



MEDIA RELEASE

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National community service champions

Hastings Co-op was awarded the coveted Community Service Award at IGA's National Excellence Awards last night (July 18), shining the spotlight on the Hastings Valley's unrivalled community spirit.

The prestigious honour follows a dream run for the community-owned co-operative, which also took out two major awards at the recent NSW/ACT Excellence Awards for their community service and Sovereign Place IGA meat department. Wauchope IGA was also a state Customer Service Award finalist and Sovereign Place IGA was a Store of the Year Award finalist.

"To win the National Community Service Award over 1,455 other independently-owned IGAs nationwide is the ultimate recognition for our staff, who have a proud reputation for customer service excellence and giving back to the communities we serve," chief executive officer Allan Gordon said.

"Our community is no different to others when it comes to facing adversities like drought, bushfires, floods and the pandemic, but I think the way our community banded together after the March 2021 floods was one of the major factors that led to this award."

At the peak of the natural disaster Hastings Co-op opened Wauchope IGA in the middle of the night to stock an evacuation centre and helped deliver essentials to stranded residents via SES boats. In the aftermath, we facilitated grant information sessions and hosted a community BBQ to thank emergency service heroes.

"Our community knows that when we're dealt a difficult hand they can depend on Hastings Co-op to support them. We often talk about the Hastings Co-op family of 19 businesses and that's what our members and customers are - family," Mr Gordon said.

Other stand-out examples include: job opportunities for 400 locals; annual Community Chest grants; a generous Co-op 100 reward program; defibrillators in 10 stores; regular competitions, giveaways and random acts of kindness; donating produce waste to Billabong Zoo; business partnerships to help the region's economy; offering space for fundraising BBQs and raffles; being one of the region's largest employers of youth and; showcasing local producers and businesses in IGA supermarkets and liquor stores.

"There's not many local clubs, schools, charities or community groups across the Hastings and Camden Haven that wouldn't have benefitted from our extensive sponsorship program over the years. Giving back is ingrained in everything we do.

"It's what sets us apart," Mr Gordon said.

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