

# CO-OP NEWS

MAY 2026

## FLYING THE FLAG OF RAINBOW WITH MEMBER CAROL LOW



Photo: Heather Faulkner, 2012

I moved to Maleny in 2006 as a Brisbaneite who had longed to live in this green beautiful neck of the woods. My partner and I found a house to have as a meditation place and to be near her family.

I have been a lesbian all my life so know the struggles of shame and discrimination. My wish is to increase our visibility through story sharing and have worked on LGBTIQ+ histories, curated the “Prejudice & Pride” exhibition for Museum of Brisbane, and compiled our very own “Who we are: Out & Proud in Maleny” book of shared lives. When Brian Day and I decided it was time for Maleny to go rainbow and created the first IDAHO in 2012, I was in there boots and all.

May 17th is a worldwide anniversary to celebrate the 1990 World Health Organisation decision to remove homosexuality from the Classification of Diseases. It has been celebrated in several countries since 2009 to mark this day and the progress we have made so far. And to build understanding, inclusion, and love. And a commitment to be an ally.

“In bringing IDAHOBIT to Maleny, we hope to spread further understanding and acceptance of LGBTIQ+ lives—and for members of our communities to feel they are really welcome in our loving town. This year we have a number of events planned for all ages and tastes: queer writing conversation, long table dinner, play-reading, craft activities, street fun kiosk, a Rainbow Grooves dance, and more.

Above all we are inviting YOU, your friends, and your family, churches, groups, workplaces, and businesses to dream up how YOU will Fly the Flag of rainbow appreciation this May. Join a number of our local cafes, book-shops, our great local library, and the Maple St. Co-op!

The Co-op is a vibrant part of Maleny’s history as a community steeped in co-operation and innovation. I always feel welcome here—and helped with information about what to buy. I enjoy filling up my bags with bulk stuff – knowing that they have been researched for provenance & quality. Plus often I double-check at the check-out if I haven’t been under-charged. Good value all round!

Find and Follow all our activities and events for Maleny IDAHOBIT on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/338872082824194/>

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**Maleny IDAHOBIT | Facebook**

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

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.

## UPCOMING IDAHOBIT EVENTS



May 7th  
Crafternoon (free!)

let's build strong communities with scissors, glue sticks coloured paper and string, with fabulous company and wonderful connections. From 1pm @ Maleny Neighbourhood Centre.

May 11th  
What Makes Queer Writing Queer? (free!)  
Maleny Bookshop 2/41 Maple St at 5pm for a 5:30pm start. Limited seating, please register via [hello@malenybookshop.com.au](mailto:hello@malenybookshop.com.au)

May 13<sup>th</sup> Longtable Pot Luck Dinner (free!)  
Bring along food or fruit and your favourite Pride song to share. All welcome - LGBTQIA+ Allies! Enjoy a meaningful and celebratory conversation with old friends and new. Maleny Neighbourhood Centre.

May 17<sup>th</sup> IDAHOBIT @ Maple Street Kiosk (free!)  
Wear your rainbows, or just lots of colour, and join us to talk, listen and learn about our wonderful rainbow-coloured community. From 8am.

May 29<sup>th</sup> 'The Laramie Project' Play Reading (\$5)  
Join The Maleny Players play reading group to delve into the Laramie Project, followed by a discussion of the play. 9:30am-noon. Limited seating, please register.

May 27th - Rainbow Groove Inclusive Dance Group  
\$15 or reduced for wearing rainbow colours!  
OUR MISSION - Getting people dancing! Challenge & change Australian society's perception of who can dance, how to dance and where to dance. Maleny yoga shed @ Balmoral Ridge from 3:30-4:30

for QUEERies and Registrations - please email [malenyidahobit@gmail.com](mailto:malenyidahobit@gmail.com) or call 0412202392



*Photo of Ian at the Upfront Club for the first IDAHO in 2012 by Heather Faulkner.*

Vale Ian McDonald

It is with sadness that we share the news of Ian's passing on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April and celebrate the life of a prominent Maleny community figure.

Among many things, Ian secured homes for Maleny's essential community establishments such as the Maleny Credit Union, Maple Street Co-op and The Upfront Club - (later Sarah's Unplugged). Ian strengthened these businesses through contributing to improvements of the properties and his involvement through long term patronage and support.

Ian was one of the key people involved with Maleny's first IDAHO celebrations and was a supporter of many community organisations and events. Also, part of the EKR non-profit foundation with the aim of enhancing compassionate care for the dying and support those grieving.

We send our deepest condolences to his partner Brian, and their family and friends. We thank him for his generosity as our landlord and longtime member and supporter of our Co-op.



