

# ABECS NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2023

## Greetings Members,

After challenging times getting through a pandemic and absorbing ongoing cost increases, we seem to have survived another year. Our membership base remains at 50 and, thanks to members supporting the co-op through supplier agreements, we finished the year with a solid bottom line. This enabled the Directors to approve a distribution of surplus funds to members.

After a good solid innings, Peter has chosen a slight move back and to pass the General Manager's baton to me. Peter has had, and will continue to have, a very positive effect on the co-op through his passionate approach and conscientious workload. He is passing it over but the good news for all of us is that he's not going anywhere.

Dimity continues to do the work of 3 people; she manages the accounts and general administration, as well as the website, and, more importantly, she keeps the rest of the management team in line, which is a feat in itself.

## MEMBERSHIP

Since the annual conference, we have 2 new members – Perkii, in Qld, and Territory Springwater, in NT, and we welcome them to the co-op. Unfortunately, AQUAessence could not continue their membership, due to a decision by their parent company.

While we have had steady growth in membership numbers over the last few years, we have been sitting on or around 50 for some time. This number continues to enable members to support and work with each other while also competing in similar markets.

During November, Peter and I travelled to WA to meet more potential members as well as members that we had not seen for some years.

## DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS FUNDS TO MEMBERS

We greatly appreciate those members who have supported the co-op, during the past year, with purchases through ABECS supply agreements, which have contributed to the co-op's rebate income. The consequential positive end of year result enabled the Directors to allocate substantial funds (\$80k) to be distributed back to members, commensurate with the level each members' purchases in line with those agreements.

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

25 member companies were represented at our annual conference along with our major suppliers. Unfortunately, sickness and last-minute clashes reduced attendance from an anticipated 30 companies. Nevertheless, there were 65 attendees all up including suppliers. We value our suppliers' ongoing support through both their attendance and financial support of the function.

We were fortunate to have 2 interesting presenters at this year's conference:-

- Chris Foley, APCO's CEO, presented on "Australia's Packaging Landscape to 2025 and Beyond". This was most informative and covered the broad issue of the need to increase the use of recycled materials in packaging.
- Shane King, Sales Manager at Visy Plastics, presented a concise update on recycling capabilities and requirements in the lead up to 2025 when government legislation will require all packaging to have a minimum of 50% recycled content. (This is a project the management team are currently working on.)

The **2024** Annual Conference will be held over the weekend from **Friday 17 to Sunday 19 August** at the **Sofitel Gold Coast at Broadbeach**. The format will be similar to the 2023 conference with, perhaps, some changes, as well as the possibility of a Saturday afternoon activity. We will provide more details over the coming months but, meanwhile, please save the date in your diary.

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## WEBSITE

Chris Foley's presentation has been posted to the website along with the minutes of the AGM. The minutes of the August Board meeting were approved by the Directors at the December Board meeting and have also been posted on the website.

## SUPPLY AGREEMENTS

Throughout the year, the Management Team finalised supply agreements with Visy Plastics, Visy Board and VIP. We renewed agreements with AMEC and Big Springs Water and established an agreement with Caps and Closures. Contracts for the supply of sugar are taken when required and when opportune.

## RECYCLING AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Since presenting at the AGM, Shane King now focuses wholly on recycled PET (rPET). He presented to the Directors at the December Board meeting and reaffirmed our need to introduce the minimum rPET levels into our PET bottles and preforms by the 2025 legislated deadline.

Shane advised market feedback stated the benchmark for bottled water is up to 100% for water and a minimum 50% for soft drinks. Interestingly, he said supermarkets have little or no interest in 30% rPET bottles.

While there is a small premium for PET bottles and preforms with recycled content, members could save on set up costs if the co-op moves as a group. For members who wish to go it alone and do not reach the MOQ, the set-up cost is \$4,000.

**On behalf of the Management Team, may I wish you and your families well over the Festive Season and a safe, happy and prosperous New Year.**

