program generally takes about five academic years to complete; with up to six four-month work terms included the curriculum.

The university has a number of internal partners that caters for specific co-op needs. They include:

- **Co-operative Education and Career Action**, which manages the education system and career-related services for the university;
- **Waterloo Centre for the Advancement of Co-operative Education** seeks to share some of the best practices of work-integrated learning through the conduct, facilitation and application of research, as well as increasing understanding;
- **Waterloo Professional Development Program** provides relevant and engaging online courses which seeks to improve students' employability and workplace productivity;
- **Enterprise co-op** offers advice on starting businesses to undergraduates who want to start their own business full-time, during a summer term or on a co-op work term; and

- **Co-op Students' Council** gives co-op students the chance to provide feedback into co-op education policies and procedures.

Link: <https://uwaterloo.ca/co-operative-education/>

### **University of British Columbia**

The key focus at this university is on short-term work placements and special projects with employers, who are able to access the vast student talent pool.

Students are generally available for 4, 8, 12 and sometimes 16 months for the work placements or special projects.

The aim is to consolidate students' knowledge gained through classes through practical application in the work place. The programs also provides employers with an opportunity of assessing a student's "organisational fit" during work placement terms, which provides students with an opportunity for a permanent position upon completion of their work placement or special project.

Link: <http://www.coop.ubc.ca>

### **The Institute for Research and Education for Co-operatives and Mutuals at the University of Sherbrooke (IRECUS)**

IRECUS was established for multidisciplinary education and research in the management and development of co-operatives and mutuals. IRECUS seeks to design and implement related co-operative movement and mutual multidisciplinary education programs.

They offer courses such as the Master in Management and Governance of Co-operatives and Mutuals. This is a 10-month course to train people with co-operative knowledge and skills to be able to effectively work in all sectors of the economy. Also offered is the aforementioned Bilingual Certificate in Co-operative Management Level 1 and 2.

The primary purpose of IRECUS is more concerned with the research and designing of co-operative education and research projects. Relationships have been developed and maintained with Quebec provincial organisations, Canadian and international organisations who are interested in its mission. IRECUS seeks to be a central hub for information convergence and dissemination.

Link: <http://www.usherbrooke.ca/irecus/>

## **Canada Provision – Work Level**

### **Canadian Association for Co-Operative Education (CAFCE)**

Seeks to foster and advance post-secondary co-operative education in Canada. Working in partnership, they have established a national forum of professional co-op practitioners, established national standards and promote the value of post-secondary co-operative education. They also seek to deliver opportunities for learning and sharing of best practices between co-ops, as well as developing and capitalising on international partnerships/alliances.

A professional development committee also exists to develop and assist in the delivery of professional development opportunities for members via conferences, professional development sessions, webinars and so forth.

They have an online Co-op Program Directory that assists students and interested in post-secondary co-op education in Canada. It provides a comprehensive list of what programs are available at various institutions that students could use in finding a suitable program to study. The directory also helps employers link up with co-operative education students for work term placements.

CAFCE are actively involved in various promotional activities, and this year, organised the Co-operative Education Week during 17-21 March 2014. The successes of co-ops and students were strongly promoted during this week, with the following promotional activities being encouraged:

- Submit articles to local newspapers and school/university newspapers;
- Send out newsletters;

- Do a show on a local cable channel;
- Highlight co-ops on school websites;
- Speak at departmental and community meetings, highlighting the benefits of co-ops.

The following media and promotional activities are encouraged regularly:

- List co-op employer profiles and their history with your co-op education program in internal/external newsletters and websites;
- Cold-call to encourage new companies/organisations to hire co-op students;
- Set up co-op awareness booths on campus at university/high school; and
- Include co-op students when promoting co-ops on campus.

Social activities should include co-op employers, staff and students and focus on building better relationships within the sector.

They have an international committee that focuses on international partnerships with members of CAFCE being able to go on international work placements, particularly in the United States due to its geographic proximity. They also develop resources to help international students understand and familiarise themselves with the Canadian workplace.

Link: <http://www.cafce.ca/>

### **Co-operatives and Mutuels Canada (CMC)**

CMC are a national body that represents over 18 million co-operative members from 9,000 co-operatives. They advocate on behalf of their members with the federal government concerning national policies that aims to strengthen the co-operative sector.

CMC have a Co-op Development Program which assists with issues such as starting up a co-op or expanding or improving existing co-ops. Part of this program is an online documentation centre that is essentially a tool kit of information from successful co-ops within Canada and internationally. It utilises lessons learned from successful co-ops and mutuels to help develop or improve co-ops and mutuels in Canada.



Offer a range of educational resources such as events, seminars and webinars to assist co-ops and mutuals establish and develop in Canada. They target leaders in governance as well as staff and management in co-ops and mutuals to broaden their knowledge and build capacity in the co-operative workplace. They have standard events and courses and also offer customised educational seminars for organisations.

The Corporate secretaries conference provides networking and professional development opportunity to those in a governance role and/or resource the board of directors in co-ops and mutuals. The Institute of Co-op Leadership is a periodic conference for co-op directors, executives and senior staff, where they discuss larger co-op related issues, economic trends and leadership theory and practice.

As research is important in the growth of any sector, CMC is actively involved in a number of research projects. They include:

- Measuring the Co-operative Difference Research Network – working to create tools to measure the value added by co-operatives, strengthen existing networks and links within the co-operative movement, inform public policy on the role and value of co-operatives in meeting various goals; and
- Canadian Co-operative Research Network – this network maintains a public online co-operative research hub for news, events, researcher profiles as well as an extensive library of co-operative research containing over 1,400 links, reports and articles. News is posted to the site weekly and visitors are welcome to sign up and receive newsletters.

CMC is presently developing a governance portal where cross-sector sharing of resources is the aim. This governance portal will contain tools such as board evaluation tools, publications such as research reports, PowerPoint slides from previous CMC events, links to co-op legislation and any other useful links, as well as an inventory of training consultants.

Link: [www.canada.coop](http://www.canada.coop)

## **UK Provision – Tertiary Level**

**Sheffield Business School**

#### Full-Time Study:

- 3 PhD bursaries for people who want to pursue an academic career
- On a full-time study basis, bursaries will covers course fees, and provides £13,650 (tax free) for living costs/subsistence.
- Applications are sought from people capable of completing a PhD in 3 years
- Target area: business and society, organizational and social sustainability; innovation, creativity and technology; organizational and workplace innovation and leadership training

#### Part-Time Study (Summer Unit):

- 3 Days intensive courses
- Open Application
- Target area: Explore the social and economic contribution of co-operatives and social enterprises

### **Sheffield Hallam University**

#### Co-operative and Social Enterprise Summer School 2014:

The course provides participants with an opportunity to develop their knowledge about the rationale, purposes and practices of co-operative and social enterprises in order to frame educational curricula and entrepreneurship strategies in collaboration with: social entrepreneurs, universities, local, national and international, co-operative members and business advisers.

Three day course:

Day 1 focuses on theoretical perspectives

Days 2 and 3 focus on applying theory to practice

Link: <http://www.shu.ac.uk/sbs/co-operative-and-social-enterprise-summer-school>

## **The Co-operative College**

A British educational charity dedicated to the promotion of co-operative values, ideas and principles within co-operatives, communities and society. It offers a range of training programs designed to meet the needs of members, directors, managers and employees of co-operatives and mutual organizations nationally.

