

**Presentation by ICA President Candidates at the 2022 ICA General Assembly
20 June 2022, Seville.**

Melina Morrison, ICA Presidential Candidate.

Buenas tardes,

Cooperators, ICA Directors and President Ariel Guarco, Director General Bruno Roelants, fellow nominees, and Coceta, our generous hosts.

As a co-operator, a co-operative leader, a woman cooperator and a representative of the Asia-Pacific region which has not nominated a candidate before, I am honoured to stand for ICA President at the 2022 General Assembly.

Throughout the campaign, I have had the immense privilege to exchange views on the future direction of the co-operative movement with leaders and apex bodies across Asia-Pacific, Latin and North America, Canada, Spain, Italy, Britain, Europe, Africa and Australasia.

In bilateral conversations with co-operative leaders from all corners of the world, it is clear that we have built an exciting coalition of cooperators who want to see a strong, dynamic ICA.

Colleagues, the world is on a precipice. The ill winds of hyperinflation, climate change, ongoing health crises and food insecurity are deepening inequality further. Government cannot respond alone. Governments seek partnership with business enterprises and civil society.

Our movement needs urgent reform if we are to respond further. To widen our social impact we need a strong and united ICA to mobilize the movement in the interests of humanity – I stand before you today on a platform of change.

We know we have strong values - it's now time to look outwards and promote co-operatives effectively and consistently.

This election is especially important because it is the chance for a fresh era of influence and visibility for the ICA and the global co-operative movement.

The ICA needs strong leadership to grow the membership and the financial health of the organisation, to grow our influence and connections on the world stage and to grow our visibility through better communications.

I have the experience and skills to bring this leadership to the ICA uniting the Board and the membership for a new era of momentum for cooperatives and mutuals.

For more than two decades my work for the movement has been dedicated to raising the profile of this powerful and sustainable enterprise model in my home in Australia and internationally.

I have driven a new movement in cooperativism in Australia from a grassroots organisation to a powerful and influential co-operative business organisation that has the ear of government.

As the chief executive of the new cooperative and mutual apex body in Australia, I have led the movement to many achievements to improve the business environment for coops and mutuals. A campaign for access to capital resulted in new laws and more than \$350 million of growth capital released into Australian cooperatives and mutuals since 2019.

I have raised more than \$24 million in government funding for new cooperatives in agriculture and social care. I have grown the membership of the apex body 10-fold since forming.

I have worked for the ICA for many years using my proven communications skills to raise the profile of cooperatives on the world stage. Working on the communications campaign in the International Year of Cooperatives and the Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade has been a highlight of my work for the movement.

My three priorities for the ICA are leadership, communication and growth.

This chimes with an international mood for change in community towards business models that offer up a more positive future environmentally, economically and ethically.

I will work with the Board and the Members to elevate the cooperative model globally to the level of influence and relevance it deserves, and I will use my proven communications skills to ensure that the ICA leads an effective strategy to bring our business model to the world's attention.

I will ensure that the ICA can grow by engaging more cooperatives and mutuals in the work of the ICA.

As President, I will:

- Set a global narrative to promote the distinct cooperative enterprise purpose
- Deliver a global cooperative framework for ESG and SDG reporting
- Promote the adoption of the highest standards in coop legislation
- Develop and promote shared policy platforms for growth in cooperatives
- Engage more cooperative and mutual businesses in the work of the ICA
- Increase engagement with cooperative directors, especially women

In delivering this ambitious but essential program, we need to recognise the strength in the diversity of our cooperative regions.

Increasing the number, size and reach of co-operatives will be at the heart of everything I do as President building on the success, expertise and knowledge of the regional bodies, the sectors and the thematic committees.

I want to stress my commitment to engaging with young people who represent the future of our movement.

We must go beyond tokenism and connect deeply with the idealism of youth to build a better world.

Working in partnership with the Youth Committee, we will develop communication and capacity building strategies that inspire younger people to use the co-op model to fulfil their common economic, social and cultural needs.

I also want to restate the centrality of women's empowerment to my priorities. The ICA and the movement needs more diversity and inclusion to live its values accurately.

Women have always been central to the success of co-ops. In partnership with the Gender Committee, we can develop a global women's co-operators strategy to inspire, celebrate and connect women co-operators across the globe.

Cooperatives have proven that they are the true sustainable business type, always with an equitable business purpose that has never been more relevant. But co-operatives continue to be disadvantaged by the lack of awareness of our business model precisely at a time when it should be the preferred way to do business.

Cooperatives are well-placed to help solve the challenges we face. But we can only achieve this if our enterprises are taken seriously by decision makers and opinion formers.

The ICA needs to respond rapidly to meet this challenge, and together, we can unleash the power of cooperatives.

I want to thank again those who have supported my campaign and given their time so generously. I also want to acknowledge my two opponents in what has been an exciting and important campaign.

Cooperatives have much to offer the world. This is our time to shine. The role of the president is to unite the movement, neither east nor west, north nor south, but in all things 'together, stronger'. This is my commitment to you.

Thank you.

ENDS