

Many thanks and appreciation to the team of FOHCOL co-organisers for an enjoyable and well-rounded celebration of co-operatives at the only International Day of Co-operatives event to be held in Western Australia.

Ten people started with morning's events with a guided bus tour of Freo Fringe housing co-operative, hosted by Leigh and Alex with their babies. The grounds are lovely, with mature trees, burgeoning vegie gardens and an inviting playground forming the central focal point. After looking around the co-op, and being welcomed into a member's home for a sticky-beak, we enjoyed refreshments and warm conversation in the chilly morning

Returning to First Fremantle we joined another 30 people (plus kids) for the presentations. Our guests were Margo O'Byrne (facilitator, author & co-op founding member), Trent Bartlett (CEO of Capricorn Society, a WA co-operatively based business) and our very own Elizabeth Cheong (PhD in co-operative business structures) who each offered a fascinating facet of empowerment of women through co-ops, the quiet fourth sector. After the speeches we were led into informal conversations in small groups before a delicious lunch featuring another of chef Sam's fabulous soups accompanied by delightful live music from Ali. Many thanks also to Lynne Tinley and Teri Fisher for organising the beautiful artwork.

Guests included politicians Lynn McLaren MLC and Adele Carles MLA, and Peter Wells (CEO from Co-operatives WA), each of whom offered support. Apologies came from the Minister for Housing (Bill Marmion MLA) and Senator Scott Ludlum and others. A letter to FOHCOL from David Rogers (President ICA Housing Sector Organisation, as part of the International Co-operatives Alliance based in Switzerland) was read by Trent (see the picture below).

There were so many other welcome guests, and it was lovely to catch up with local co-ops socially too, many of whom work generously together through FOHCOL and our housing co-op company, Co-operation Housing (Homes for Sustainable Communities).

We look forward to seeing you next year! First Saturday in July...

Our 'houses' from the 2009 conference were colourful play places for the children attending the Day.



Focused attention for the speakers...



Trent Bartlett delivering the message from ICA President David Rodgers.



A great place to be...



Talk from Margo O'Byrne captures the audience



Scintillating group discussions after the speakers



Ali Tapper's music for after the show, with food.