



nsw Federation of  
Housing Associations inc

ABN 86 488 945 663

**Minutes**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Held 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
at Federation offices

*Meeting opened 9:10am*

**Welcome**

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**Present:** Patrick Yeung, Bobbie Townsend, Nick Sabel, Nazha Saad, Beverley Wiggins, Mohamed Ibrahim (9:30 am)

**Apologies:** Kelvin Allen, Coral Garratt, (David Mathews – see resignation letter Item 4.)

**In Attendance:** Adam Farrar, Wendy Rockwell

**1. Declaration of conflicts of interest:**

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None

**2. Minutes of previous meeting (14 December 2007)**

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**Motion:** That the Board accepts the minutes of the meeting held 14 December 2007 as presented.

**Moved:** Beverley Wiggins      **Seconded:** Patrick Yeung      Accepted

**3. Business Arising**

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- **Executive Director appraisal** – President will send out appraisal forms to rest of board (noted).
- **Aboriginal Advisory Group** – has been trying to set up a meeting date for later in February, or early March. Will provide a report for next board meeting.
- **Regulatory code/ Evidence guidelines** – won't be exactly same people as on the original group, will add one in order to broaden the view.
- **Training Fees business case** – tabled by Executive Director.

**4. Correspondence**

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**Final version of Maura Boland's response to HAM – tabled.**

- The tender for the new accreditation body will be going out shortly. The Federation had previously considered tendering for this (It is looking like it will only be a one year contract, rather than 3 or 5 year contract as previously proposed). The Federation may have to set up a separate entity. The Federation does currently have staff with existing knowledge of the sector and skills to carry out the service. The risk is: there is virtually no market. Not clear if it is a viable business. Although organisations may be more keen to take up accreditation in order to gain 'credentials' ie; in order to be attractive to affordable housing developers, etc.

**Will need to see the tender document before any decision can be made.**

**David Mathews – resignation submitted (19 Dec 2007). This creates a casual vacancy.**

**ACTION: Put an e-bulletin to all members regarding the casual vacancy, see what responses come in.**

## **5. Financial Overview**

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**Motion: That the Board accepts the financial reports for the period ending 31st January 2008, as presented.**

**Moved:** Patrick Yeung      **Seconded:** Mohamed Ibrahim      Accepted

**Recommend- that the Treasurer reviews and presents the financial reports to the board. Agreed.**

## **6. Half yearly revision of financial projections**

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**Motion: That the Board adopts the revised projections for the YTD reporting.**

**Moved:** Patrick Yeung      **Seconded:** Beverley Wiggins      Accepted

## **7. 2007- 08 Funding Agreement**

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The agreement has been redrafted. It is now in final form and ready for board approval.

**Motion: That the board authorises the President to sign the 2007-08 funding agreement and that the corporate seal be affixed.**

**Moved:** Nahza Saad      **Seconded:** Mohamed Ibrahim      Accepted.

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

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Meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> January. Discussion around National policy issues. Bobbie Townsend reported. May be increasing tensions with SAAP sector, under the new national agreement (replacing the CSHA). Brief to identify benefits of title being held by associations (rather than long term leases) – Federation may be invited to 'participate' or contribute to this process. Bobbie was requested to bring this up with the Federation board. Noted. CHAC will advertise for new members (currently on Minister's desk). Until then, existing members to continue.

## **9. Executive Director Report**

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(Note on structure of this report – Report has been restructured to link in more clearly with risk management areas.)

**Policy environment:**

- The Federation has been building relationships with the new Federal government.
- NSW policy environment is less promising.
- No word on new approach to rent policy
- No action on CHLP funding.
- Next round of growth providers – process for selection has not yet become public.

**The key issue of the NRAS was discussed It was agreed that the Federation should aim for a three part approach:**

- Information provision – getting more detail
- Engaged in discussion, particularly nationally
- Identify a group of providers prepared to think about what they can do when the NRAS is launched.

