

CO-OP NEWS 2025

DECEMBER 2025

2025 - INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CO-OPERATIVES RECAP



As 2025 comes to a close, we thought we'd reflect on some highlights from the International Year of Co-operatives. The theme for this year, set by the UN is "Cooperatives Build a Better World". This theme underscores the lasting global impact of cooperatives and their role in creating social and economic development. It emphasizes that the co-operative model is an essential part of the solution for achieving sustainable development by 2050.

There are 3 million co-ops around the world – with 1.2 billion members. There are more than 34.8 million Australian members of at least one co-operative or mutually owned organization, with reports indicating that eight in ten Australians have membership in at least one. Co-ops employ 280 million people across the globe – that's 10% of the world's employed population. Co-ops are resilient – in the UK, 81.2% of co-ops survive the first five years of business compared to 39.6% of companies. To read more about co-ops around the globe, checkout stories.coop

In February, we celebrated the launch of international year of co-ops alongside launching our beautiful mural by Lexie Abel and Libby Harward of Munimba-ja. It was a lovely community event and celebration of art.

In April, Charlotte and Kesten flew to Sydney to attend the Co-op Federation Assembly. On the second day, they collaborated with other food co-ops to share what helps the Maple Street Co-op thrive. They were inspired by all of the different, diverse co-ops that were born out of a need from community.

On the 5th of July, we celebrated International Co-ops Day with a celebration in the garden. We were joined by other co-op delegates from our community and it was a fun way to connect with co-op members and remember all of the historical Maleny co-ops that have drawn so many here over the years.

In October, we celebrated our AGM and elected three new board members to join our existing board. We said goodbye to Elke Watson and John Ford who have helped Maple Street Co-op so much over the years. We now welcome Sia Carlyon, Penelope Tod and Phillip Brown.

Here's to a successful 2026!

We pay our respects to the Jinibara and Kabi Kabi people of this Country, and to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that our Co-op stands on land that was never ceded. We honour the profound wisdom, the deep sustainability and connection to land since time immemorial.

CO-OP SPOTLIGHT

SILC - SUPPORT INDEPENDENT LIVING CO-OPERATIVE



Where Everyone Truly Belongs

When it comes to supported living for people with disability, most of us have experienced the same frustration: being kept at arm's length. Staffing changes happen without consultation. You have little say in who supports your loved one day-to-day. The provider's systems drive decisions, and somehow, independence becomes dependency.

SILC offers something different.

We believe that people with disability, together with their families, are in the best position to make decisions about where they live, who they live with, and who supports them. This isn't just a nice philosophy – it's how our homes actually operate.

What Makes SILC Different?

At SILC, families aren't observers. You're leaders and co-decision-makers. You work with us to form or join a cooperative that runs your loved one's home. You help identify and choose the support workers. You're informed about staffing decisions because you're part of making them. You can visit anytime – because it's genuinely their home. personality.

This creates something powerful: real relationships, genuine independence, and natural safeguards. When families are actively involved and informed, the risk of abuse and neglect drops dramatically. Your loved one remains an active part of their family, living in a home that reflects your values and their

The Reality and the Support

We're honest about what this requires: time, energy, and commitment. You'll be involved in governance, financial management, property decisions, and ongoing house operations. But here's what makes it work – SILC handles all the complex compliance work. We're the registered NDIS provider and employer. We manage payroll, workers' compensation, employment law, and all regulatory requirements. You get a dedicated Operations Lead, experienced mentors from existing homes, and professional systems to support you.

Through our cooperative model, families pool resources to create economies of scale, stretch funding further, and build financial reserves for long-term sustainability.

Is SILC Right for Your Family?

SILC isn't for everyone, and that's okay. We're for families who want genuine choice and control, and are ready for the commitment that comes with it. If that sounds like you, we'd love to explore whether SILC could be the right fit.

Ready to learn more? Register your interest and start a conversation with our team:

<https://www.silc.coop/get-in-touch/>

SUPPORTING LOCAL PRODUCERS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



If every Australian adult spent \$40 on local goods, it could inject billions into the economy and significantly support local jobs and businesses. For example, one analysis estimates that if every household shifted just \$100 of their weekly budget to local products, it could create 38,000 new jobs and add \$16 billion to the economy.

