**Alfalfa House Extraordinary Zoom Meeting**

**January 6, 2021**

**Presentation by the Alfalfa House Members’ Council**

***Ashton Roskill***

1. The Members’ Council (MC or board) wants to be clear that unless something extraordinary happens our retail shop in Enmore Road will have to close by the end of January, 2021, because if current rends continue, and as our Leave Loading liability gets closer to fruition, we will may well be trading insolvent by then.
2. Unless there is significant member support between now and then, the MC will no other option but to close Alfalfa House’s Enmore Road shop doors.
3. Best case short- or longer-term scenario may be to relaunch Alfalfa House, with a more pared down, and more efficient business model – members are already investigating this possibility, however, it will only possible with concerted and active member support.

**Some background**

1. Two years ago in 2019, we were also in a financial ‘world of pain’ and close to insolvency. An Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 27 March 2019, which led to a successful Crowdfunding campaign, and beneficial changes to our operating model.
2. Then we thought Alfalfa House was in the red by $42K. We believed that we could raise funds to plug that gap in the balance sheet – the Crowdfunder raised $47k.
3. Unfortunately when the fundraising was barely over, financial due diligence revealed unforeseen costs had not been attributed correctly – In fact we were $82k in the red, a much worse position than we initially thought. We then committed to try to trade ourselves out of debt. The Co-op was making other positive steps.
4. But it was not happening fast enough to avoid creditors our biggest creditors, suppliers and others. At that point, three MC directors decided to invest their own money to boost AH’s equity by $25k, so that into the next financial year AH would not be in danger of insolvency.
5. We then had strong trading into 2020 – including a strong Xmas.
6. But in February/March 2020 COVID came to town. Initially we did not know how it would impact us. At first, we were the beneficiaries of panic buying and had several strong trading weeks, banking about $28k profit. In addition to that we also received a $14k government subsidy.
7. By end of June 2020 we were just about viable, trading above the critical $85k per month level with a small profit – things were looking reasonably positive.
8. Unfortunately two things have happened since. Between June and September some government subsidies to businesses and individuals were withdrawn, having a marked impact on our turnover. From August 2020 we were trading behind last year’s turnover. It started being a manageable 5-10%, which we thought probably a blip. It became more serious in September and October causing further concern.
9. And then the second issue occurred – our new bookkeeper discovered that we had not been correctly paying **Leave Loading** (an obligation to permanent staff for their holiday period) for the last 5 years. Our Treasurer assessed the size and scale of the problem, and we were obligated to report the matter to Fair Work Australia and seek their assistance.
10. Our analysis found that we are liable for total of around $20k in payments to current and former staff, effectively wiping out the trading surplus of the prior 6 months. The exact number, and other details are still to be determined by Fair Work Australia.
11. We articulated the above financial position to December’s AGM.
12. **These two challenges have put us in a very precarious financial situation.** In the beginning of November/December we also saw a substantial reduction in foot traffic in the area, not just with to Alfalfa House. Those coming to the Co-op were primarily members. On a good day we make a gross margin of between 3-4%. So, in effect whenever we sell to members we are making a loss. We are relying on passing trade to support the Co-op. When you don’t have that passing trade – we don’t make that money. If 100% of sales are to members we are losing 6% on every transaction.
13. The purpose of the Co-op is to provide good value wholefood and products to members. Member discounts are effectively subsidised by non-members, and we have seen a marked reduction in non-member shopping in recent months, largely due to COVID and online shopping impacts.
14. We can take immediate steps to change our pricing model or member discount system. If not reset ‘right’ however, we may erode our existing competitiveness. What this does show is that our current model is not sustainable right now and into the short-term. Unfortunately we do not have much time to resolve our current issues nor trade our way out of them.
15. Our pricing is set on the basis of two slightly different criteria. If it is a key item like eggs, milk, bread, etc. we price to the market. We try to be as competitive as possible. If it is not a key value item we have a relatively blanket mark-up. We then make some money.
16. Some members may be willing to forgo their discount, and others may not. MC can also make temporary or other changes to our systems that may assist.
17. The MC’s responsibility is to make a decision on the future of the Co-op that provides the best possible scenario for all of our stakeholders. It is our fiduciary duty if we believe the business is likely to become insolvent, to declare it. We have to transparently declare it to members and staff, the government, the tax office, and our suppliers.
18. We started to think how we could avoid bankruptcy, which would force us to close, or wind-up, the Co-op entity as well. None of us want that. Also if we became bankrupt an administrator would have to be appointed, we would also have sell our assets to cover the liabilities, and MC Directors would be personally liable for any leftover debt.
19. So a two-pronged approach is best at this stage: first we can shut the shop but not wind-up the Co-op. Shutting the shop before we become insolvent can preserve our assets so they can be used for any future model, i.e. Alfalfa House 2.0.
20. Is closing the shop up for discussion? I hesitate to say it isn’t, but as we are tracking today I would not be doing my duty to anyone on this call to say that as we see it, we will not be closing the shop at the end of January, and we are currently planning to close do this. All indications still are that we will be trading insolvent beyond January.
21. I am a great advocate of never say never. I am hoping to hope for miracles, like an extraordinary turnaround in sales. As it stands today I cannot mislead anyone. We have to close the shop to prevent insolvency, administration and wind-up.
22. If we close by end of January we will not be bankrupt after we clear all supplier debt.
23. We also need to quickly workout an Alfalfa House Version 2.0 as soon as possible.

