

nsw Federation of  
Housing Associations inc

ABN 86 488 945 663

## Minutes Board of Directors Meeting Held 14th December 2007

*Meeting opened: 9:10 am*

### **Welcome and apologies**

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Present: Nick Sabel, David Matthews, Mohamed Ibrahim (departed 12:40), Beverley Wiggins, Kelvin Allen, Coral Garratt, Patrick Yeung (arrived 12:15)

Apologies: Bobbie Townsend, Nazha Saad.

In Attendance: Adam Farrar, Wendy Rockwell

Welcome to new members: Kelvin and Nazha Saad

### **1. Declaration of conflicts of interest**

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None.

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting: 12 October 2007**

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**Motion:** That the board accepts the minutes of the meeting held 12 October 2007 as presented.

**Moved:** Coral Garratt, **Seconded:** Mohamed Ibrahim Accepted

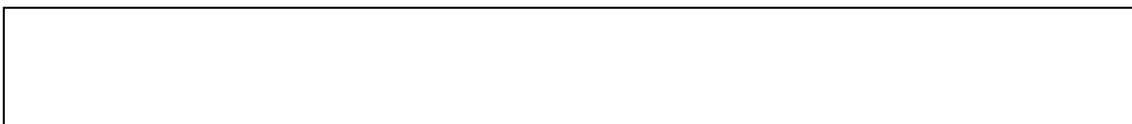
Actions from previous meeting, noted.

### **3. Business Arising**

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#### **25<sup>th</sup> Party –**

- Issues of possible concern arising out of Minister's speech: His interest in fixed term leases, and consistency in policy between public and community housing.(ie Reshaping).
- Cost of Party was greater than planned. 100 extra people at \$60 each, (approx. \$6000 extra). Board felt it was a successful night and worth the investment.



- Board notes it's thanks for a successful night and all the hard work that went into the planning and preparation.
- Board discussed - how can the Federation use this public event as a platform to continue P.R.
- Unfortunately "Planning for the Future" was not launched at party, and post election media was busier than expected to pick up our story.
- Currently building on relationships with NSW Housing Industry Association and KPMG.

**Family Leave** discussion – will go to the next Aboriginal Advisory Committee meeting.

**CHLP review** – need to firm up the Federation's approach to subsidies, early next year.

#### 4. Correspondence

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Noted.

Mark Reader letter – David Matthews pointed out that he felt there would be value added if someone close to the training delivery was a part of the selection process for the Scholarships Program.

Correspondence tabled: Deeds of Agreement with Housing NSW, to become a preferred provider, needs to be signed by two members of the Board. This would allow the Federation to provide training on behalf of Housing NSW in the future.

#### 5. Financial Overview

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**Motion: That the Board accepts the Financial reports for the period ending 30 November 2007, as presented.**

**Moved:** Mohamed Ibrahim

**Seconded:** David Matthews Accepted

*Request: in future print two MYOB generated P&L reports (one for Y.T.D. budget, and one for Annual Budget) instead of exporting to excel format in order to show both in a single report.*

Adam gave an overview of how the Federation costs day charge rate for Training Sessions. The calculation would increase daily rate from \$280 (non member) to around \$350 per day. The market would not bear this increase, so recommends increase rate by CPI, or 5-10% increase. This is not just to about making more money. Members' fees are always subsidized. This was an exercise in calculating cost-recovery and the gap was bigger than expected.

Nick suggested this kind of review and re-calculation should occur annually. A business case should be presented to the Board.

Adam responded that the Training calendar is about to go out for the next year, so a decision needs to be made as soon as possible.



**ACTION** – The Board agrees, due to the short time frame and the need to send out the Training Calendars in the coming week, to increase the training fees by 10% (rounded to the nearest \$5), and to present a Business Case to the Board at the next meeting, then decide how to set up a regular review cycle for costings.

Could consider seeking private contributions to fund scholarships (particularly for small organisations).

## **6. Business Plan Monitoring – Exceptions Report to Nov 07**

Three factors that had significant impact on business plan progress:

- Substantial leave taken by staff during the past three months
- 25<sup>th</sup> Party – involved more than 3 weeks full time resources into this unplanned activity.
- DOH 2 contract is being rolled out more slowly than planned, due to timing of parts of Swinburne distance delivery development.

OCH has still not signed off on the Business Plan to date.

## **7. Summary of Service Evaluations**

Apology – not available. To be tabled at next meeting.