It delivers programs to help individuals and groups achieve the skills and understanding needed to put co-operative values and principles into effective practice and help build successful co-operative businesses. It works with a wide range of universities, government departments and non-governmental organizations, together with a rapidly growing network of co-operative schools.

### Key areas of work

- Researching co-operatives
- Co-operative Learning and Development
- Co-operatives Globally - International work
- Co-operative heritage
- Schools and young people

**Online Learning:** The Co-operative College provides lists of virtual learning programme to its students for the ease of their studies and researches. It offers a range of training programmes designed to meet the needs of members, directors, managers and employees of co-operatives and mutual organisations nationally.

**Resources and Database:** The Co-operative College disseminate research findings on co-operatives as widely as possible. They produce a range of accessible publications for wide circulation in the co-operative movement and beyond. These publications, along with the briefing papers, can be viewed and download in the Resources section of the site. They also created an online library which provides a comprehensive guide to publications and electronic documents relating to co-operative research. They also present papers and other contributions on co-operatives research at conferences and other events.

**Partnership:** The Co-operative College had entered into a partnership arrangement with Business Impact Training (BIT), which receives government funding to provide subsidized training and assessment leading to nationally recognised work-based qualifications.

Link: [www.co-op.ac.uk/](http://www.co-op.ac.uk/)

## **UK Provision – Work Level**

### **Worker Co-operative Code of Governance**

The Principle 5 of the Worker Co-operative Code of Governance highlighted that the co-operatives need to provide education and training for their members and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives.

Co-operatives should:

1. Assess the technical, management and co-operative skills needed to achieve your long term plans and replace key members who leave.
2. Ensure all prospective members, members and elected representatives receive training in membership and co-operative skills.
3. Encourage members in specialist roles to obtain technical skills and professional development for current and future needs.
4. Develop and share management skills and techniques permit efficient co-operative business co-ordination.
5. Educate business partners, customers and the public about the nature and benefits of co-operative forms of business.

### **The Co-operative Enterprise Hub**

The Co-operative Enterprise Hub is supporting the development and growth of co-operatives in the UK.

- It provides you with up to four days' free support, depending on your needs.

- Expert advice and training are delivered by co-operative development advisers and is available to you at any stage
- During your advice and training, advisers can also work with you to put together a finance package.
- The Co-operative Enterprise Hub also offers specialist packages of support for renewable energy co-operatives and groups involved in employee buyouts.

Link: <http://www.co-operative.coop/enterprise-hub>

### **Co-operative and Mutual Solutions**

Co-operative and Mutual Solutions has been working with co-operative and social enterprises for over 11 years. They are a worker co-operative ourselves with a passion for values based, member led businesses. They provide work with new start businesses, those that are established and want to grow and groups of people in transformation/looking to transfer.

These are the areas that they assist in:

- Transformation into coop structure
- Business and financial planning
- Market research and marketing
- Designing a new organisation
- Legal and governance structures
- Setting up effective systems
- Capacity building training

Link: <http://cms.coop/>

### **Co-operative Business Consultants**

CBC aim to promote democratic and participative management methods and techniques within the wider co-operative sector. Bob Cannell, Jo Bird and Kevin McGrother advise all kinds of co-operatives at all stages of development. CBC members are based in Bradford, Manchester and Hartlepool.

CBC provide support with:

- Co-operative human resource management
- Co-operative working practices
- Business planning and development
- Legal structures
- Income generation
- Fundraising and community shares
- Growth and organisational development
- Operations and risk management
- Democratic governance
- Financial management
- Team building and participative management
- International and FairTrade issues

And effectively deliver at:

- Research, reports and feasibility studies
- Business plans
- Business process and organisation audits
- Promotion, representation and negotiation
- Membership engagement
- Fundraising, lobbying and bid writing within the co-operative sector
- Hands-on problem solving and management support
- Practical training, events and seminars
- Mentoring when you need it – face to face, by e-mail, phone and/or Skype
- Reliable referrals – no dead ends that waste your time

Link: <http://www.cbc.coop/>

### **Plunkett Foundation**

The Plunkett Foundation helps rural communities in the UK to take control of the issues affecting them through community ownership.

The Foundation's work includes:

- Supporting the growing network of community-owned shops across the UK
- Promoting and supporting wider forms of community-owned enterprises and co-operatives in rural communities
- Promoting and supporting community food and farming enterprises
- Advocacy and awareness raising with the purpose of increasing awareness of the potential of community-ownership in rural areas and making it easier for rural communities to take action

The Plunkett Foundation was founded in 1919 by the pioneer of rural co-operation in Ireland, Sir Horace Plunkett. Since being founded it has been involved in a range of work relating to international development, rural development and agricultural development. It is based in Oxfordshire, England.

Link: <http://www.plunkett.co.uk>

## **Appendix II – Interview Questions**

### **Organisational Training Needs Assessment Interview**

#### **Interview Questions**

##### **I. About your organisation**

Approximately how many employees and/or how many members does your organisation have?

##### **II. Organisational Goals and Objectives**

1. What is the main purpose of your organisation? (e.g. to provide health insurance, to provide access to fairly priced locally sourced wholefoods → maximum of 3 “objectives”)
2. What are the long-term strategic objectives of your organisation, if these differ from main purpose? (e.g. membership growth, more differentiated member services, more or different advocacy goals; business growth – more outlets/branches etc.)

### **III. Human Resources and Internal Constraints on Meeting Goals and Objectives**

#### *3. Future staff*

- a. Given growth objectives (or other objectives → based on responses from question 1 and 2), will you need additional HR resources?
- b. If so, in what areas? If not, proceed to question 4.
- c. Will these staff need specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge and expertise working in these areas of the business?
- d. If so, based on your knowledge and understanding of the resources available today, do you believe you'll be able to recruit individuals sufficiently qualified in the relevant areas (i.e. with specialist C&M training and knowledge) to meet future objectives?
- e. What types of qualifications would you require (e.g. TAFE, University – masters/post-grad, independent training, online training courses, professional associations)?

#### *4. Existing staff*

- a. In your view/experience, which areas of your organisation need specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge (e.g. board level, general management, functional areas)? All or some areas? Which areas?
- b. Do they currently have an adequate level of co-operative and mutual business knowledge? If yes, then go to question 5.
- c. If no, which staff most lack this knowledge?
- d. What sort of training content/topic is needed or would be beneficial to fill this gap?
- e. Do you think training needs could be adequately met by professional associations or independent trainers? (professional development/training).
- f. Why/why not?
- g. What is your view about the need for specialist TAFE and University training in co-operative and mutual areas of knowledge? (education)

#### *5. Expected outcomes of training and knowledge for staff and organisation*



- a. What difference (to the success, profitability, efficiency of your organisation) do you think it would make if your staff had specialist co-operative and mutual training in their particular area of your organisation?
- b. How is the specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge of your staff helpful to the achievement of your organisation's goals and objectives? (Encourage interviewee to provide 1 or 2 examples)

### **III. Organisational Transfer Climate**

6. What specialist co-op/mutual training do you currently provide to your staff?
7. What specialist training are you planning to implement in the future (if any)?
8. *Co-operative and mutual knowledge transfer*
  - a. How is co-operative and mutual knowledge transferred between existing staff? (Prompt – does your organisation provide any induction training in the co-op/mutual model? Do you provide bespoke training, written or video resources/do you carry out informal conversations with staff/members?)