***Bruce Diekman***

1. There are a still a constructive few things we can do before the end of the January. For example contact members for support, introduce a voluntary 2021 Annual Subscription Renewal (membership) Fee and more. Members will be advised as soon as possible of further ways they can help.
2. The nature of the pressures we are feeling, why did we not see this coming, and why is it impacting us so severely are as follows. Had we been in a more financially robust position we would not be doing this.
3. High street ‘bricks and mortar’ retail is suffering a catastrophic decline – it was starting to be felt before COVID – e.g. the movement to online trading. Foot traffic into AH has diminished – also the streets are often empty, compared to pre-COVID times, i.e. the passing customers we make money from. When farmers and organic markets started to re-open it affected us. The migration to online shopping has accelerated this – any future AH model should have an online trading component.
4. We may not have a long time to close the shop and preserve the value of the Co-operative. The faster we act the more value we can preserve.
5. A request has been lodged with the Department of Fair Trading (Co-op Registry) to wind-up the Coop. We don’t have to wind-up the Co-op if we close the shop instead.
6. We have a plan in place to sell and reduce our stock liability. Slow-moving items will be discounted heavily. In the week starting 18 January we will commence discounting any stock that is not turning (being sold) once a week by discounting such items by 25%, and 50% the following week. And in the final week we will discount to clear the rest of the stock.

**Kathryn Welch comment**

1. I can’t believe that our model has not been the right one to ensure we are viable. We shop at the Co-op for a reason. Members get to buy stuff we trust. Members don’t shop at AH because it is cheaper, although I have checked that we often are competitive. We shop at AH because it is a place we can trust, without heaps of packaging and plastic. I
2. I am disappointed that we do not appear to have a choice whether or not to close the shop, but I understand the responsibility that the MC have.
3. Perhaps before you close the shop you should ask members whether they are willing to forgo their discount, so they can access a shop that works hard to obtain ethically sourced products – this is why we support Alfalfa House.

***Ashton reply***

1. Since December when we asked members to shop more it has not yet made a marked difference in our trading performance.
2. A large cash injection will not really help, as we do not have a profitable trading model – it may give us breathing space to get a better model. The difficulty is that what you have as members is cast in our objects and changing it would take time, which we don’t have, and may have unwanted outcomes. We simply don’t have the time now to make such changes now and see if they will work.
3. We have asked the landlord, via the estate agent, to give us some rent relief. That may delay the inevitable by a few weeks and also give us an opportunity to improve the situation.
4. We will continue to trade until the very last day. We plan to keep fresh produce stocked and the fridge as full as possible, and as mentioned we will be discounting slow moving items.
5. If we keep the shop open there is also a long-standing and ideal requirement to refit and refurbish it. We currently don’t have the funds to do that. A full refurbishment would cost around $120k new materials and lost sales.
6. The members have the right to decide on the future of the Co-op but the management of the shop front is the duty of the MC. And that is what the MC has elected to judge – one of the critical accountabilities is to trade within our means.
7. What we can do immediately may give us some breathing place. We can talk about the **2021 Annual Subscription Fee** – we believe it’s unethical to demand and enforce and the full yearly amount ($20 per membership), as our future is so uncertain. However we will allow members to pay the Annual Fee voluntarily, and pay more if they wish. **Training skilled volunteers** to manage till shifts is also a viable option.

