

ASID National Conference  
13 November 2015

# People's Organisations

*Presenters*

*Danny Thomas – President, IYHG Ltd*

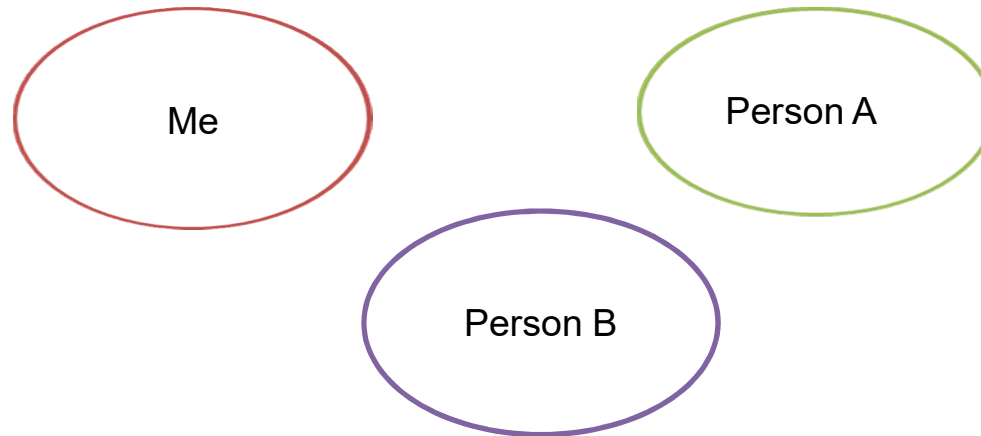
*Morrie O'Connor – Co-ordinator, CLA Inc*

WELCOME

My name is Danny Thomas

My friend here is Morrie O'Connor

This is a story of People's Organisations. A People's organisation are when a group of people who want the same thing get together to do it



## The IYHG – A People’s Organisation



Craig



Bernard



Moya



Rachel



Felice



David



Paul



Jenifur

*We were all sad because we were paying a lot of our pension on rent.*

*Craig said – I was paying half my pension for a one bedroom place, it was pretty hard to make ends meet.*

We got together and said:

- We all have the same problem.
- Can we work together to find a way to get more affordable housing
- We had an idea to set up a housing Co-op.
- We would own our housing and set our own rents.



- *We were successful.*
- *We got money to buy housing \$\$\$\$.*
- *We formed a Co-op. We are the Board of Directors.*
- *Each member selected their own house.*
- *We set our own rent.*





- Then things went bad.
- People didn't pay their rent.
- The other members couldn't be hard on their friends about paying rent \$\$\$\$.
- The Co-op didn't have money to pay bills.
- People started to fight at the Board meetings.
- If it all fell apart we would lose our housing.





- We had a great idea.
- We found it difficult to be hard on each other about paying rent, so
- We hired a Housing Worker.
- Rents started to be paid and things got better.



- The Housing Worker was a thief, she ran away with all our money
- The Government sent people to say we are going to take your houses away. You need to close down.



- The members became angry at the Government.
- The members said we are not going to close down.
- We found a volunteer auditor who got us through the financial mess.
- We worked hard on the rules (policies and procedures for the Co-op).
- We went to CLA to see if they could help out.





- It got better.
- The Co-op continues.
- Members are happy in the houses they have chosen.
- The Co-op has borrowed money from the Bank to buy new housing.
- We have lots of extra benefits e.g. people use the Co-op to save money.
  - E.g. Jenifur was really keen to go to Mardi Gras so she paid an extra \$10 a week in rent which became savings she used to go to Mardi Gras
- *Member Quotes*
  - *For me the Co-op has meant freedom and independence (Moya).*
  - *Having my own place (Ian).*
  - *An opportunity to meet new people.*
  - *A choice to do things on my own.*
  - *I couldn't afford to feed myself if I was in private rental.*
  - *The Co-op makes living in the community do-able (Jenifur).*
  - *Gives me an opportunity to live my life as I want to (Paul).*
  - *It's the difference between a roof over my head and on the streets (Craig).*