## **8. Community Housing Advisory Committee**

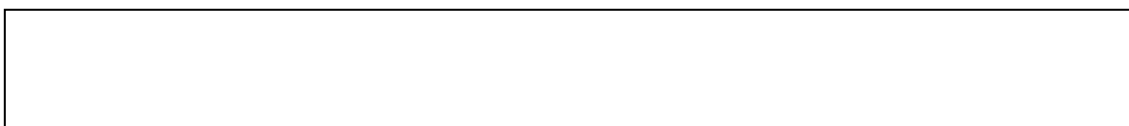
Deferred until next meeting – Bobbie not in attendance.

### **(8b) Additional agenda item:**

Coral Garratt, met with South Sydney Leagues Club. They have a project to find employment for young aboriginal men (football players linked with the club). It is a requirement by the club that football players have part time employment . North Shore and St George are each willing to employ two young men. S.S. club is willing to come in to speak to the Federation about the project. Premier's Dept is trying to get other projects happening, like community gardens, etc. and would also like to speak with the Federation and housing associations.

## **9. Executive Director report & training report**

**Strategic Planning** – Necessity to formalise, and begin, the process in order to be in a position to respond effectively by the beginning of next financial year.



**Federal Housing Policy** – didn't specifically announce additional funding for growth of social housing, or address viability. They do want to discuss how rental incentives could be taken up in NSW.

Need to develop a plan of action which is quite specific, in order to take up opportunities available. Establish a working group prior to February Board meeting.

**Growth Provider Tender** –

Affordable Community Housing Ltd (Cumberland and Western Suburbs) and St. George are the successful growth providers in the first stage to be granted long term leases.

How does the Federation provide support to these and future growth organisations?

Should the Federation have a discrete 'development unit'? Should the Federation take a risk and buy in the capacity? There is also a possibility this may be funded at a national level. Not sure if this is better delivered locally or nationally?

**OCH capacity building** – Federation likely to be part of panels, sharing expertise, in order to offer assistance to growth providers.

**National capacity building** – CHFA is going to hold a SWOT analysis to further discuss a possible future brokerage unit/ business incubator. Staff retreat urged that we begin to work with peaks in other states to share information, resources and skills. How is the Federation positioned?

**Community Housing strategy** – They have announced that it is launched. It is not driving the main changes we are about to experience, although it will provide support for them.

**Minister** – The federation should have more substantial discussions on a range of policy issues as soon as possible.

**Regulatory code** – The Federation needs to work with sector experts to ensure that evidence, KPIs and procedures are effective.

**New rent policy: maximisation of CRA** – announcement is still coming.

**IT** – KPMG was engaged to find best approach. Firstly find out what has worked in the past. A series of workshops will happen. Mohamed argued against participant groups being divided by size of organisation. KPMG will then identify a range of options. Concern that there is no time frame around the last step, ie making a decision and implementing. Sector input and concerns can occur at the workshops. Government is saying they are only in a support role, and afterwards will withdraw from the process.

*Mohamed departed meeting 12:30pm*

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**9b. Training update**

- The Federation is in the process of extending its accreditation to provide a Diploma in Social Housing qualification, and is undergoing the VETAB Audit process.



- The Federation has been accepted as a preferred provider for Housing NSW.
- The Federation is developing CTTT training for Housing NSW.
- The Federation is in discussion with ACT Department of Housing and Community Services to provide social housing training for their frontline staff.
- Proposed training dates for Diploma in Social Housing 2008 presented.

Revised draft Quality Training & Assessment Policy – revised in order to more effectively assess outcomes and quality assurance. (to be ratified under item 15. policy review)

## **10. Governance – Priority Risks Review**

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The Board was waiting for advice from Audit & Risk Management subcommittee before reviewing the Operational and Governance Risks. The committee didn't meet for some time due to transitional issues, and this then came back to the Board. The Board has deferred this item for a number of meetings.

**ACTION: Email directors to establish who might be interested in Audit & Risk Management Committee membership, and try to hold a meeting prior to the next board meeting in February.**

The Board reviewed the Governance risk assessment – no risks had been identified as a 'priority risk' (high probability/high impact) to date. (NOTE: there is not a governance area, it flows through different areas).

Governance priority Risks - Identified:

**6. People Risks – Board – current election process does not ensure expertise available matches the range of the business.** All identified strategies have been pursued. Still remains a high risk?

**3. Strategic Risks – Voice for members – Members to do not feel their issues are heard/represented by the Board.**

Operational Priority Risks:

**4. Operational Risk - Business Plan – progress against business plan significantly delayed.**

**4. Operational Risk - Sector co-ordination – Sector is fragmented despite the existing ranges of networks.**

**4. Operational Risk – Lack of knowledge to effectively represent sector's issues.**

**4. Operational Risk – R&D – lack of in-house expertise to deliver research required in emerging areas.** (Note staff indicated not enough time for reading, etc.) Third action point – Build relationships... (delete 'for free').