***Questions and comments raised on Zoom chat***

**We need to buy some time to develop an Alfalfa House Version 2.0**

1. I cannot see how this works if we shut the shop. It will disband the community and the community has been how we have solved things in the past.
2. I don't think the majority are suggesting trying to trade out of the situation - we need to make immediate changes to support AH through the current financial crisis & then revisit the business model in a way that aligns with members' needs & values.
3. Can we keep the shop open long enough to save it?
4. Please ask the members tomorrow to contribute, and end the discounts for now. Keep the shop open as cheaply as possible and then let's plan a new future.
5. How much time would be preferable to keep the shop afloat to explore other options including new premises, etc?
6. We need breathing space, to come up with new vision and strategies to take Alfalfa further. Only then, the money that members contribute will be useful.
7. So, how much money would we need to allow us to develop this new model, or if we had a war chest, how much would need to be in it to help with this?

**Shop or Online Model?**

1. Part of the reason people love to shop with us is the community aspect of the Co-op ... a purely online model would never provide this.
2. How would package free work online?
3. To me online isn't a Co-op! Just my feeling & opinion!
4. I would be more open to having a volunteer run warehouse space. I don’t see Alfalfa’s future being purely online. We loose the community aspect being purely online.
5. Purely online misses the point for me.
6. The online aspect will be masses of work to set up as well, and to maintain.
7. I don’t relate to online especially for produce. It is a crowded space. Won’t online lose the no packaging aspect?
8. The online idea is not bad but likely to be very labour-intensive and of course has zero scope for 'footfall' - again, we'll just be selling to members.

**Alfalfa House Version 2.0**

1. Cyrus from MC has undertaken to ‘lead the charge’.
2. If you want to be on the team looking at Version 2.0 please email the MC.
3. Samson wants to be involved in Version 2.0
4. We could find a space which caters better for Alfalfa House meetings, and membership engagement activities.
5. The trick to Alfalfa House 2.0 will be to transfer and maintain member support if the shop closes.
6. I am willing to stay to see Alfalfa House convert into a new model if the shop does have to close. Addison Road Community Centre does sound like a good option to me.
7. Possible new location: Addison Rd is mostly comprised of old buildings, some needing major repair and is hard to get to on Sundays due to a large, existing organic market? There would be newer small warehouse spaces nearby with good access.
8. The volunteer run warehouse type space would be the most viable option.
9. We could have some clear and robustly developed options for AH 2.0 presented to the membership for voting at another meeting? Then hopefully we can encourage willing members to donate their time and energy to the Co-op’s future direction.
10. Clare Donovan: Could we set up a working group for V2? It would be good to understand what investigations you have been done so far to help inform V2.
11. How many AH members are there? A significant volume of like-minded members will be needed going forward. They're our main asset (there are about 1,900 active members).
12. Sandra Clark: I was thinking what are the issues in the shop e.g. stock loss, slow moving stock, mixed boxes, encouraging volunteering. I don't agree in a volunteer only model – I have tried this with another co-op and it doesn't work.
13. Rajeeb Satyal: It’s time to engage professionals who can volunteer to help craft new business models.
14. Peter Coyle: Happy to help V1 and V2
15. A two-pronged short & long-term strategy: Donations/voluntary extra annual subscriptions plus reduced or no member discount. Development of a plan to move to a better premises next to a supermarket. Our successful sister co-ops nearby are all next to supermarkets.
16. Could we get a place in Addison Road Community Centre? Members pool orders and meet once a week to divide?
17. Ashton’s presentation was so clear. I think we should go for the option of shutting down the shop but not the Co-op, so we can start again from a clean slate … using Alfalfa’s long and well-earned good will. There is new hope in a different way.
18. If we move fast enough, we can still maintain Alfalfa’s social equity.
19. Do we know what rental difference might be between current shop-front location and a warehouse type location?
20. Can we set up sub-committees to find new premises? Some councils are offering cheap one-year rentals/pop ups, etc.
21. I think another place could be much better, space-wise, newer, and structurally sound. The current shop isn't good for COVID social distancing -1person/4m2.
22. Starting afresh is better than keeping investing in this model.
23. Addison Road is lovely but would never attract new people - it's not a location with high footfall.
24. I've spoken with the Inner West Council about subsidised spaces and Sydney City Council, without any results so far.
25. A stall at Marrickville markets *(NB Sundays only)* may help increase foot traffic - it would also help marketing & increasing numbers to the actual shop. May not help currently but a good option if the shop is to close? *(NB we would be competing with many existing, generally cheaper organic food traders).*
26. We need a lower cost tenancy.
27. It has to be an entirely volunteer-based organisation to keep costs down.

