

“The successes of 2019/20 belong to our members and hard-working staff”

Despite the challenges posed by bushfires, ongoing drought and a worldwide pandemic, Hastings Co-op celebrated their staff’s tenacity and the organisation’s ability to overcome adversity at their 104th Annual General Meeting.

Highlights included: the acquisition of the Enterprise Rent A Car franchise in Port Macquarie; the opening of a new IGA, liquor store, hardware store and Juice Box at Sovereign Place; a 39% increase in Co-op 100 members (to 8,182) and Wauchope IGA Liquor being crowned IGA Liquor Retailer of the Year for the eighth time.

“To say that the past financial year was challenging is an understatement, and the ongoing economic impact of Covid-19 will have an effect on some of our businesses well into 2021 and beyond.

“However, the successes of 2019/20 belong to our valued members and hard-working staff. Without their loyalty and dedication, we would not be the Co-op we are today,” chief executive officer Allan Gordon said.

“I am very proud of the way our staff stepped up, often under enormous pressure, delivering day-in and day-out to members and customers.

“Despite the adverse conditions, I’m also proud of the fact that we did not lay off staff, and due to our diversity, we were able to re-deploy staff into areas of need at the height of the pandemic.

“As always, giving back is what co-operatives are all about, and a total of \$343,795 in reward vouchers was returned to Shareholders and Co-op 100 members in the 2019/20 financial year.

“We also donated \$10,000 to local Rural Fire Service units and continued to support hundreds of local community groups and events, employ more than 350 locals and promote local producers wherever possible in our family of 22 businesses.”

On the environmental front, the Co-op modernised its fleet, reduced waste, increased recycling and the use of solar power and continued to host two Return and Earn sites.

Mr Gordon said 2020-21 will be a year of “consolidation”, as the Co-op launches into a number of projects that will make the organisation far more efficient into the future.

“Our focus will be the development of our staff, investment in technology and understanding our customers so we can deliver a better offering, no matter which business they use. Continuing to provide a safe work environment and investing in new infrastructure that will make our staff’s jobs easier will also be our aim,” he said.

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