### **IV. Consultants and Advisors and External Constraints on Meeting Goals and Objectives**

9. *External advisors and consultants*
  - a. To what extent does your organisation use external advisors/consultants to assist with co-operative and mutual specific knowledge and expertise? (Never/occasionally/regularly?)
  - b. If occasionally/regularly, why does your organisation bring in external consultants?
  - c. If never, why not? (e.g. lack of available consultancy, lack of interest, not an identified need in the organisation)
  - d. In your view/experience is there sufficient specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge/consultancy available in the market currently?
  - e. If no, why not?
  - f. In your view/experience what are the main constraints on adequate education and training in the co-operative/mutual business model? (e.g. lack

of specialist training, industry courses, inclusion of the business models in mainstream education; poor trainers, consultancy, organisational disinterest?)

## **V. Support**

### *10. Gauging support of the BCCM's efforts*

- a. Would your organisation be supportive of efforts to further develop specialist education and training for the co-op and mutual sector? (This is one of the BCCM's objectives)
- b. If yes, what would you like the results of these efforts to be? (e.g. more co-operative and mutual specific training in mainstream tertiary education system (universities, TAFE), such as accounting and legal courses; more external, specialist consultancy; more professional development opportunities at masters, post grad, diploma, grad certificate level; more industry training in specialist areas like accounting and legal?)

## **Appendix III – Interview Summary**

### **Mission**

Our interview aims to uncover the current and future education and training needs of the co-operative and mutual sector.

### **Interview Goals**

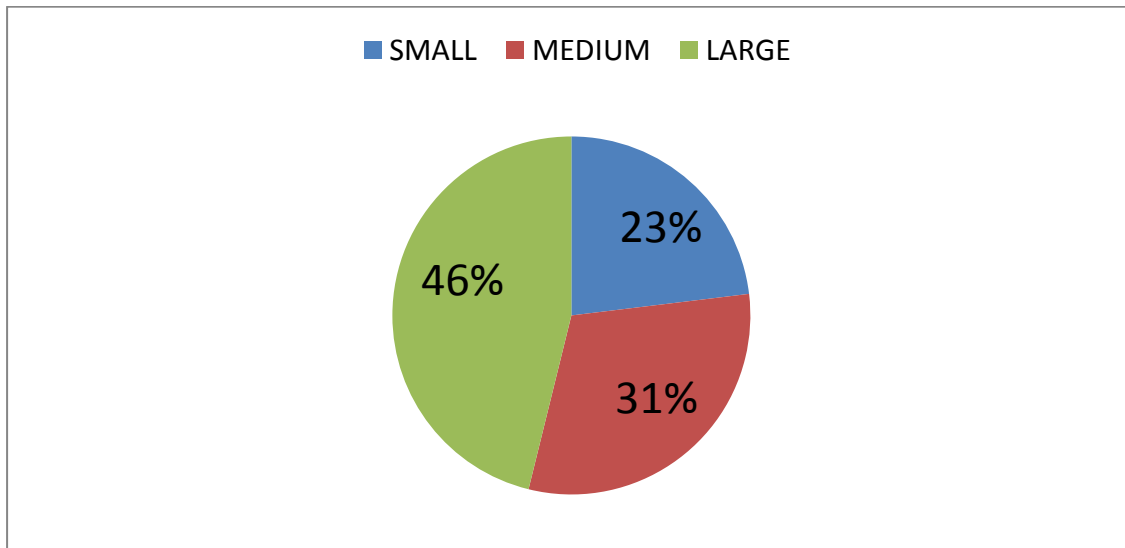
We are trying to establish whether there is indeed a chronic lack of education and training on co-operative and mutual business models for the co-operative and mutual business sector. We are thus looking for gaps in co-operative and mutual knowledge within the organisations we are interviewing.

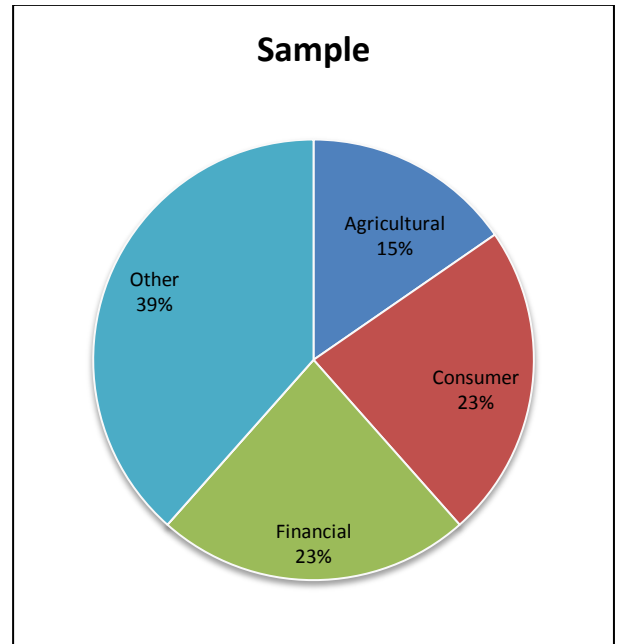
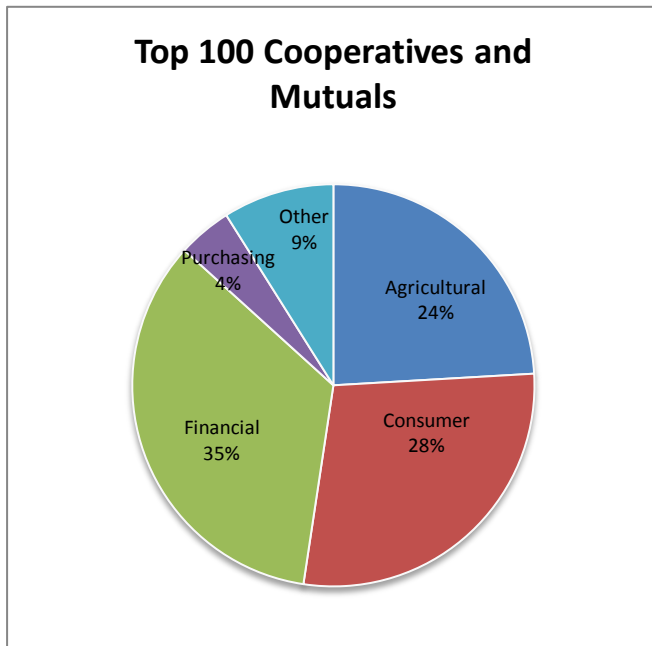
Questions we are seeking to answer through our interview questions: What are these organisations missing in terms of co-op and mutual knowledge and which particular areas of the organisation are most in need of this knowledge? What specific training is/will be available now/in the future?

Questions we are seeking to answer in the analysis of interview results: What role can the BCCM play in supporting the development of education and training for the sector to fill gaps in specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge? What are the building blocks that comprise its national strategy? Ultimately, we are seeking to understand specialised co-operative and mutual knowledge and training and to forecast the needs of the sector based on our results.

### Sample Categories and Diversity

Of the thirteen firms interviewed on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April and the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, three were small, four were medium and six were large as per ABS, 2001 classifications. Furthermore, the sample is representative of the industry diversity in the Co-operative and Mutual sector (ABS, 2012).



