



Companion

credit union *We're listening...*



From the Chief Executive's Desk

I don't know what it has been like for you, but for all of us at Companion 2009 has begun at such a hectic pace – already we are into the second quarter of the year, and there are no signs of our "busyness" abating!!

Society continues to be bombarded (almost saturated) with negative commentary about the causes of, and the fallout from the sub-prime lending fiasco in the US, and now, the significant consequences for many of the global financial crisis or GFC as it is being referred to.

I personally have a fairly optimistic view of the way forward. Here in Australia (and very specifically at Companion), our banking businesses are in very solid shape, and apart from the increase in the cost of our funds, we will come through this ready, willing and able to respond to our members needs.

The combined effects of the Reserve Banks' easing of Monetary Policy, and the Federal Governments two Economic Stimulus Packages, will in my view significantly reduce the impact of the global slow down here in the Hunter and Gunnedah. That is not to dismiss the fact that some will do it tough over the coming months, particularly if unemployment becomes a factor. We stand ready to respond to the needs of our members, whatever they may be, and encourage you to make contact with us if there is any way at all that we can assist.

This Autumn edition of our Member Newsletter is packed full of important information, so please take the time to peruse its contents.

Kind regards

Ray O'Brien

Customer Service Award

Congratulations to Jan Snape who was awarded first place for the Customer Service Award – Individual at the recent Gunnedah Business and Service Awards evening. The local community voted Jan as the winner from among 50 individual nominees. It is fantastic to see Jan receiving recognition from her community for the great work she has continually dedicated to her Gunnedah members for almost 10 years. Well done Jan!



Newsletter

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Website Poll Results

Companion Credit Union Members recently voted through the Companion website on 'Should Companion offer its members a credit card?' The results came through with an astounding 'yes', 77% of voters voted for a credit card facility.

We appreciate our member feedback and will commence investigating which credit card options are available, the viability, and impact on our members and the business.

Thanks to those of you that voted, we hope you like our next Listening Poll- 'Are you considering buying a house in the next 12 months?'



No Application Fee Car Loan!

Auto Advantage and Companion Credit Union give you the easiest and best way to save big dollars on your next car.

With any car purchased through our partner Auto Advantage, we will **waive the application fee* on your Companion car loan!** Just mention this offer to Auto Advantage!

Auto Advantage provides:

- Free service
- Independent advice
- Trade disposal
- All makes - new and used
- Personalised service to your door
- For private and business use

Get a quote at

www.autoadvantage.com.au or call Steve Carter and the Auto Advantage team on **4961 5200**

* Only valid on Companion Car Loan applications made for Auto Advantage vehicles throughout April and May 2009.





ATM Direct Charging

ATM Direct Charging is a Reserve Bank of Australia reform to improve competition, efficiency and transparency of ATM fees. From 3 March 2009, an ATM owner may impose a fee (known as an ATM Direct Charge Fee) on the cardholder for their transaction at the time of the transaction.

Good news - RediATM's are Direct Charge Fee free for our members!

Companion's 50 ATMs are part of a national network known as rediATM. By using any of the over 1,400 rediATMs nationally, Companion members will avoid any direct charge fees. To find your nearest rediATM visit www.rediATM.com.au.

Please note that with the implementation of ATM Direct Charging on 3 March 2009, ATM fees charged to your account on 3 March 2009 were for the period 1 February – 2 March 2009.

Additional ATM direct charge fees from other financial institutions will be debited from your account immediately and will be shown as a separate fee following each of your ATM transactions on your statement.

Change to Monthly Transaction Fees

With ATM Direct Charging now in place, Companion has amended the ATM fees that are charged to your account each month. See table below:

Fee Description	New Fee (effective from 3 March 09)	Old Fee
Withdrawal at a Companion owned rediATM	\$1.00	\$1.00 [#]
Withdrawal at a Non Companion owned rediATM	\$1.00	\$1.50 [#]
Withdrawal or Enquiry at a Non rediATM	Nil* (see note)	\$2.00

Previously charged on both withdrawal and enquiry.

* Note: The owner of the ATM may impose a 'direct charge' at the time of the transaction. This fee is separate to Companion's Monthly Fees and Changes. To minimise Direct Charge fees we encourage you to use a Companion card in any rediATM.

Please refer to Part C, Conditions of Use Brochures for more details which are available from any Companion branch or via our website www.companion.com.au.

Avoid Direct Charge fees by using:

- A rediATM – Companion card holders will not incur a direct charge fee
- Your Visa Debit Card when completing a purchase and select 'credit'
- EFTPOS - withdraw cash at the same time
- Our online and phone banking to pay your bills

To find your nearest rediATM visit www.rediATM.com.au



When a Companion member uses a rediATM:



- On insertion of your card, this screen will appear, press to continue as normal
- No direct charge will be imposed
- rediATM Fees will be charged monthly to your Companion account for all transactions completed during the month @ \$1.00 per transaction

When a Companion member uses a Non rediATM:



- On insertion of your card, a screen similar to this will appear. It will advise the Direct Charge Fee, press to continue as normal or cancel the transaction
- On transaction completion, the Direct Charge Fee and any withdrawn amount will be deducted from your account immediately

Brand Update

A quick update on the changes we have been working on since we unveiled the new logo you voted for in November. Since we have started introducing changes we have had some great positive feedback on the logo and what it represents – our members, community, staff and mutuality.

