



Subject: 'Global Mutual Revolution'

## NEWS RELEASE

*For immediate release*

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### ***Public servants told 'go it alone', be your own boss and keep the savings, in radical plan for UK state 'co-ops'***

The plan by Tory leader, David Cameron for a public sector of "co-operatives", where nurses, teachers and other public servants, run their own services, is evidence of a business phenomenon sweeping the globe – the growth in 'mutual' forms of business on an unprecedented scale, according to Dame Pauline Green, head of the International Co-operative Alliance, the world's largest non-government organisation, who visits Canberra on Monday 15 March, to deliver a lecture at Parliament House marking the launch of Social Business Australia.

"We see the trend in the UK. In the run-up to the election the major political parties, Labour and Conservative are, for the first time ever, both arguing for a stronger co-operative and mutual agenda to deliver business solutions for the future.

"Governments around the world, including the Australian government, are debating the need to devolve services and reform welfare. Not only to reduce the strain on the public purse but also to improve the efficiency and quality of services.

"Governments can establish public sector mutuals in health, housing and education and develop new areas of the economy such as renewable energies, as mutual businesses; or risk losing ground to those economies that are diversifying their corporate structures right now," said Dame Pauline.

"Obama has picked-up on it with his 'mutual' healthcare bill now before Congress; Italy delivers up to 70% of government services via co-ops; Finland has 21% of GDP from co-ops; and the combined revenue for the UK mutual sector is 98 billion pound, equal to the entire NHS budget."

Trent Bartlett, CEO of successful social business, Capricorn Society Limited, and the chair of Social Business Australia, said the Australia sector was significant: "The top 100 businesses operating as co-ops, mutuals and credit unions have a combined annual turnover of AUSS\$20 billion. They include our biggest exporter of processed food, Murray Goulburn, and one of the biggest private medical insurers, HBF.

"Mutuals are best for business and for social purpose. They keep the wealth local, they wash their face in commercial waters and they make profits. It's what they do with the profits, that makes the difference."

"2012 has been declared the UN International Year of Co-operatives and we want to discuss support for a campaign with our political representatives," said Bartlett.

ENDS.

BACKGROUND/2



## BACKGROUND

- International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) is the largest non-governmental organisation in the world.
- It was founded in 1895 with a remit to promote the co-operative economic and social model.
- It has consultative status at the United Nations and works in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation.
- The UN has declared 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives, recognising the contribution of co-operatives to socio-economic development worldwide.
- Co-operatives are owned by almost a 1 billion members worldwide.
- The sector employs more than 100 million people, 20% more than all multi-nationals.
- The largest 300 co-operatives have a combined turnover of nearly US\$1.1 trillion, equivalent to the GDP of Spain.
- Deloitte's publication 'Global Powers of Retailing 2010' confirms the growing influence of consumer co-ops, one sector of the movement that runs successful retail businesses across the globe.
- Dame Pauline is the former Chief Executive of Co-operativesUK, the national trade body for co-operatives and a former MEP and leader of the Largest Political Group in the European Parliament. She was elected President of the ICA on 20 November 2009, the first woman in the post in the organisation's history.
- Social Business Australia was established in 2009 to assist all forms of social business to develop and grow in the competitive environment of the 'real' economy.  
[www.socialbusiness.coop](http://www.socialbusiness.coop)

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