**External relations:**

- Ministerial staff – our relationship with Minister’s office continues to strengthen.
- IPA (Infrastructure Partners Australia) – attended a forum last week on social housing in NSW. Excellent opportunity to build relationships with major private sector players.
- National Affordable Housing Round Table – work continuing. Federation has made small donation to assist.
- AHO – continuing to build strong relationships with AHO and new board.
- CHFA board – Adam is a board member. Key issues are NARAs and development of a national unit to support growth associations.
- Homelessness – Rudd’s emphasis on homelessness may mean new opportunities (and new tensions between housing providers and homelessness organisations).
- Churches – entering the affordable housing arena in Victoria (and possibly NSW).
- Aged care sector – no significant relationships here. New Garrigal CEO was involved in Aged care and has offered introductions.
- OCH – we will meet with Maura Boland and Andrew Larkin in a couple of weeks to discuss respective roles of the Federation and OCH.

**Government led strategic initiatives:**

- Regulatory code – work on the code is largely finished and with Parliamentary Counsel for drafting. There will be a brief public consultation period in a few months time.
- I.T. – Federation invited onto steering committee, and working actively with KPMG consultants.
- Common Access Strategy – Nick Sabel on steering committee/ Adam Farrar on working group. This work will have major implications for the way in which the sector works.
- Growth providers capacity building panel – Adam is a member.



**Strategic sector considerations:**

Ongoing changes in the sector continuation. Two more associations have wound up. South West and Burwood (which has appointed a liquidator). Cumberland and Western Suburbs have almost completed amalgamation. Compass has won contract to manage new social housing arrangements in Broken Hill.

**Business strategy:**

Contract Management of DOH training – issues have emerged: (a) change to DOH staff; (b) integration of DOH trainers and the Fed qualification; and (c) with some outcomes for Aboriginal trainees.

**Organisational:**

The Federation has been understaffed on the admin side due to loss of admin trainee and unexpected absence of office manager for family reasons.

**10. Strategic plan review process (ongoing)**

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***The board reviewed the diagrams from Anne Porcino:***

Vision for the Sector 2018:

- If we see ourselves as a ‘sector’ of the housing industry, rather than of the community services industry, that’s a big shift.
- Revisit the name of the Federation? Are we just the peak of housing associations? Or of a variety of housing providers? Who is the member base? (also, many housing associations are incorporated as Companies ie; ;not associations).

Bigger bolder Federation 2018:

- National platform? How does the Federation fit into that? Do we end up as a branch of a national organisation?
- “Facilitate sharing of best practice” – will the Federation take a lead role?
- Clarify term ‘power’ in “create platform for cohesion and power in the sector”.
- Add “affordable housing” to “Leader in delivering a framework for community housing”.
- Our vision is to make sure we have an impact (with government) – at a state and national level ...ie; sustainable relationships and some sense of Federation’s effectiveness.

Learning from success a few learnings from Vivienne Milligan’s presentation:

- Need to tease out the details and what this actually means.

Opportunities and Gaps:

- Too limited. Too quick a conversation to be completely useful.

***Next the Board looked at – Strategic goals 2004-05:***



The board ranked how far the Federation has progressed on these objectives: 1 to 5 (1 being hardly, 5 being got there). (see list)

1. *The future for associations*

- Sector growth as a share of all social housing (substantial part): 1 or 2
- Control all aspects of their business – assets and financing: 1 or 2
- Recognised & respected sector: 3 or 4
- Work closely with other sectors to reduce social exclusion: 3
- Sustainable businesses – workforce, assets, financial, tenancies: 1-2
- Registered under legislation, majority accredited, all adopt the code, best practice governance - but compliance burden is minimised: 4 1/2
- Small but growing specialist activities – affordable housing, development, long-term supported housing, community development: 2-3 (suggest remove the word “small”)
- Small number of associations at 5,000: 4+
- Small associations have respected place in sector. Some group structures improve efficiency & effectiveness: 2-3