We have also ensured 'We're Listening' with prompt responses to member queries, staff and member surveys.

Branches have undergone a transformation with staff purchasing new uniforms as modeled by Carolin Mackaway, Chris Austin, Penny Davies. We have also replaced all signage in our branches.

You may occasionally see stationery with our old logo on it, we are ensuring we use old stock up to minimise wastage and expenditure.



Added Online Banking Protection with SMS One Time Password Security

We are pleased to announce our SMS One Time Password (OTP) service for our online banking facility is now accessible for members being 'officially activated' from the 16th March 2009. All current online banking members were mailed a detailed letter in January, introducing this security service as well as verifying we have your correct mobile phone number listed against your member details. If you haven't already begun to utilise this service we encourage you to register next time you log onto online banking.

What is it?

SMS banking is a **free service** for our members whom utilise our online banking service. It is today's most secure way of protecting our online members from fraud by sending a text message to a mobile phone with a special password to complete upon each online banking log-in. The password is only valid for 10 minutes from the time it is sent.

How to register?

To commence using this service please follow the prompts on our website www.companion.com.au or phone your branch on 131 609.



Concerns?

If you don't own a mobile phone or suffer from poor mobile service in your area or please contact your branch on 131 609 to discuss your security options.

More questions?

Please review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and instructions available on our website www.companion.com.au.

"SMS One Time Password is today's most secure and safe method of protecting your funds"

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MEMBERS:-

Online Banking External Third Party Transfers Reduced to \$500 per day

To also further enhance the protection of your deposits, we are reducing the daily transaction limit for external third-party funds transfers (excluding BPAY) via Online Banking to \$500 per day (from \$5000). Members who use SMS OTP may be granted a higher daily transaction limit upon request. Please contact your branch on 131 609 to arrange.

Who are your local champions?



At Companion Credit Union we're listening and we want to hear from you!

The exclusive *member's only* Companion Community Grants, has **\$20,000** to donate to the local community. We want you to tell us how to donate by nominating your favourite 'not for profit' club, group or charity. If you know a group or club who could use a helping hand then tell us.

Applications open 15th April – 15th May

You'll find full details on line at www.wearelistening.com.au or ask for an application at any Companion branch.



Are you worried about the recent market volatility and the effect on your investments?

The recent fall in the value of shares has been reflected in disappointing returns, not only for any investments you hold, but also from your super fund. However, it's important not to panic and sell any shares you have in favour of more conservative investments, such as cash, as you may miss out on growth opportunities when the market rebounds.

At times like these it's important to remember some of the basic rules of investing.

What you choose to invest in will depend on your goals, your risk profile and your time horizon.

Your risk profile is determined by the level of comfort you have with fluctuations in the value of your investments. While higher risk investments, such as shares, have the potential for higher returns, the risk of loss is also greater.

Your time horizon, or the length of time over which you have to invest, will also be a determining factor in

the investments you choose. Shares are a longer term investment – the more time you have to invest, the more time you have to ride out the market movements.

Another important point to remember is that although the loss in value is disappointing, you've generally only lost money if you've had to sell your shares and realised a loss. If you have the capacity to hang onto them, when the market does eventually rebound, generally so will the value of your shares. History has shown us that after most major downturns, the market does recover and generally goes on to achieve new highs.

Diversification is the key. By spreading your investments across a range of asset classes, the risk of loss is minimised, because not all assets perform in line with each other. Poor performance within one asset class can be offset by strong performance in another asset class.



Before you make any decisions, isn't it worth seeking advice? A Bridges financial planner can review your investments and whether your strategy is appropriate for your circumstances.

Call us on 131 609 or visit your local branch to arrange a complimentary, obligation-free initial consultation with a Bridges financial planner.

**Bridges**

financial advice makes a difference

Bridges Financial Services Pty Limited (Bridges), ASX Participant, AFSL No 240837. This is general advice only and does not take into account your objectives, financial situation and needs. Before acting on this advice, you should consult a financial planner. In referring members to Bridges, Companion Credit Union Limited does not accept responsibility for any acts, omissions or advice of Bridges and its authorised representatives.

You told us you'd like a **LOW** rate on your home loan...

How about the **Introductory Rate Home Loan:**

- **Competitive** one year interest rate **5.22%**
Comparison rate 5.59%
- Enjoy **no ongoing** fees or charges
- **Flexibility** to move to a fixed or variable rate at no cost after 12 months
- **Fast** approval times and redraw facility
- Ideal for first home buyers

131 609

www.companion.com.au



Comparison rate is calculated on a loan of \$250,000 secured over term of 25 years based on weekly repayments. Interest rate is subject to change. Normal loan criteria applies. Warning: Comparison rate applies to example given. Different amounts & terms will result in different comparison rates. Redraw fees, early repayment fees, fee waivers are not included but may influence cost of loan. ABN 82 087 649 947

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