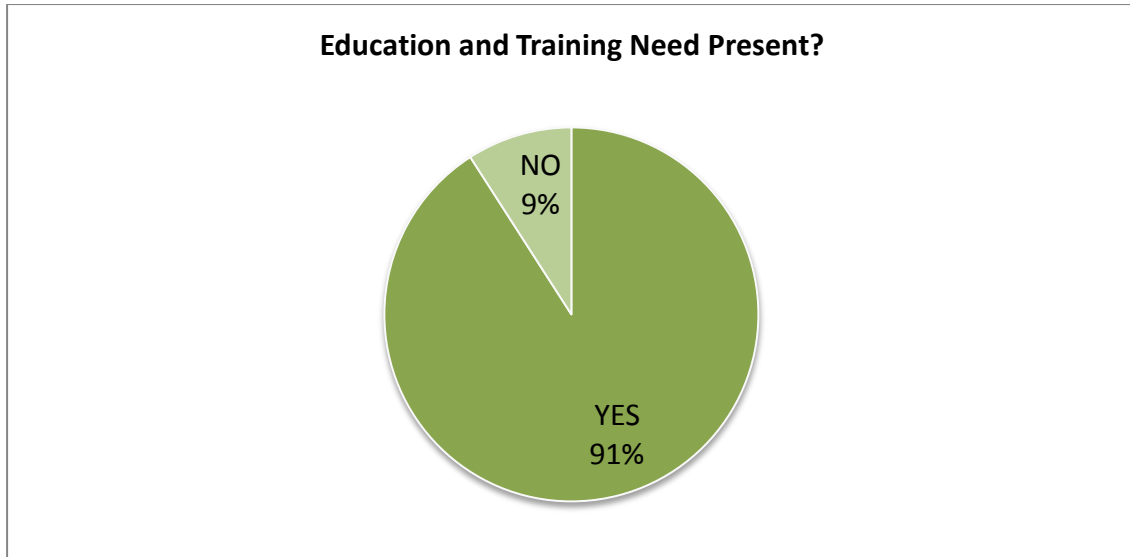


The top 100 co-operatives and mutuals are represented according to the total number of employees within each industry category (ABS, 2012). The sample is represented according to the number of interviewees that can be classified under the industry categories defined by the ABS (2012). With the exception of the 'Purchasing' category, all other industries were represented in the sample. Great care was taken to ensure the diversity and representativeness of the sample with respect to not only the organisation's size, but also its industry classification.

## Future Employees

### Needs (3a/3c):

- Eleven of the thirteen firms are hiring new employees and of these eleven hiring firms, ten think that future employees will require specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge.
- The two firms that aren't currently hiring also think that any future hires will require a certain degree of specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge.

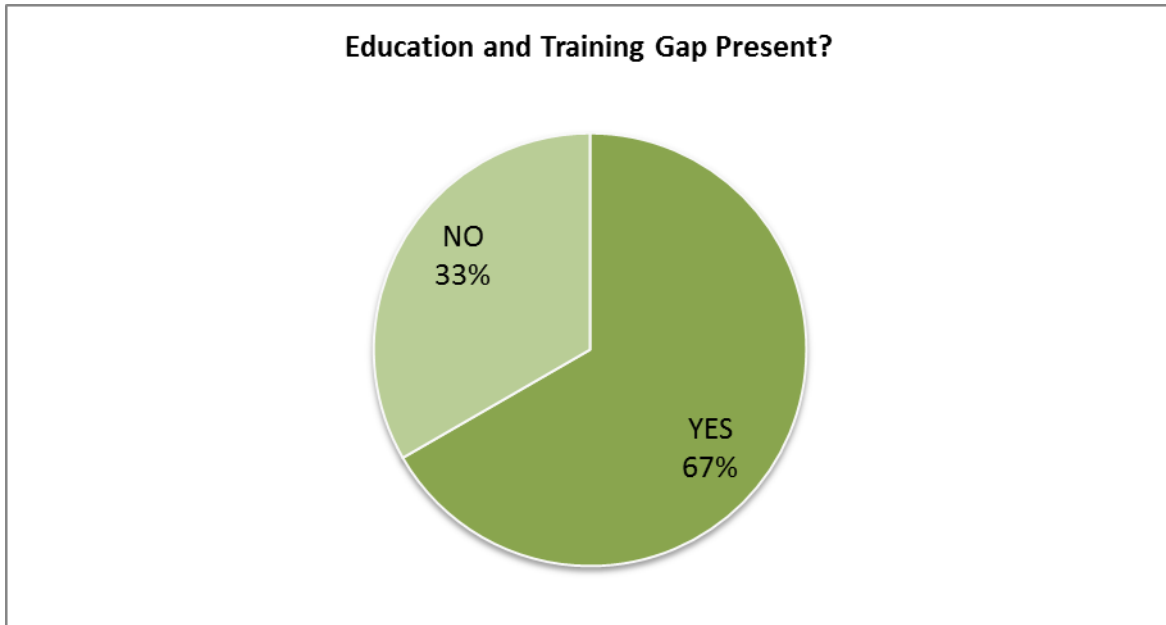


**Provision (4e/4g):**

- All of the firms think that independent trainers and professional bodies can provide the required training and education for their future staff.
- All of the firms also think that University/TAFE courses in co-operative and mutual business are a great potential source of education and training for their future staff.

**Gap (3d):**

- Of the twelve firms that think that future hires will require specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge, eight think that they will not be able to hire people with the required knowledge.
- The four remaining firms think that their potential employees, by default of their interest in working for the sector, will have adequate knowledge and cultural understanding of the co-operative and mutual business concept.



## **Current Employees**

### ***All Employees***

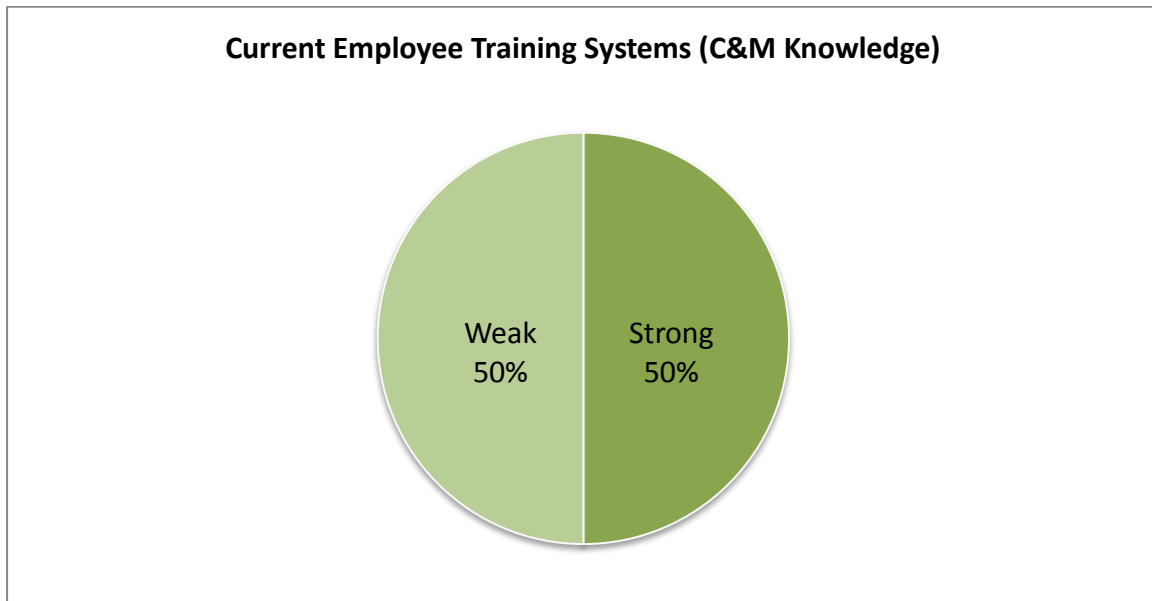
#### **Needs (4a/5a/5b):**

- Twelve of the thirteen firms think that there is a need for specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge at all levels of the organisation.
- These firms are also of the opinion that providing specialist co-operative and mutual training for their staff could make a significant contribution towards their organisation's success.