*Danny is going to hold a quiz with some questions to see what people remember.*

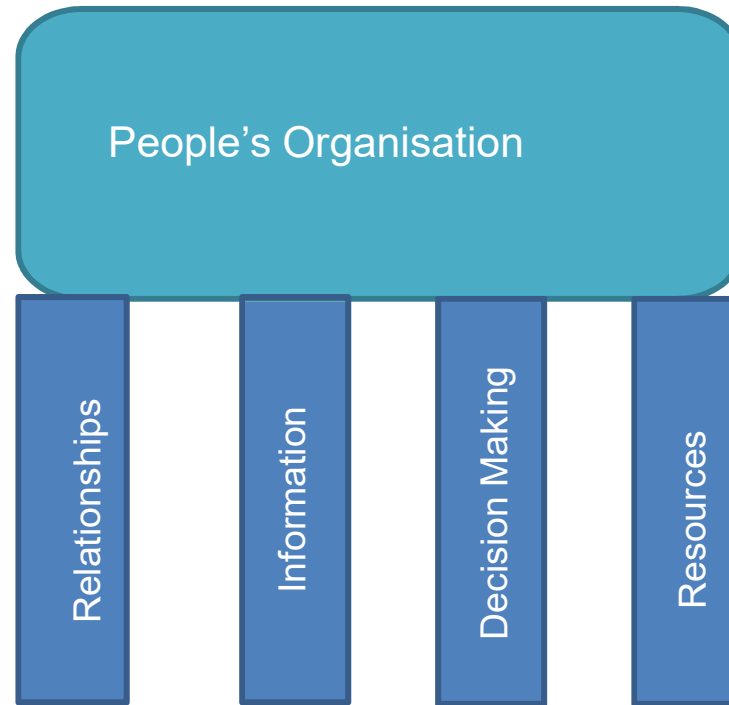
*We are asking people to put hands up for True.*

## The Quiz

All the tenants of IYHG are members – True or False

1. The Treasurer can use the money to buy himself a new car – True or False
2. The tenants are the Board of Directors – True or False
3. IYHG is a not for profit company – True or False
4. The Board of Directors that is the tenants set rents and determine policies – True or False
5. The President of IYHG makes all the decisions – True or False
6. IYHG has taken out loans to buy houses – True or False

The 4 legs that hold up a People's Organisation



### **The Relationships Leg**

- People come together around same problem or with same goal.
- The group who have come together seek out others who can give them legal advice, money advice, organisation help.

### **The Information Leg**

- Stories of what's possible, what others have done.
- Information on what's available to help the group.
- Information about technical things like contracts, constitution, submissions.

### **The Decision Making Leg**

- How the group can make good decisions.
- Work out problems.

### **The Resources Leg**

- Get money to operate.
- To buy the things we want e.g. housing, supports, transport, equipment.
- To pay wages.

# One more story of People's Organisations

- Nundah Community Enterprises Co-operative

## Nundah Community Enterprises Co-op

### We couldn't find work

#### *Quotes*

*You're not who we want for the job; will have to let you go* 😞

*I was always excited and hopeful at the start of each job and then*

*shattered, angry and feeling lousy and useless at the end (Craig)* 😞

*Sitting at home all day you go mad (Danny)* 😞

*No one bothered to get to know me and understand the things I found  
hard (John)* 😞

Some of us were members of IYHG – we knew about getting together and finding a solution to a common problem.

We started with lawn mowing and washing cars.

## NOW

- We manage a café.
- Maintain Nundah Village and local parks.
- Some of the workers have their own individual business within the Co-op – painting business, car washing business, biscuit making business, lawn mowing business, worm juice business, herb growing business.
- We are the members of Nundah Community Enterprises Co-op. We set it up to provide employment – that’s what it does.
  - *I had experience working in a few jobs.*
  - *Had difficulties with health and safety, boss didn’t give me a fair go, and mean to me.*
  - *Left employment, sat home all day being bored.*
  - *I became involved in starting up the Workers Co-op.*
  - *My first job was mowing private lawns and car-washing.*
  - *Then we got Council contract.*
  - *Now I work in café.*
  - *The Co-op means to me good employment and people don’t look down on each other.*



People say –

*Sitting down together at lunch is great, really good to get to know people (Michael ) 😊*

*Work stops being bored and cooped up which feels terrible (Danny) 😊*

*Helps you get to sleep at night because you've worked hard 😊*

*Helps the medication work, I feel better. Go home knowing you had a good day (John) 😊*

*Now Danny is going to hold a quiz to see how much people have remembered about the NCEC Co-op.*

*Asking people this time to put hands up for False.*

## NCEC Quiz

1. To work at Co-op you need to be a member – True or False
2. The Co-operative is owned and controlled by its members – True/False
3. The Co-operative's only reason for existence is to create employment for people with intellectual disability – True or False
4. The Co-operative members/workers elect the Co-ops Board of Directors – True or False
5. Workers are allowed to swear at customers – True or False
6. Member/Worker cannot be elected as Directors – True or False
7. The Co-operative has worker meetings to talk about workplace issues – True or False
8. The members of the Co-operative decide on the membership fees of the Co-operative – True or False
9. Workers can help themselves to money out of the till – True or False

Wanted to tell these People's Organisations stories

- because believe NDIS is a great opportunity for people to pursue some of their dreams through people's organisations.

Resources are one of the legs of People's Organisations and the NDIS provide resources to pay for support hours.

NDIS - can help an individual achieve – but can also help a group of people achieve.

Now we would like to ask people to make suggestions on the sort of things that people could get together to achieve.