**4. Operational Risk – Training –**

**(a) low take up** (no longer high probability)

**(b) competitive pressures** (still priority area)

(c) **Products unaffordable to members.** (still priority area) – if still considered a high risk, need to add another action re creating new scholarships???? Or need to specify if this is applying to small organisations or large. ie; separate risk into two.

**4. Operational Risk – Good practice – information not best practice/ up to date.**

Some guides and advice may not be incorrect, but there may be gaps (for example supported housing models / leases).

**4. Operational Risk – Gov & Mgmt services – Change process required in intensive support....** Risk was: working with C grades may damage our reputation. This no longer exists.

**4. Operational Risk – Strategic alliances –**

(a) **Key stakeholders unaware of or not engaged with Fed** (always high risk of losing personnel who have key relationships).

(b) **inadequate time allocated to strategic alliances/ not funded for ...** now an accepted part of the business plan, and therefore funded (no longer high risk).

(c) **time spent on alliances no targeted to priority areas.** (Still high) Need to establish stronger links with financial sector and industry bodies. Also other parts of the accommodations sector: aged care, disability, etc.

**ACTION: More specific reporting by E.D. to the Board on strategic alliances and relationships.**

**Recommended that the Federation hold an event, by invitation, to meet with ‘strategic alliance players’ - Housing Industry Association, Real Estate Institute, Master Builders Association, etc. (ie; financial sector and other industry bodies.)**

**4. Operational Risk – Consultancies – low success rate in tenders.** (no longer a high priority)

Patrick suggested a protocol be developed to avoid ‘stalling’ the Audit & Risk committee during times of transition and/or absence of board members.

**ACTION: Refer to Audit & Risk management Committee to develop procedure to ensure continuity of its work**

**11. Sector Issues**

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No issues raised by directors.

**12. Membership**

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**Motion: that the Board agrees, as per the Rules of Incorporation, that unpaid members be removed from the register of members two months after final reminder, if still unpaid.**

**Moved:** David Matthews

**Seconded:** Beverley Wiggins

Accepted



## 15. Policy Review

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Most of the policies presented for review, had either no changes recommended, or very small, straight forward changes, (the exception being: training policy discussed earlier under item 9.)

1.1 – Staff induction - no change

1.3 – Staff supervision - change table on pg 3 change S.C. to Board throughout (also review practice of supervision for E.D.- *not necessarily change the policy, but make sure it is being enacted*).

1.5 – Staff training & development - no change

1.13 – office security - see track changes as presented

2.2 – Policy Team consultation - no change

2.6 – electronic medium use – (add: that people should be reminded of this policy annually, and should sign it at beginning of employment and be added to the induction kit as a highlighted policy)

3.1 – Financial Mgmt – see track changes as presented

3.8 – managing conflicts of interest- no change

3.9 – Board of directors code of conduct/values statement – no change

ACTION – review the National Federation of Housing Association UK policy “Integrity at Work – Model Code of Conduct for Employees of NSWHA Members – to see if there is a newer version, with anything we would want to adopt to amend our code.

4.7 Quality Training & Assessment Policy (as presented) – Board recommended more headings and reformatting in order to make the information more accessible. Otherwise the board accepts the rewrite as presented.

Change ‘NSW Department of Housing’ to ‘Housing NSW’ throughout all policies and procedures.

**ACTION – Annual appraisal process for E.D. is due, and needs to be added to the Board agenda.**

**Motion: That the Board accepts the policies presented for review, with the changes as presented, and any additional changes as mentioned above.**

**Moved:** Patrick Yeung **Seconded:** Beverley Wiggins      Approved.

## 16. Other Business

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The Federation was approached by Dun & Bradstreet – Debt Recovery Process, to discuss their services and the potential for use in the housing association sector.

The Federation could potentially be approached by any private company seeking business opportunities. Should the Federation have any involvement in promoting or endorsing them?

Does the Board/sector need to further discuss the issue of debt collection (best practice) at all.

In this case we should only provide information already in the public domain. Any future specific request should go to the board, and decided on a case by case basis. The issue of debt collection could be taken to the next HAM.

**ACTION – That we only provide Dunn & Bradstreet information that's in the public domain; and that the issue of debt collection could be taken to the next HAM**

## **17. Next Meetings**

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8<sup>th</sup> February 2008 (A full list to be sent out.)

Meeting closed: 3:55 pm