#### **Current Provisions (6, 8):**

- Of the twelve firms that recognise and value specialist co-operative and mutual education and training, six currently have strong internal training systems in place for their staff.
- The remaining six of these twelve firms have weak/no training systems for their staff other than the employee induction program.

- Two of the six firms with weak systems are planning to introduce stronger employee education and training systems in the foreseeable future.



**Gap (4b, 6):**

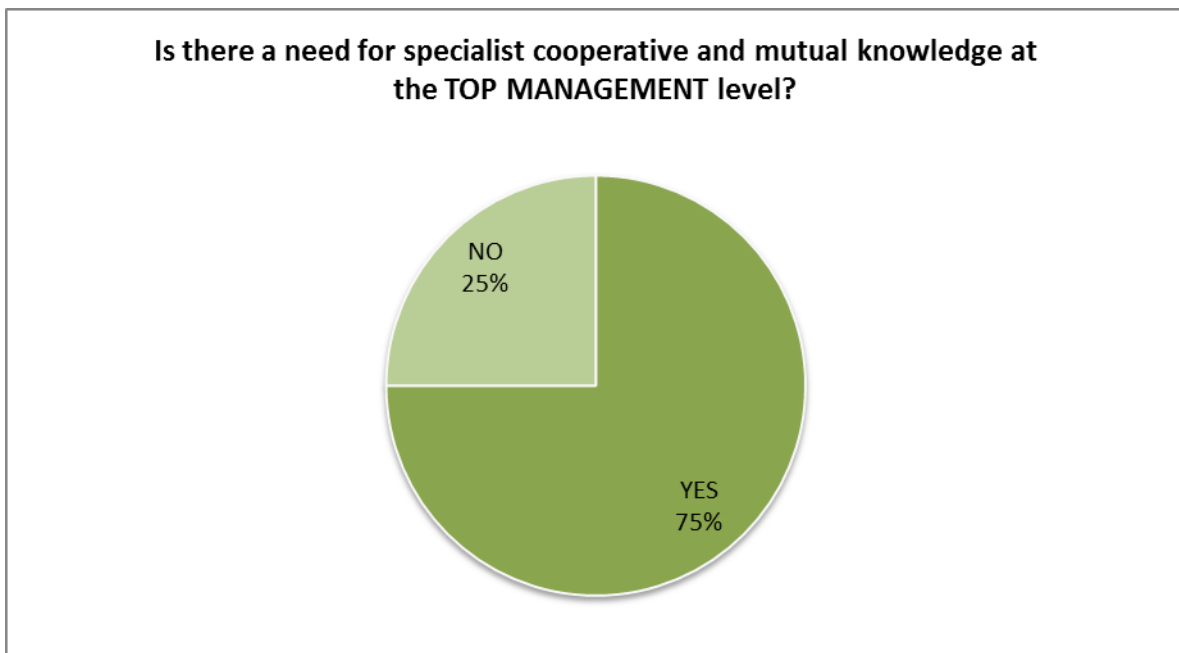
- Of the twelve firms that think there is a need for specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge that permeates all levels of the organisation, seven think that their current staff does not have sufficient specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge.
- Of these twelve firms, six of the firms think their staff currently has adequate knowledge; however, only three of these firms have strong formal training systems in place for their staff (apart from induction).  
→This has important implications for the importance and necessity of formal training systems in organisations - perhaps informal training systems will be more effective in some organisational settings.
- These twelve firms that think that their organisation requires specialist C&M knowledge can be further analysed by segmenting their current staff into Top Management, Senior and Middle Management and Non-Managerial Staff (see below).

## ***Employee Segments***

### **Top Management**

#### **Needs (4a):**

- Nine of the twelve firms think that there is a need for specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge that exists at the Top Management level.

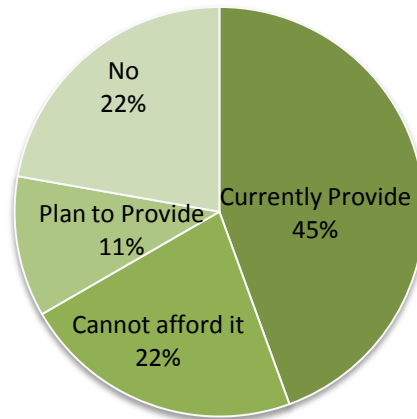


#### **Current Provisions (6):**

- Of these nine firms, four firms provide Top Management with specialist education and training sourced from independent training providers/consultants.
- Of the remaining five firms, two are small and are constrained by available resources, but both have expressed interest in gaining access to such education and training due to the value of this to their respective organisations.
- One of the five remaining firms intends to introduce formal specialist education and training in the near future.



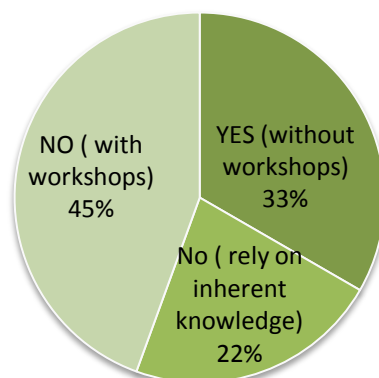
### Top Management Specialist Education and Training Provision



#### Gap (4b, 6):

- Of the nine firms, three believe that their Top Management requires further specialist knowledge about co-operatives and mutuals. All three firms have no specialist education and training provisions in place currently.
- Two of the remaining firms rely heavily on the inherent experience, knowledge and skill of their top management.
- The four firms that have strong training and education provisions in place believe that top management has adequate specialist skills and knowledge.  
→ This has important implications for the provision of specialist education and training to top management in the co-operatives and mutuals sector. There seems to be a measurable amount of success in workshops conducted by independent trainers and providers for top management.

