

the CUFA Citizen

July 2005



"Corporate Social Responsibility is when a business operates in a manner that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that society has of business".



Featuring this month...

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CSR Discussion Forum Up and Running

CUFA has set up a CSR Discussion Forum on interact. The forum can be accessed by going to the 'Hot Links' box at the top of interact, clicking on 'Discussion Forums', then selecting the forum titled '[Corporate Social Responsibility](#)'.

The forum is an excellent method for interested credit unions to find out more about CSR, the Toolkit, Sustainability Reporting, and other relevant and topical CSR issues. It is also a forum for credit unions to post and discuss their own CSR initiatives, and how these initiatives have contributed to your credit union's business.

We encourage every reader to jump onto the Discussion Forum and outline a few of their credit union's CSR activities.

You can also select to receive email updates of what's happening on the forum – when you're in there simply click on the 'Watch Forum' button up the top.

Case Study: Fitzroy & Carlton Community Credit Co-operative (FCCC)

FCCC is outstanding in its provision of socially responsible products and service to its members.

The Budget Service

FCCC's Budget Service assists financially disadvantaged members to establish workable budgets including providing members with:

- representation in negotiations with creditors, including utility companies
- debt repayment schemes
- bill-paying services – if requested, the amounts can be deducted from the member's account on the night their pay/pension comes in, so that the member is not able to withdraw against the amount set aside for bills
- on the member's request, staggering deposits from the pay/pension into the member's account over the pay period, so that the pay lasts throughout the pay period.

FCCC's budget officer, Michelle Wilson, works with a range of clients, including single



Michelle Wilson,
FCCC

parents, the unemployed, homeless, and those suffering from substance addiction. Michelle finds that her clients come to her because they don't have the confidence to go to the banks. Some of her clients had never banked before they came to the

FCCC.



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Peggy's Story

One of FCCC's many success stories is Peggy, who approached the FCCC in 1992 on the recommendation of a friend. At the time, Peggy was a single unemployed mother of two children under the age of 8, and her 2 year old daughter had just been diagnosed with cerebral palsy. Peggy needed to take her daughter for treatment every day for 12 weeks. Then Peggy's car broke down. Peggy applied to her regular bank for a loan of \$200 but was rejected. Peggy turned to the FCCC who provided her with a \$200 loan to fix her car. Peggy recalls it was "unbelievable to be treated like a real person by a financial institution".

Peggy continued to struggle to make ends meet despite her best efforts. In time, Peggy found out about the FCCC budget service and she became a client. ***Peggy said "the service gave me stability, security and certainty"***. With this new found stability, Peggy started to consider what she wanted to do to forge a career. She started volunteering with the Aboriginal Legal Service, and applied to study law in 1996. Her application was successful. Throughout Peggy's studies, the FCCC helped her budget to cover her educational costs, with occasional small loans to tide her over when buying textbooks or to meet other educational expenses. Peggy graduated in 2001 and now works for Victorian Legal Aid.

Peggy was appointed a director of the FCCC in December 2004 and is still a client of the FCCC budget service. Peggy says of Michelle "she is unbelievably patient". Peggy seeks Michelle's services once a month.

Would you like to contribute a Case Study to CUFA for the CSR Toolkit?

You don't need to write it up yourself – just drop Sonali a brief email (sbishop@cuscal.com.au) or call her on (02) 8299 9031, tell your credit union's story, and Sonali will write up the case study for you. Easy!

CSR and the Environment

CUFA is currently developing the 'Environment' aspect of the Toolkit, which considers what credit unions can do to be an environmentally friendly business. Taking steps to be "environmentally friendly" is not only socially responsible, but can benefit business, by decreasing bills for energy, water and paper.

CUFA is considering the following environmental initiatives:

- Energy efficiency – eg turning off lights, computers after hours, using 5 star energy efficient office equipment
- Climate change and greenhouse gas reduction, eg car pooling
- Paper & cardboard recycling/reduction
- Office equipment recycling/donation
- Water management practices
- Employee waste recycling while at work (milk cartons, pet bottles, cans, tins, newspapers)
- Office waste reduction
- Green Buildings eg water saving fixtures
- Green car/home loans
- Environmental impact assessments when issuing financial products
- Greening the supply chain

Is your credit union active in any of the areas above? CUFA is keen to hear about what your credit union is doing. If you can provide information from which a case study can be derived, CUFA would like to hear from you.

For a fun way to calculate how much **greenhouse gas** you use go to: http://www.abc.net.au/science/planetlayer/greenhouse_calc.htm
Select the 'Greenhouse Calculator'!

PJC Inquiry into Corporate Responsibility

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services (PJC) has announced [an inquiry into corporate responsibility](#) and triple-bottom-line reporting for profit and not-for-profit incorporated entities under the *Corporations Act 2001*.

If you are interested in contributing to this inquiry, please contact Josh Moyes, Public Affairs, (02) 8299 9033, email: jmoyes@cuscal.com.au



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