*Photo of Ian and Brian at the Upfront Club courtesy of friend Carol Low*

## MOTHER'S DAY GIFT GUIDE

Stuck on ideas for your mum this Mother's day? Our store is packed with gifts that'll make your mum feel ultra special.

Our Loco Love range is a wonderful option for anyone with a little sweet tooth – from fabulous flavour profiles like pistachio creme and rose ganache, there's a Loco Loves chocolate flavour that your mum is guaranteed to adore. Our range includes singles, duo packs, chocolate bars and gift packs.



Sow N' Sow seeds are a wonderful gift for any green thumb mum. With a seed pack for every occasion, these wonderful little gift cards are locally-made and are the perfect way to say thanks to your mum this Mother's day.



The Bopo Women Mama's Self Care Kit is packed with some wonderful skin care goodies, including a mini Self-Love Body Oil, Dreamer Essential Oil Perfume Roller, Berry Blush Lip Balm and a Goddess Bath Shot. Plus, when you spend \$50 or more in our Bopo range, you get an exclusive Mother's Day cosmetics bag included with your purchase!



We have plenty more in the way of gifts for your superstar mum – visit us in store before Sunday 10th May for more gifting ideas.

## NEW FRIDGES AND FREEZERS ARE IN!

Thank you for your patience and understanding while we got our brand new fridges and freezers in the building and installed! We are now left with a little wiggle room so if there's anything you're wanting us to stock, please place an order at the counter or email your suggestions to [info@maplestreet.coop](mailto:info@maplestreet.coop) and we'll look into them. Purchasing these new units means a larger range of products, more energy efficiency and less heat generated inside the building. Thank you for supporting us and making this possible!

## UNDERSTANDING PERIOD PAIN



Period pain, also called dysmenorrhea, has been recorded as one of the most common women's reproductive complaints, with approx. 80–90% of women experiencing pain during their bleed at least occasionally, and over 55% having pain every cycle. The general consensus is that a painful period is normal, whereas severe cases are perceived as a pathology of the female body needing intervention. While that might be the case on some occasions, dysmenorrhea can be easily supported through holistic practices that bring a woman's body back to balance.

Through the lens of the western medical system, we recognise primary and secondary dysmenorrhea. The cause of primary dysmenorrhea is thought to be the alteration of prostaglandin levels around the onset of menstruation, in response to the drop of progesterone. Prostaglandins are hormone-like lipid compounds that support a healthy inflammatory response in the body, stimulate contractions of the uterus and affect its blood supply when it is shedding the endometrial lining (menstruation). When there are too many prostaglandins, period pain is present. Secondary dysmenorrhea is caused by underlying pathology such as endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, ovarian cysts, fibroids, or other conditions. That is why the common approach of the western medical system to primary dysmenorrhea is to prescribe either NSAID drugs (suppressing prostaglandin levels) or the contraceptive pill (preventing ovulation and the production of progesterone altogether).

However, from a holistic perspective, I see a woman's cycle as a highly intelligent feedback loop that reflects her physical and emotional wellbeing. Where there are imbalances or pain, treating it as an invitation to get to know yourself and your body more deeply, rather than merely preventing pain and suppressing the root cause, can be more beneficial in the long run.

When we search beyond the answers of modern science, we find that Chinese medicine practitioners consider a painful period to be stagnant Qi (life force). Their restoration protocols are much gentler on the body, offering warming circulatory herbs while also supporting the vitality of the liver and kidneys, which are connected to reproductive imbalances.

As someone who works closely with women and their cycles, I often begin period pain cases with a simple question: Where is this woman suppressing or overriding her Yin? Meaning, where has she been prioritising constant "doing" over simple "being"? Has she forgotten how to rest? How is her relationship with her blood? These seemingly unrelated or unimportant questions usually lead us down a path of exploration and transformation of her current state, with her cycle becoming more easeful over time. This kind of exploration, of course, needs to be supported by lifestyle adjustments (diet and movement), herbs, and practices that support healthy circulation in the pelvis.

If you are experiencing a challenging menstruation, I invite you to explore the natural alternatives to pain management we stock on the Maple St Co-op shelves – such as Hey Sister! natural period pain relief tablets, local herbal vaginal steaming blends (to be used prior to or following your bleed), or the more subtle flower essence remedies.

Dominika Hlavata

Integrative women's care practitioner, herbalist and flower essence therapist

## CO-OP SPOTLIGHT



The democratic, member-owned principles of the cooperative model provide a great basis for individuals to come together and work together to achieve a shared goal. In some cases, such as farming producer co-ops, the goal may be to achieve a greater economy of scale via group purchasing or by selling products under a unified brand. Consumer co-ops like your very own Maple St. Co-op are another iteration of these principles in action, where the customers are the shareholders and the profits are reinvested in the business.