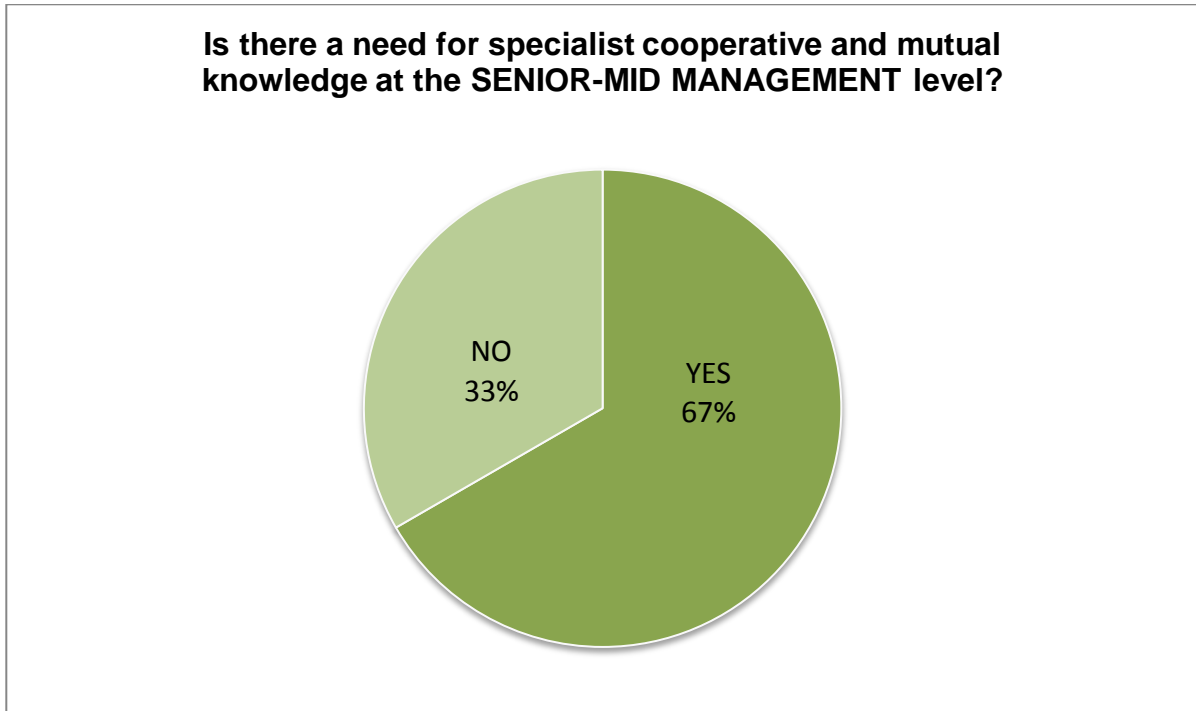
### Gap in specialist cooperative and mutual knowledge of Top Management?



## **Senior-Middle Management**

### **Needs (4a):**

- Eight of the twelve firms think that their senior-mid management requires specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge.



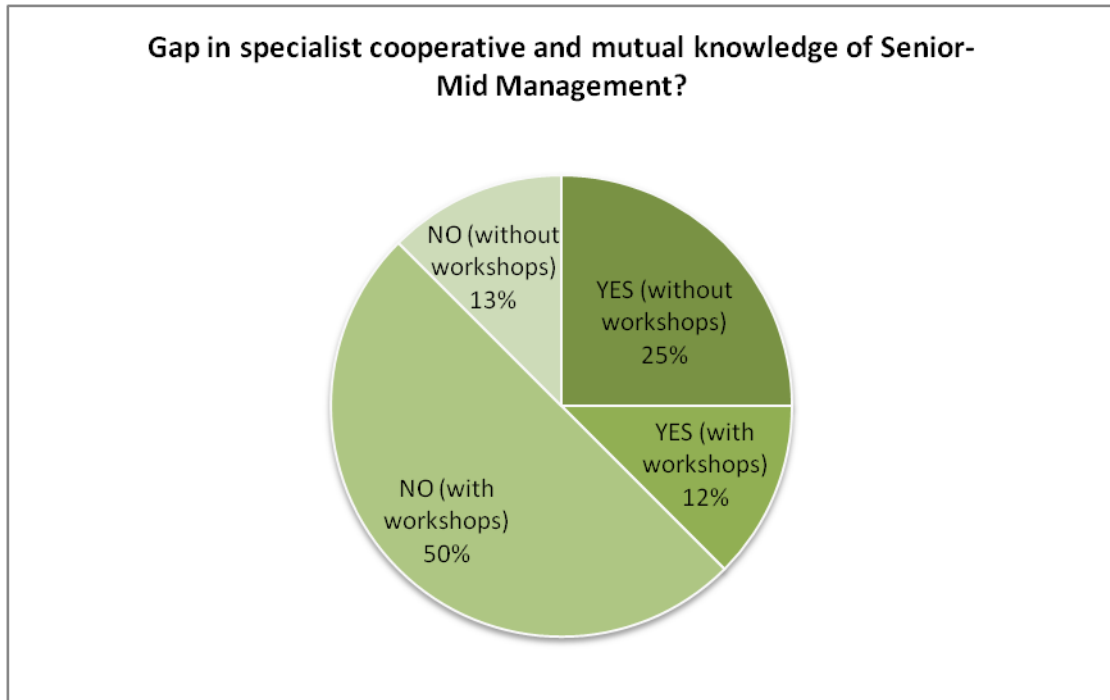
### **Current Provisions (6):**

- Of these eight firms, five currently provide their senior-middle managerial staff with specialist education and training sourced from independent training providers/consultants.
- One of the remaining three firms is interested in accessing such education and training but is currently constrained by its lack of financial resources.
- The remaining two firms rely on in-house expertise developed by their staff in senior-mid managerial positions.



**Gap (4b, 6):**

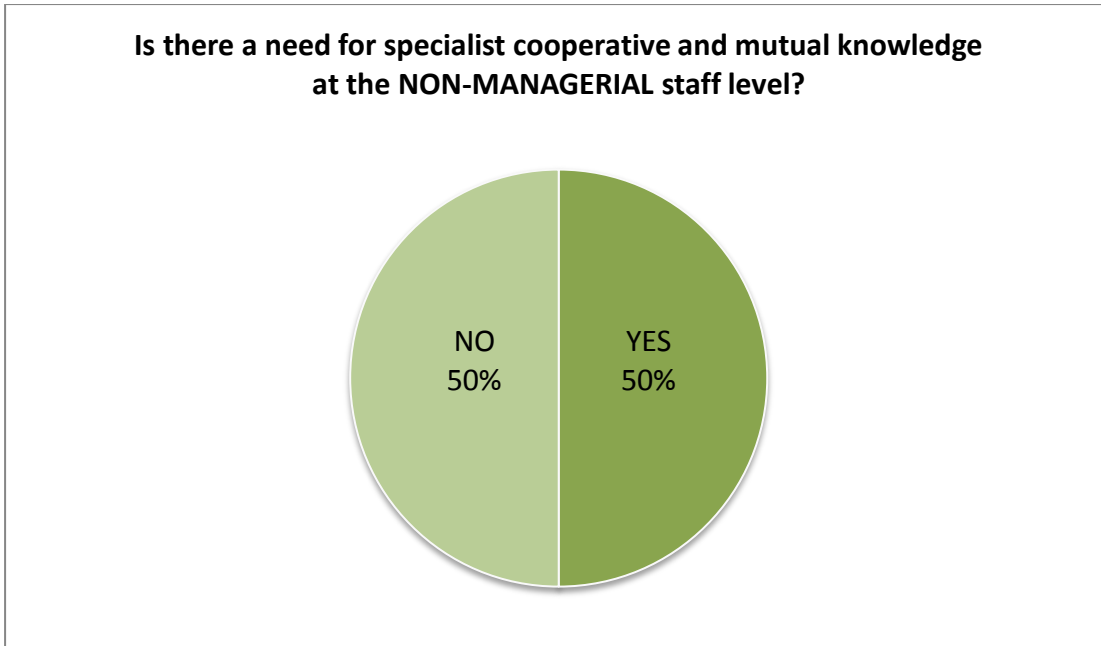
- Of these eight firms, three think that their senior-middle management staff requires additional specialist co-operative and mutual training and education.
- Amongst these three firms, only one currently provides their senior-mid managerial staff with specialist co-operative and mutual education and training; however, this training is developed in-house and not through independent training providers.
- Of the remaining five firms, four currently think that their senior-middle management currently has adequate specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge.
- Four of these remaining five firms provide their senior-middle managerial staff with training sourced from independent training providers.  
→ There seems to be a measurable amount of success in workshops conducted by independent trainers and providers for senior- middle management.