Multiplier effect: A dollar spent locally has a multiplier effect. Westpac analysis shows that 43 cents of every dollar spent in Australia goes to wages and labour income, which then filters through the economy to support other jobs.

Job creation: This spending shift can support and create jobs across various sectors, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises which dominate industries like manufacturing, retail, and hospitality.

Economic growth: The collective spending could provide a significant boost to Australia's GDP, helping to counter sluggish growth and cost of living pressures.

Choosing local produce also cuts transport emissions, supports local farmers, and delivers fresher food to your plate

LOCAL GIFT IDEAS

Here's some of our favourite locally made products to consider adding to your shopping list:

Cards from local creators: Sow n Sow Gifts of Seeds, The Wild And Me Tea Cards, printed art cards from Juliette Kalifa, Ketakii Jewson-Brown, Jenny Law and Katie Moon.



Pepa's Black Garlic Salt – made in another Maleny Co-op, available with: Australian Sea Salt, West Australian Lake Salt, Celtic Sea Salt, Pink Himalayan Salt, Lemon Myrtle and Chilli.

Rado's handmade beeswax pillar candles made from his bees wax in Mt Mellum; they look and smell amazing and burn for a really long time.

Tea and coffee! We have so many locally produced teas from The Medicine Room, Skye Chai, Liquid Chai, The Fresh Chai Co and even Arakai Estate Teas grown just down the road in Bellthorpe. Local coffee companies include Montville Coffee, Eumundi Coffee and Community Co Coffee Roasters.

Honey! We have so much local honey, honeycomb and wax from Conondale to Cooloola.



Lyndy's always bringing in show stopping bouquets of flowers as well as her handmade pottery Christmas beetle incense holders. Dale and Ruth bring in locally grown plants and flowers each Friday from their farm in Cedar Creek.



The local skincare section is huge including: The Medicine Room, Tree Fox, Aiya Skincare, Rick's Hairy Fairy oil and heaps more! We also stock books by local authors on permaculture, health, mindfulness and beyond.



We've got lots of gifts that won't cost the earth this Christmas, check our display / chocolate table as you walk in the door for our picks or ask one of our friendly team for ideas.

Christmas can add extra stress and financial pressure so remember that there are ways of showing someone you care other than buying gifts.



OPEN FOR THE MALENY CHRISTMAS STREET PARTY!

we'll be open until 8pm for the Christmas Street Party on Friday the 12th of December! Pop in and say hello and treat yourself to some low key late night shopping.



COMMUNITY REMINDERS

If you're feeling a little lonely for Christmas or would like to bring the whole family to meet your community, Maleny Neighbourhood Centre holds Christmas breakfast each year and everyone is invited. The Co-op donates natural muesli to go along with their BBQ spread, and it's a lovely way to bring in Christmas surrounded by your local Maleny community. MNC are looking for volunteers to help prep for the Christmas brekky, if you are available, give them a call 5499 9345.

A reminder that the Co-op has a 'Member Care Account' that is available for members to use to access groceries for free when experiencing unexpected hardship resulting in lack of income. If you know someone in this position, reach out to us and we can assist them using this account. Thank you to our local producers who choose to donate funds from fresh produce sold to the care account. If you would like to donate, you can do so at the counter or talk to the produce team if you have excess organically grown produce.



ALIGNING WITH THE SEASONS: COOLING HERBS TO BEAT SUMMER HEAT



WRITTEN BY
OUR
NATUROPATH
SAMANTHA

Summer in the hinterland brings long, sunny days and frequent storms that refresh the land but can leave our bodies feeling heavy, fatigued, and easily irritated. As the temperatures rise, it's natural to seek shade, stay well-hydrated, and enjoy cooling treats – like one, two or maybe three Frozen Sunshine ice blocks or Yumbars from the Co-op freezers!

While things that are physically cold in temperature, like ice cream or icy beverages, can help temporarily cool us down, if you are seeking extended relief from the scorching summers, choosing to incorporate dietary herbal remedies may have a deeper effect on the body. This is particularly important for those prone to heat sensitivity due to thyroid, cardiovascular, or metabolic conditions, where excessive warmth can negatively increase their symptoms.