Another crucial and much-overlooked model is housing co-operatives. Housing co-ops provide housing. Who would've thought? How do they do this though? Are they effective? Are there any in Australia?

There is a long tradition in Australia, with the first housing cooperative founded way back in 1888 by the Melbourne Anarchist Club in the suburb of Albert Park and growth continuing throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s and subsequent decline in government investment in public housing, the number of housing co-ops suddenly surged supported by Commonwealth-State Government agreements to guarantee bank loans. This number finally began to decline in the early 2000s as governments withdrew funding and support, with only ~270 housing co-ops still operating today.

There are four basic structures of housing cooperative in Australia:

1. common equity
2. First Nations
3. rental housing
4. private equity

The differences between these models relate primarily to ownership structure and how equity is configured. Common equity models represent nearly 50% of the co-op housing stock in Australia, where a property is owned by the co-operative and leased to members at a fixed rate to provide long-term tenure. Members have the opportunity to build some equity over time. First Nations housing co-ops are often either member-cooperatives or community-owned organisations that seek to provide safe, secure, and affordable housing to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. While individuals don't build up equity over time in rental co-ops, they provide long-term, affordable housing with rent typically pegged to incomes. Meanwhile, private equity models typically involve land held in common while providing for individual ownership of each respective dwelling.

In total the various forms of housing cooperatives represent a tiny fraction of the total housing in Australia (estimates vary between 0.1% and 0.03%). This is not the case worldwide though. In the ever-forward-thinking Nordic countries, cooperatives account for nearly a quarter of all housing stock. In Sweden this translates to 1.2 million individual dwellings. In the Norwegian capital of Oslo, up to 32% of housing is cooperatively owned.

Cooperative housing doesn't just mean cheaper rents. Maintenance and renovations are also frequently less expensive than private rentals, while actual building quality and energy efficiency are considerably improved.

Could housing cooperatives be one part of the solution to the so-called 'housing crisis'? All the evidence points to one answer: yes. With more and more people experiencing extreme rental stress, we need to increase the accessibility, affordability, and long-term security of housing in Australia. Whatever their structure or equity agreements, housing co-ops provide exactly that.

*This article was written by Matthew Newman*

## MEET THE MAKERS - FABLE LADLE



Fable Ladle is the latest chapter in Maxene and Gary's fifty-year partnership, committed to love and the creative stories woven through time together.

The late 1970's, saw them move from NZ to Cairns. Gary's knowledge of how to make 'a' loaf of bread and the great offer of an underutilised commercial kitchen saw the beginnings a small artisan bakery. The grain they hand ground was biodynamic - sent from South Australia. Fermentation followed and the loaves then baked in a large gas oven. By 10am at Rusty's weekly market, all loaves were sold out. Still in their twenties they made enough to survive and regularly phone parents in NZ from a public phone box, to assure them they were still alive, together and not eaten by crocs....

After some years of baking bread, the arts tempted them away from food and into a world sculpting and writing. In 2009 Maxene wrote a children's book 'Hayley and the Magic Farm' - based on a real farm on Coochiemudlo Island. All the animals had colourful houses and were named after Hayley's favourite foods. It wasn't long before they also became inspired by all the fruit trees growing there -

remnants from the then Department of Mining and Agriculture's experimental crops of the early 1900s, along with an abundance of native plants and fruits. Voila! ... a new business was born. Making and selling jams and chutneys to the Island residents, as well as tourists, gave them great satisfaction.

It was also during that period Maxene and Gary became intensely interested in Japanese fermenting practices. They fermented everything they could get their hands on and turned them into miso, koji, shio koji and amazakes. Most exciting of all - the fermenting and making of plant-based cheeses.

The study and making of nut- based cheeses became part of a seven-year experimental phase. In 2025 that resulted in the desire to move to the heart of cheeses - Maleny.

While waiting for health department approval for fermented plant-based cheeses, Maxene and Gary further investigated native foods for use in their products. Lillypilly jam has to be one of the most delicate jelly jams, and hands down the most beautiful colour in a jar. At the other end of the colour and taste spectrum is the Davidson plum - that wonderful purple deva of the rainforests.

What about their cheeses? The insistence of maintaining organic ingredients helps to make them one of the best fermented plant-based cheeses this side of the green stump. From Fable Ladle's secretive lab like kitchen they are emerging, variety after variety (the latest, a very exciting bunya nut cheese), finding their niche in the comfort of the new Maple Street Co-op fridges!

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