### **Non-Managerial Staff**

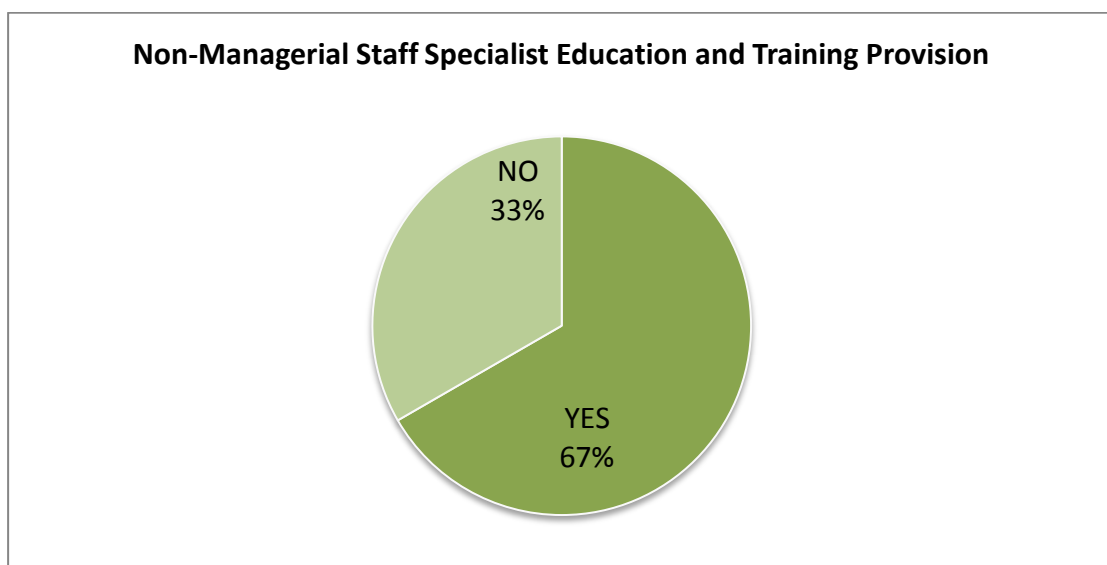
#### **Needs (4a):**

- Of the twelve firms, six think that their non-managerial staff, especially frontline customer and member-facing staff require specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge.
- All six of these firms indicate the importance of this knowledge to driving their competitive advantage in their respective fields.
- Enhancing the ability of staff at the coalface of the organisation to clearly differentiate members from shareholders and to communicate the co-operative message to members was also emphasised as an important area of focus for education and training efforts.



**Current Provisions (6):**

- Of these six firms, four currently provide non-managerial staff with specialist co-operative and mutual education and training.
- This training is created in-house and is delivered through induction seminars to their staff.
- There is also concurrent on-the job training delivered from managers and supervisors.
- The remaining two firms have no systems in place to deliver specialist co-operative and mutual education and training to their non-managerial staff.



**Gap (4b, 6):**

- Of the six firms, four currently think that their non-managerial staff has adequate specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge.
  - These four firms currently provide their employees with induction seminar training.
  - The remaining two firms think that their non-managerial staff does not have adequate specialist co-operative and mutual knowledge.
  - These two firms do not provide their non-managerial employees with any education and training.
- This has important implications for the effectiveness of specialist co-operative education and training delivered through induction seminars to non-managerial staff.

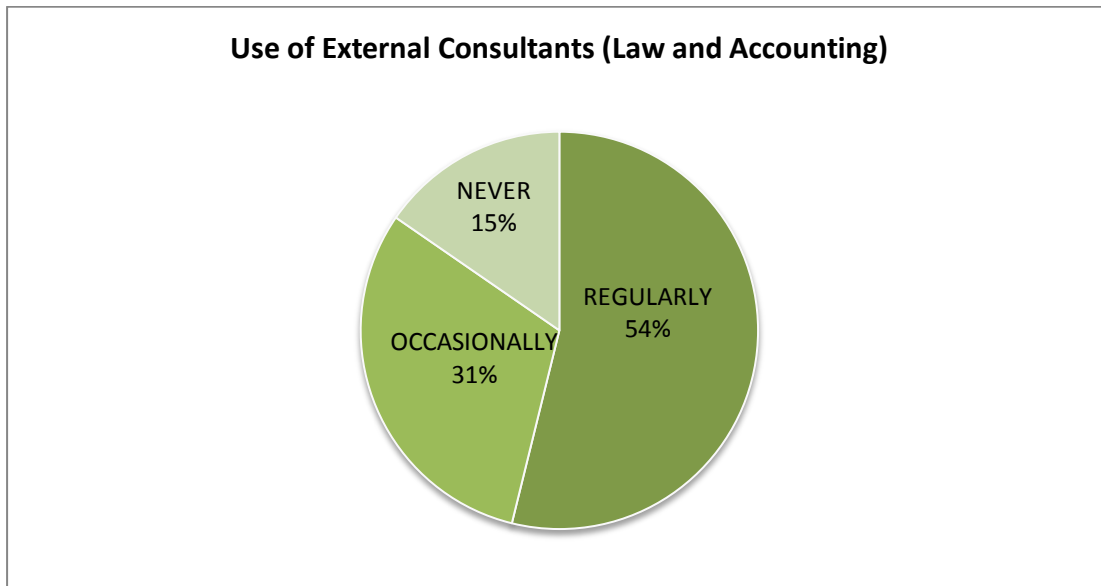


**External Consultants**

**Needs (9a/9b/9c):**

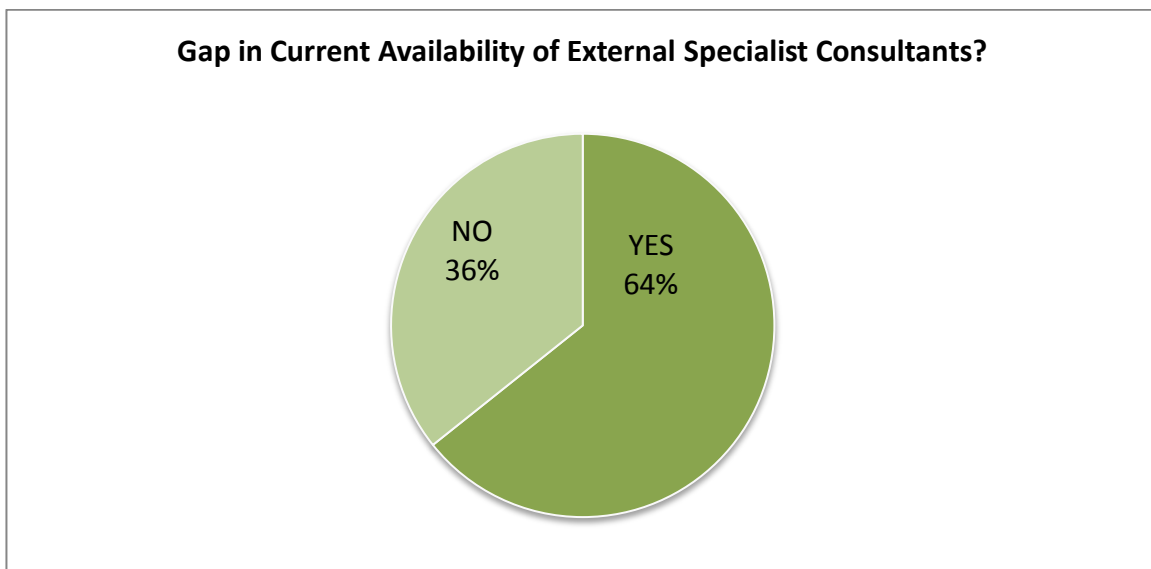
- All thirteen firms hire external consultants for specialised expertise in the fields of Law and Accounting.
- Seven of the thirteen firms regularly use external consultants, four of the thirteen occasionally use consultants and the remaining two firms never/plan to never use external consultants.