UNDERSTANDING HEAT STRESS

Even when hiding in air-conditioned environments, heat-stress heightens cardiovascular load and disrupts homeostasis, which can manifest as digestive strain, fluid loss, mucous membrane irritation, sleep disturbance, and reduced mental clarity. Traditional therapeutic systems such as Traditional Chinese medicine & Ayurveda describe this excess heat as Pitta or Yin imbalance, which is a state marked by agitation, redness, dryness, and overstimulation. By choosing to work with herbal allies that are cooling, tonifying and moistening, we can help the body to release heat in a healthy way.

HOW HERBS HELP COOL THE BODY

Herbs help the body cope in summer by physiologically and energetically dispersing excess heat, restoring moisture and supporting emotional resilience. For example, cooling demulcent herbs hydrate and soothe tissues, particularly the mucous membranes, which helps counter heat-driven dryness and disrupted digestion.

Cooling astringent herbs can draw water into the tissues, which tightens pores and helps to maintain hydration in the body. While mild diaphoretic herbs work by increasing natural perspiration, releasing heat, and reducing strain on internal organ systems. Some herbs even activate cold-sensing receptors in our body, offering a perceptible cooling effect that supports thermoregulation from the inside out. Many of these herbs also calm the nervous system, easing the irritability, restlessness, and mental fatigue that often show up in times of hot weather. From a nutritional standpoint, these plants are also rich in minerals and antioxidants that support electrolyte balance, improve vascular tone, and prevent oxidative stress – key foundations for staying steady and well-regulated in environmentally stressful times.

IDENTIFYING COOLING REMEDIES

Identifying a 'cooling' plant is easier than you think, look to taste and touch. Sweet, bitter, and astringent flavors often indicate cooling properties, while moistening herbs are physically identified through their generally plump, juicy-looking leaves that hold moisture.

Some of my top picks for summer herbal support include:

- Mints: By stimulating thermoreceptors, mints cool and alter the nervous system.
- Lavender, Lemon Balm, Rose: Soothe skin, and ease heat-related irritability and tension.
- Hibiscus, Rosehip, and Ginkgo Leaf: Supporting vascular health and rich in antioxidants.
- Gotu Kola & Bacopa: Promotes cognitive resilience during times of heat-induced mental exhaustion.
- Coriander, Fennel, Lemongrass: Aid digestion and disperse internal heat.
- Chrysanthemum & Dandelion Root: Disperses heat and supports liver and organ function.
- Marshmallow Root, Aloe Vera, Purslane, Chickweed: Hydrate tissues, lessen inflammation, and nourish mucous membranes.
- Sage: Astringent and anti-perspirant, perfect for excessive heat-induced sweating.

SIMPLE WAYS TO USE COOLING HERBS

- Infuse water or create herbal teas with these cooling herbs.
- Toss fresh herbs into salads or dishes, and combine them with water-rich foods, such as bitter greens, cucumber, celery, melon, or okra.
- To cool your cooking, use fennel seed, coriander, or lemongrass instead of warming spices like garlic or chilli.
- For a quick, revitalising spritz, keep herbal hydrosols on hand to spray.
- As a treat, make your own popsicles, ice creams, or herb-infused ice cubes.
- Try applying a cold compress to your wrists, neck, or forehead, by soaking a cloth in chrysanthemum or mint infusion.
- To relieve sunburn or heat rashes, apply topical demulcent herbs

While these herbs are great tools for easing summer heat, it's important to not get carried away and to use them in balance, and also honour your body's own constitution and needs, to avoid being too cooling and disrupting digestion and other internal systems.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Samantha is a Naturopath passionate about supporting individuals with a diverse range of health conditions, such as autoimmune conditions, mental health and chronic pain. She creates accessible, personalised, practical strategies that fit easily into everyday life. Follow her on @catandfernau to stay connected. Samantha consults at Luna Wellness Collective in Yandina @lunawellnesscollective. Offering new client bookings in 2026.



OPENING HOURS AND REMINDERS

We'll be open every day except Christmas Day this year so no need to panic.

Most of our suppliers will be closing down for a period so you may wish to place a bread order, etc. to avoid missing out.

24/12 - OPEN 9-5:30
25/12 - CLOSED CHRISTMAS
26/12 - OPEN 9-4 BOXING DAY
31/12 - OPEN 9-5:30 NYE
01/01 - OPEN 9-4 NEW YEARS DAY

Reminder - this is the busiest time of year for us retailers so please show our staff the respect that you wish to receive. Rude or inappropriate comments will not be tolerated.



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