**Buy time to come up with a plan – defer the closure for a while.**

1. Appeal now to enable breathing … we’re ready to start phoning members!
2. Miska Mandic: This is for the future form of the Co-op. I’m a board member of another local community group, *Frontyard Projects*, We have a small ‘accounting trick’ to make our situation clear to the community. We chart ‘breathing space’ to make it very clear where we’re at, and then aim as an organisation to keep viable for the next 6 to12 months roughly: <https://www.frontyardprojects.org/supporters/>

**What are the priorities?**

1. Our priority needs to be protecting our directors and preserving the Co-op.
2. Definitely – in an ideal situation it would be great to get money donated back to directors who have personally contributed.
3. We need to protect the MC members from personal liability at this stage. Agree we want to keep the co-op going, but not at the MC's personal expense.

**Alfalfa House V1 – Keep current version**

1. Our website needs a revamp – more photos of products offered on the first page and photos of different shelfs with products.
2. From this call can we find people to work on various things? Wrapping up and preparing for 2.0 sure, but likewise those of us wanting to work to keep it open as is.
3. Marion Spiller: Can we setup a working group for V1?
4. Peter Coyle: Happy to help V1 and V2.
5. What does Alfalfa House need to stay open? How can members help?
6. How much do we need to stay open?
7. We need $85k sales per month to cover our costs
8. Has the MC investigated the new guidelines for trading out of insolvency? Were we eligible for JobKeeper?
9. I'm on the board of the Total Environment Centre - they qualified for JobKeeper - have kept staff & stayed afloat during COVID. *(BD as a registered charity the qualification for TEC would have been a 15% decline).*
10. We investigated JobKeeper but didn’t qualify. *(BD we are only a not-for profit, not a registered charity; to qualify we needed a 30% decline which would have sunk us anyhow – the bar was set too high for us).*
11. I would like to keep the shop, even as we explore other options. Agree it is essential to the AH community.
12. Thanks Ashton for your clear communication. Seems logical to me to close the retail outlet in Enmore and think through alternative ways to keep the community alive. Is it helpful in the meantime for members to shop the stock down using either their member discount or no discount at all?
13. I want members to save Alfalfa House again and keep us open.
14. This is the only place I trust to shop ethically and fairly in a community setting. When I bought my current property 14 years ago, walking distance to Alfalfa House was a non-negotiable requirement.
15. My main motivation for shopping at Alfalfa is avoiding packaging, not the discount.
16. Robert Pulie: Same, shop ethically and avoid packaging.
17. I agree but I have friends that reckon we’re too pricey. I love the vibe in the shop, good products and no plastic, and love the shop team.
18. If we don’t have a debt, could we continue on a shoestring? With a new pricing model?

**Raising Funds**

1. Can funds be raised through *ForwardBuy? (BD was something else meant, Afterpay)*?
2. How many members paid the $20 annual fee last year? If this was increased it might help.
3. I agree – also keep in mind if we keep the shop we would essentially need to raise over $200k at some point to outfit and protect it for the future. Need to focus on future models and hope for another shop when feasible.

**MC & Staff**

1. Thankyous to all our amazing staff.
2. Thankyous to the MC for all their hard work.
3. Thanks so much to Ran, Tallulah, Yue and all the team.
4. Lots of thankyous to MC and Staff.

**How much do we owe? What is our financial position?**

1. What level was the turnover in December? How far from the $85,000 minimum desired target?

**Tenancy**

1. How much notice is required to end the tenancy?
2. Have we given notice to leave?
3. Did we get a rental reduction?
4. Can our landlord not pay for some of the maintenance issues we experience, e.g. the dodgy floors and layout?

**MC Member Liability**

1. MC member liability: If we don't look after the MC's interests now (i.e. their personal liability for the finances of the Co-op), who's going to put up their hand to be on the MC in the future.
2. I don’t feel comfortable in Bruce, Tom, and Ashton foregoing the money they put in. I think this also needs to be accounted for in any wind-up.
3. And the three of you who invested $25,000 to keep AH alive, will you lose that money?
4. The issue of insolvency is very serious & MC members have personal liability. We need to address this as a priority. Closing the shop is one option but not the only one.