- Of the two firms that never/plan to never use consultants, one intends to leverage internal capabilities and the other has resource restraints (financial and otherwise).



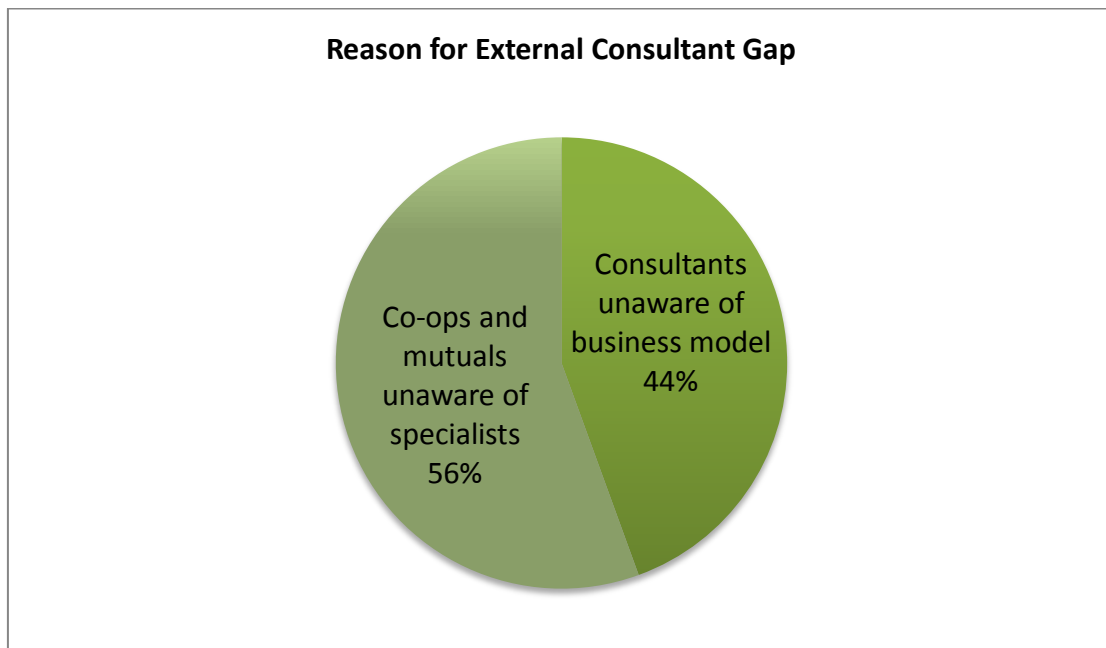
**Current Provisions (9d/9a):**

- Nine of the thirteen firms do not think that there are sufficient specialist consultants available currently.
- Of these nine firms, five regularly use external consultants and two occasionally use external consultants. Only two of the nine firms have never/plan to never use external consultants.



**Gap (9e):**

- Of the nine firms that think that there is currently a lack of specialist consultants available in the market, four are of the opinion that the reason for this is low awareness amongst consultants of co-operative and mutual business models as forms of contemporary business practice.
- The other five firms are unaware of co-operative and mutual specialist presence in the consulting market.



**The BCCM**

**Support (10a):**

- All of the thirteen organisations were supportive of the BCCM's efforts to provide nation-wide education and training for the co-operatives and mutuals sector.

**Role of the BCCM (10b):**

- All of the respondents agreed that the BCCM had a key role to play with respect to lobbying on behalf of the co-operatives and mutuals sector for



greater access to education and training. Interview respondents suggested the BCCM could play a key role in the following areas:

a) *Awareness:*

- Generating awareness among the general public of the co-operative and mutual business models as contemporary, successful and sustainable business practice.
- Lobbying on behalf of the co-operatives and mutuals sector for Government recognition.

b) *Networking*

- Establishing a strong network within the co-operatives and mutuals sector where current issues can be discussed and best practices can be shared.
- Fostering a strong relationship with universities and TAFEs and promoting academic interest in co-operative and mutual business models.
- Establishing a strong network of specialist external consultants.

c) *Provision:*

- Creating content and delivering education and training about co-operative and mutual business models and business practice that contains information which is relevant for all levels of the organisation, potentially delivered through webinars or MOOCs.
- The content should particularly emphasise the difference between Co-operatives and Mutuals from other business models and the resulting implications for effective communication between staff and all stakeholders: members, customers, the wider community and society in general.

## Appendix IV – Data Categorisation

Name	Location	Duration	Industry	Level	Work Placement
University of Sydney – Co-operatives Research Group	Australia	3 day conference	Academic	Tertiary	No
University of Sydney – Co-operatives and Mutuels Course	Australia	39 hours programme	Business	Tertiary Postgraduate -	No
University of Western Australia- Executive Leadership Program	Australia	5 day programme	Academic	Tertiary	No
The Co-operative College: Australia	Australia	N/A	Academic	Tertiary	No
UNSW: Co-op Program	Australia	N/A	Academic	Tertiary Postgraduate &	Yes
Charles Sturt University	Australia	2 sessions	Academic	Tertiary	No
Fifth Principle – Education, Training, & Information	Australia	N/A	General	Work	N/A
Co-operatives of Western Australia	Australia	N/A	Consultation	Work	N/A
Australasian Mutuels Institute	Australia	N/A	General	Work	N/A
Saint Mary's University - Master of Management, Co-operatives and Credit Unions	Canada	3 years	Business	Tertiary Postgraduate -	No
Saint Mary's University - Graduate Diploma	Canada	16-20 month course	Business	Tertiary	No
Saint Mary's University - Bilingual Certificate in Co-operative Management Level 1	Canada	300 hours	Business	Tertiary	No
Saint Mary's University - Bilingual Certificate in Co-Co-	Canada	600 hours	Business	Tertiary	No

operative Management Level 2					
Saint Mary's University – Arts, Commerce, Science and Master of Science in Applied Science	Canada	N/A	Academic	Tertiary	No
University of Waterloo	Canada	5 years	Academic	Tertiary	2 years after graduation
University of British Columbia	Canada	4 - 16 months	Business	Tertiary	Yes
University of Sherbrooke - IRECUS	Canada	10 months	Academic	Tertiary	No
Canadian Association for Co-Operative Education	Canada	N/A	General	Work	N/A
Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada	Canada	N/A	General	Work	N/A
Worker Co-operative Code of Governance	UK	N/A	General	Work	N/A
The Co-operative enterprise hub	UK	N/A	Start Business <sup>Up</sup>	Work	N/A
Co-operative and Mutual Solutions	UK	N/A	Start Business <sup>Up</sup>	Work	N/A
Co-operative Business Consultants	UK	N/A	Consultation	Work	N/A
Sheffield Business School - Full time Study	UK	2 years	Business	Tertiary	No
Sheffield Business School - Part time Study	UK	3 day course	Business	Tertiary	No
Sheffield Hallam University	UK	3 day course	Business	Tertiary	No
The Co-operative College	UK	Varies	Academic	Tertiary	Yes