

The Origins and Early Years of the Barossa Community Store, 1944-65

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The Barossa Community Store in Nuriootpa is Australia's largest and most successful surviving Rochdale co-operative store. It is located in the Barossa Valley, the centre of one of Australia's major wine growing regions. This paper explores the origins of the store against the background of the German heritage of the Valley and the community movement that developed in the town and attracted both national and international interest. The early years of the store, which arose from the result of the mutualisation of a successful non-co-operative retailer, saw tensions between leaders of the co-operative and the broader community over whether surpluses should be retained by the co-operative or ploughed back into the community. The co-operative saw need to raise capital to grow by seeking additional sources of capital beyond members' shares. Management also had to face the challenge of changing retail practices, which gradually saw the shift to self-service and the opening of its first supermarket under the Co-operative brand in December 1965.

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