



College of Media, Communication and Information

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

26 January, 2019

Ms. Natalie James
Chair of the Inquiry into the Victorian on-demand workforce
Victoria State Government, Australia

Dear Ms. James,

I am gratified to see the care and thoughtfulness with which the Victorian government is considering the challenges of the emerging on-demand economy. It is surely a process that many of us abroad will be able to learn from. I eagerly anticipate your findings from here in the United States.

I am equally pleased to see the submission to your inquiry prepared by the Business Council of Co-operatives and Mutuals—an organization I have been consistently impressed by, during and since my visit to Victoria several years ago. Public policy shapes the kinds of businesses a society produces, and governments around the world can help shape the development of the online economy in more equitable, democratic directions. In my recent book, *Everything for Everyone: The Radical Tradition That Is Shaping the Next Economy*, I show how cooperative economies were developed in rural communities a century ago, around the world, through a combination of local organizing and wise government policy. If we want a better kind of online economy, we need to support structures of ownership and governance that support shared wealth, shared governance, and shared accountability. The legacy of cooperatives and mutuals is uniquely suited for enabling this, and BCCM's submission offers excellent guidance on how to start.

I have had the privilege of working with young people all over the world, including in Victoria, who are building *true* sharing-economy companies through cooperatives. But because the policy and business infrastructure holds a bias toward investor ownership, especially in tech, they face many obstacles. I hope Victoria will take the opportunity to be a global leader in showing that a better kind of online economy is possible.

In gratitude for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nathan Schneider', written in a cursive style.

Nathan Schneider
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