

Co-operative shop carves out market

Local crafts out on display after group takes on mid-city lease

By John Maslin
john.maslin@wanganuichronicle.co.nz

The acronym is Minz and it's an ideal fit for a group of Wanganui craftspeople who have opened their own mid-city cooperative store in Wanganui.

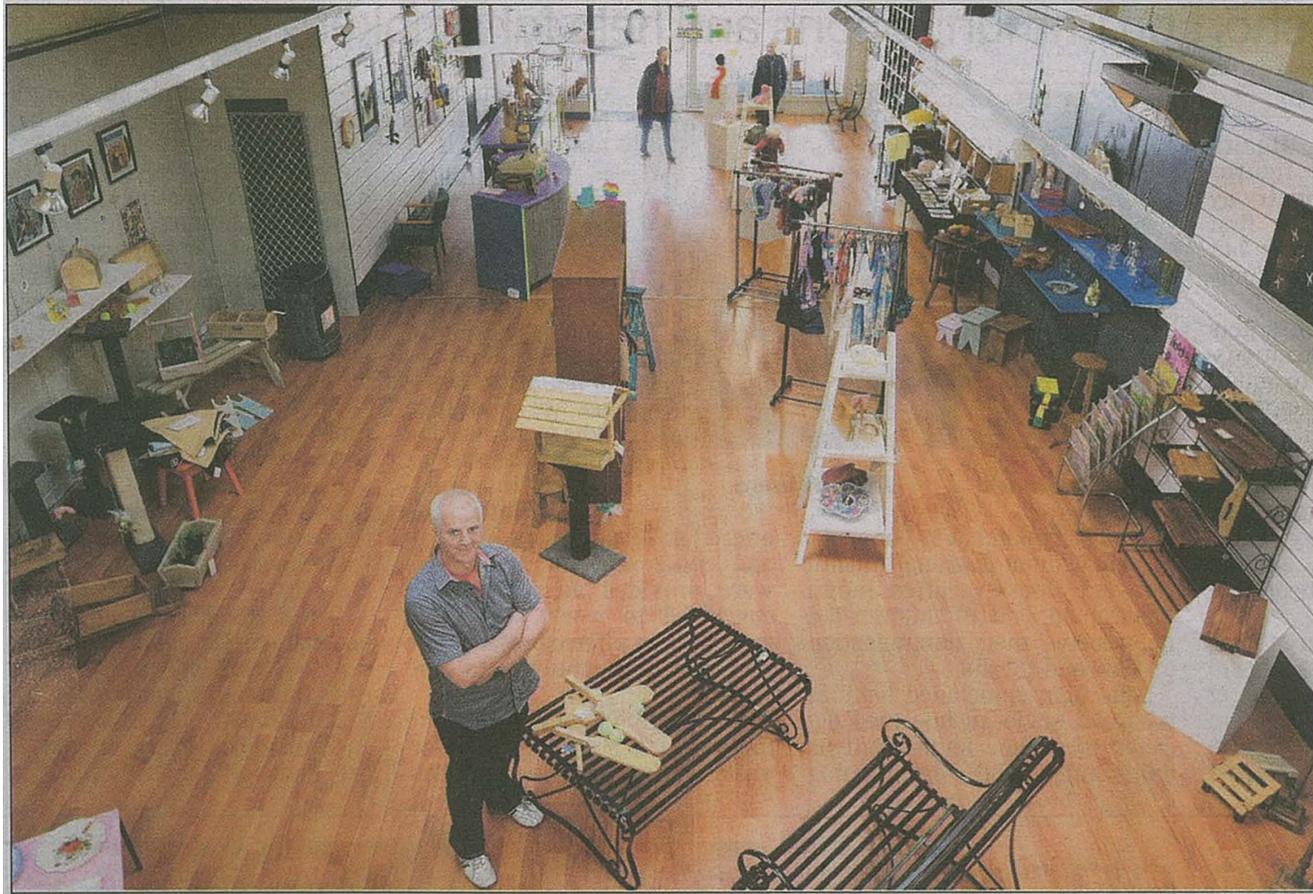
Minz stands for "Made in New Zealand". One of the members Peter Shepherd said it was just what the locals were looking for.

"There's a group of us who want to sell what we make so we decided to set up the co-op so we could sell what we make directly to the public," he said.

But there are other benefits. It means prices are kept low because there is no middle man and all contribute to the shop's operation and the lease.

"There are nine of us involved at the moment but that could increase in time," Mr Shepherd said.

"We're giving an outlet for craftspeople. There's a lot of talented people in Wanganui who struggle with the selling side. They can make beautiful stuff but selling it can be a problem for them. Not everyone's into marketing so this shop fills that void."



They are renting the former Cheapskate store in Victoria Ave and have taken out the lease through until next February. We'll review things after that but hopefully we're in it for the long term," he said.

The shop only opened last Tuesday and Mr Shepherd said

already the customer feedback had been "brilliant".

"It's all very positive because the products we're selling are all locally made."

Prices for some of the sale items are at the higher end but he said generally prices were kept low because the co-op did

not have to rely on middlemen getting their cut.

"The shop doesn't make money in itself. We're all paying a share of the rental and expenses and everyone gives time to man the store."

Mr Shepherd, who makes jewellery, said they expect the

stock in the shop to increase over time as the co-op attracted new members.

The shop started trading from 10am-4pm from Tuesday through to Saturday.

"But the more members we get the more trading hours we can see in the shop," he said.

JOINT APPROACH: Peter Shepherd is one of the nine local craftspeople who belong to a new co-operative shop that's opened in the Avenue.
PHOTO/ STUART MUNRO
030615WCSMSHOP1