**Profit and Loss**

1. Rule No1 in any business (or home) if the funds coming in do not cover costs is, quickly slash the biggest costs.

**Need another meeting**

1. Maybe we need another meeting to digest this and wrap our heads around it.

**Additional Funds, Grants etc**

1. Did AH apply to City of Sydney council for funds?

**Phone Link Up**

1. We need to get a broader picture from the member database as to how many people are actually committed to making a volunteer-run space work. I've had a lot of people tell me they don’t want to see us go but they can’t contribute time to help
2. Tara: We’ve formed a group to do a member phone around and will still proceed with that – to canvass member thoughts on V2 and other matters. If anyone would like to join us on please contact staff – we will be working on our messaging In the next couple of days.

**Next steps**

1. Agree with Jamie Payne – presenting some options to vote on would be helpful.
2. Have follow-up meeting in 1 or 2 weeks time.
3. Happy to meet every week.
4. Keep sending feedback, comments & questions to the MC at: alfalfamc@googlegroups.com

**Donations, Discounts & Membership Fees**

1. Any fundraising is flawed because we don’t have an online presence.
2. We have to be clear if people do pay the ASF or make a donation, it may not mean the shop will remain open.
3. What about proposals for immediate changes re: discounts, pricing, membership?
4. Yes, members can choose not to have a discount each time they shop.
5. Can we pay our nominated subscription fee now, soon?
6. Yes, to the annual subscription fee, and is it possible for interstate relatives to buy an AH gift voucher if used in January?
7. I'll donate at shop tomorrow!
8. A two-pronged short and long-term strategy: Donations/voluntary extra annual subscriptions plus reduced or no member discount. Development of a plan to move to a better premises, next to a supermarket. Our two most successful sister co-ops nearby are both next to supermarkets.
9. Are members willing to forgo their discount to save the Co-op, 5%?
10. Member discounts are bankrupting the Co-op.
11. The current model doesn't make sense. Why not keep the discount, but price items so the member spend allows us to break even, given that most of the people who shop AH are members.
12. I feel confused by this. I'm not sure why we would have set up a system that sees us operating a loss every time we shop. I was under the impression our mark-up covered this and buffered us.
13. I think some meeting attendees are thinking we can keep the shop going now. Is the urgent shop closure due to the simultaneous: 1) Discovery of unpaid leave loading. 2) Decrease in non-Member sales?
14. Also confused - does this mean that current push for members to 'shop their socks off' is actually worsening the situation?
15. Does the volunteers’ discount impact the problem further?
16. I also volunteer at Lyttleton Co-op in Lawson, their prices are over double Alfalfa's.
17. Single price for everyone for the year. Create a surplus, and then give a member 'dividend' discount the following year. The discount amount relates only to the prior year’s surplus.
18. 'Dividend discount' is good spin :-) Raising prices immediately may cause a drop in sales, so we'd be back where we started.
19. There's big support for relinquishing our discounts. Could those willing to do so, backpay our discounts received since, say June, so we aren't so deeply in debt?
20. I would rather not see discounts past cost price, so we have a fighting chance of making some money so we can get directors money back and/or have some money in the kitty for version 2.0
21. Happy to forego discount, member and volunteer.
22. If we have 1,900 active members and all contributed $50 each we would raise $80,000. No one has had a chance to offer contributions yet.
23. I don’t expect discount now. Actually upset that my discount contributes to shop closure – seems illogical.
24. Can we make a decision tonight to reduce the discount for members?
25. There seem to be flaws with the business model. If you had a serious issue a year ago, why weren't changes made then. I think the prices reflect market price and cannot be increased, so you need to look further. Membership fees should go up to $40 per year, minimum.
26. Membership in other co-ops are up, to $100/year.
27. Tomorrow, ask members to contribute and forego the discount.
28. As a volunteer I would be completely ok to forgo my discount, but would foregoing the discount save us?
29. I still really don’t understand about members getting a 10% discount causing us to operate at a loss ... I've never been made aware of this the entire time I've worked at AH, and this is the first I'm hearing it.
30. It seems we have just found out about these dire straits. Would this information & the prospect of closure mean that we as members must make a concerted effort to shop. Surely, as was mentioned in Ran's email that if we all shop more, things will turn around. COVID has seen sales decline, but now we can shop with masks & better social distance, etc.
31. I agree that foregoing the discount may help, but then what is the benefit to being a member? The discount should decrease and membership fees increase to allow the shop to cover all its costs.
32. I am very willing to contribute to crowdfunding. Can we not try that immediately?
33. Like I said, $50 each if many members contribute.
34. We also applied for a NSW government community grant to make the shop more workable but weren’t successful.