2. *Focusing & balancing our activities*

- Ensure all registered associations have the business system needed for the new environment: 3
- Balance activities between expertise, research & support for assoc. pushing forward; ongoing support to maintain sector effectiveness (training, resourcing & representation); intensive assistance to at risk associations. 2

3. *Working with our members – to be an effective face and voice for housing associations in NSW*

- The Fed draws on the leading edge of practice and aspirations in the sector.
- The Fed further develops these.
- The Fed involves the sector in the directions that emerge.
- The Fed’s representation role is unquestioned externally & internally.
- Priority to peer support, sector expertise, sector representatives.
- Federation draws on members for staff development.
- Federation has a communication strategy to engage members, debate, & share info.
- Strong structures for communication between Board & members.

*As a group the above scores around 4, with the exception of second point which could do with more work.*

4. *Working with partners*

- Priority to working with other service systems involved in partnerships to build mutual understanding: 0 (no progress)
- Will work to ensure that practice in formal partnerships are effective: 4

5. *Strengthening the Federation’s capacity*

- Contacts with external stakeholders ensures we have the best possible information base: 4
- Federation is included in wider discussions & debate that may create opportunities: 4
- The sector is seen as a key partner & the Fed as a key player. 4



- We play an active role in the community services sector advocacy through involvement in other peaks. 4

### **11. Business Plan Exceptions Report to Jan 08**

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Noted.

### **12. Summary of service evaluations**

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Noted.

### **13. Members service usage**

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Deferred.

(Mohamed Ibrahim departed meeting 1:30pm)

### **14. Initial 2008-09 business planning**

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Adam proposed a process involving, discussion by board, input by other players (including staff, external...) and drafting document for next board meeting.

### **15. Sector issues – raised by directors**

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Patrick raised the issue of sector's engagement with local government. Some councils are tendering directly. Suggestion that Federation might facilitate housing associations involvement.

Adam Farrar pointed out that Shelter NSW has an existing network with a watching brief for these kinds of opportunities. Also the Centre for Affordable Housing has contracted the Federation to deliver training on a package they developed, that housing associations can use to approach local governments.

Patrick noted that the increased use of tenders by OCH opens up the possibility of people competing on price and, hence, undercutting the current funding benchmark approach. Similarly, concerns were raised about OCH negotiations on funding levels in the case of amalgamations.

It was suggested that we could bring this up during the quarterly peaks meeting, under discussions re funding methodology.

### **16. Audit & Risk management committee**

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Vacant position. Meets 3 times per year (half day), requiring some work in between. Roles divided between: financial, information mgmt and human resource mgmt. Existing members: Mohamed and Patrick. Bobbie agreed to join the committee.

### **17. Board governance cycle & reporting calendar**

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Noted.

Add to Induction Manual.

### **18. Members survey**

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Deferred.

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### **19. Quarterly report**

Deferred.

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### **20. Executive Director performance appraisal**

Nick will send appraisal forms to board members.

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### **21. Reclassification of positions**

Given that there is no potential progression within the organisation. Proposal is for a change of title, no money involved - once a person reaches the top level, change title to add "senior". Policy should be that it is discretionary – ie; that at that point they are eligible for that title, rather than it being automatic. Also, a new person entering the organisation with a higher level of experience, may also qualify for this title.

In principle agreement by board. Bring revised policy to next board meeting.

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### **22. Options for Federation workplace agreement**

No change.

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### **23. New members & renewals**

No new member applications.

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### **24. Code of Practice report**

Noted.

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### **25. Other business**

None.

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### **26. Next meetings:**

**April 11<sup>th</sup>**

June 13 (or 6<sup>th</sup>?)

Agreed to the **June 13<sup>th</sup>**

August 15<sup>th</sup>

Moved to the **8th August**

**October 10<sup>th</sup>**

**AGM – November 21<sup>st</sup>**

**December 12<sup>th</sup>**

Meeting closed: 2:30 pm