**Not everyone receives newsletters**

1. Patricia & Myles: Please check that everyone is receiving newsletters.
2. Samson unsubscribed.
3. Marion Spiller: I don’t receive newsletters either.
4. Janet also not receiving newsletters.
5. Therese: Yes can mailing list be checked?
6. If everyone who isn’t receiving newsletters can give us their email address next time they shop, that would be helpful and we will update accordingly.
7. For staff team - perhaps over the next few weeks we can ask people for their current email address when they shop and I will cross check these.
8. Send an email to info@alfalfahouse.org
9. **Can we have a link to the recording?**

**Questions**

1. Could a definition of insolvency vs bankruptcy be provided, and insolvency of the shop vs the Co-op?
2. How much is the current debt? The leave loading is approximately $20k.
3. If management is planning to close the shop, who’s making the plan to keep it open.
4. Has the person responsible for the wage theft been dealt with in any way? *(BD It’s a Leave Loading liability that staff are entitled to receive, should have received, and which we are required by law to pay and will have to very soon).*
5. Hasn’t the Co-op been in a similar financial position before this and gotten through it?
6. What is the monthly cost hurdle with current cost reductions? How much less than $85k is it now?
7. Why were we asked to buy when members are actually costing the Co-op money?
8. How much monthly member-shopping turnover do we need? Is the $85,000 figure accurate to break even?
9. What are the Co-op’s debts? A: Debt is in terms of liabilities on the balance sheet (GST, employee super & salaries, Annual Leave Loading & suppliers). The Co-op does not have any loans. When the shop closes the employees will be paid all their entitlements.
10. Will we still be stocking sufficient goods in the Co-op? A: To clarify we are short on some products due to the holiday period, most of our suppliers only reopened on Monday. We will be selling our top sellers and essentials like bread, eggs, milk and discounting slow selling products.
11. What say do members have on shop closure?
12. What do our Rules say on member input on decisions of this nature?
13. Can we do hybrid online sales with members phoning or emailing in a shopping list?

**Volunteer**

1. Mel: I'd be able to do a till shift as well as produce if that helps at all. Michelle: Me too - not much money right at the moment, but a bit of time on hand!
2. Noemi Taco: I'm keen to volunteer, would like to know what areas are really lacking in volunteers.
3. Jennifer Kent: I think that if Ashton is calling for more member involvement in AH - it is clear we need more member involvement. The rallying call really needs to be heeded & those who are passionately interested in Alfalfa's future (such as me) should get more involved in the Coop's governance. I'm happy to volunteer on the MC &/or sub-committee.
4. Tom Bartels: Is the best way to get people who are keen to commit to contact the MC at the MC email:
5. Jennifer Kent: We need someone to investigate options for a Treasurer for the MC. I don't have the expertise but happy to ask the Total Environment Centre’s Treasurer if he can provide any recommendations.
6. I am happy to volunteer, especially if there is still any chance at all of keeping the current shop open while we explore new possibilities.

**What we need**

1. We need a new Treasurer or person with financial skills to help navigate our way through.
2. Breathing space would be great … we need more directors and perhaps some to stand down.

**Tap on successful Co-ops**

1. Agreed Blue Mountains Co-op sounds very successful & may have ideas.

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**Disappointing**

1. I am very disappointed. I thought this meeting was at least in part about avoiding the closure of the shop. It seems we do not get a say in that.
2. And the three of you who invested $25,000 to keep AH alive - will you lose that money?

**Trading Hours**

1. Difficult to get to the shop, as you say, when it closes at 5pm. We’ve not been able to get in.
2. Keep trading, need to stay open past 5pm to allow for full-time workers to shop.

**Need a staged approach**

1. It is clear there needs to be a reassessment of the retail model of AH but this will take time - so a staged approach is required.

**Next step**

1. Have some regularly calls to figure out the progress.
2. Get information on ASF out immediately and also information about how to donate to the Co-op.
3. **Comments**
4. USyd’s Business School’s Co-operatives Research Group has a current research project on the place of co-ops in the COVID economic recovery: <https://www.sydney.edu.au/business/our-research/research-groups/co-operatives-research-group.html>
5. Alfalfa House used to do a lot more outreach like in the past – Newtown Festival for example.
6. How much time would be preferable to keep afloat to explore other options, including new premises, etc?