



**nsw Federation of
Housing Associations inc**

ABN 86 488 945 663

Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting
Held 10th October 2008
at Federation Offices

Meeting opened: 9.05 am

Welcome:

Present: Mohamed Ibrahim (to leave at 11.20am), Nick Sabel, Bobbie Townsend, Greg Budworth, Beverley Wiggins, Nazha Saad

Apologies: Coral Garratt, Patrick Yeung

In attendance: Adam Farrar, Wendy Rockwell

1. Declaration of conflicts of interest

none

2. Minutes of the last meeting(s)

Motion: That the Board accepts the minutes of the meeting held 8 August 2008 as presented.

Moved: Beverly Wiggins **Seconded:** Bobbie Townsend Accepted
29 Aug

Motion: That the Board accepts the minutes of the teleconference held 29 August 2008 as presented.

Moved: Bobbie Townsend **Seconded:** Nick Sabel Accepted

NOTE:(In future minutes: spell out the acronyms in the first instance.)

3. Business Arising

Come back to this later in the agenda... (resumed this item at 10.22am):

Common Access Strategy –

Mohamed described the allocations systems in place as a growth provider. ACH has set up a separate steering committee and then ACH has to meet with different Housing NSW divisional teams. His organisation has to work with three different allocations teams with

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Housing NSW, and there are inconsistencies in how each divisional team carries out their allocations. There is a lot of duplication in the process, and a lot of confusion and tension in having to deal with so many parties.

Growth providers have to work with a lot of Housing NSW divisions and Housing NSW divisions have to work with a lot of different growth providers, and it's not very efficient.

Adam pointed out that the long term CAS is very different from the interim arrangements. In the long term system the decision will be completely with the association. In the interim arrangement it is a joint decision making process.

Nick Sabel recommended speaking with Geoff Mann from HOW, as they have done extensive work in prioritising clients.

Mohamed told that there is a perception amongst government that CH does not take on high needs clients.

Issues:

How much do you need local flexibility?

How much is this shaping community housing in public housing's image?

Governance - How is this system going to be run?

Who governs the "common access system".

Who manages the I.T.?

Do we get funded to assist in running it? Or conversely will they take funding away if we don't.

Will our involvement risk our charitable status?

(NOTE: See minutes of teleconference 29 August 2008 for prior discussion:)

Governance

3 governance options have been proposed.

It appears that Housing NSW is moving toward Option A, with the possibility of Option B.

The board agrees that Option B1 for governance is the best. If the sector gets forced into option A we should push for concessions.

Charitable Status

Nick is on the steering committee and pointed out that government is seeking independent legal advice on the charitable status issue.

Resources

Funding of a common access system may involve 'resource shifting'.

IT

Need to get agreement on what data needs to be collected from applicants up front. The sector needs to have real input into what this information might include.

Prioritisation (3 bands)

Speak with Geoff Mann about how they do it.

Choice of role

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Ability to choose to participate in all parts of the system.

Prime responsibility for applicants

Who takes this?

4. Correspondence

- The Federation was invited to AICD special training. No staff members have taken this up.
- Funding agreement.-
Motion: That the Board agrees to sign the funding agreement (with two amendments: (1) “Board” instead of “State Council”, and (2) that training participant records require permission from trainee prior to OCH having access to view them.) The Board approves the affixing of the Federation seal. A cover letter will be provided.
Moved: Bobbie Townsend **Seconded:** Beverley Wiggins Accepted.

5. Financial Monitoring

Motion: That the Board accepts the financial reports as presented for the period ending 30 September 2008.

Moved: Bobbie Townsend **Seconded:** Greg Budworth Accepted

Write off bad debt –

Motion: That the Board agrees to amend delegations list - to include a delegation to the Executive Director to write off bad debts up to \$1,000. Any bad debts written off are to be reported to the board.

Moved: Greg Budworth **Seconded:** Beverley Wiggins Accepted.

6. Exceptions Report to September 08

Noted.

7. Summary of service evaluations

Noted.

8. Conference evaluations & report

Financial outcomes our still preliminary, but likely outcome is a surplus. Only 26 evaluations were received, although there has been oral feedback from various sources. Increased participation overall, but declining participation by Churches and Co-ops.

9. Audit & Risk Management Committee

Motion: That the Board agrees to the following recommendations, that:

- the Committee minutes be noted.
- the Annual Report statements be noted.
- the priority risks review be undertaken at the December board.

Moved: Greg Budworth **Seconded:** Beverley Wiggins Accepted

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10. Audit resolutions

Will need to have a board teleconference once the audit is available to pass resolutions:
The Directors Report
The Directors Declaration

ACTION: Board teleconference or at strategic planning meeting on 10th Nov.

11. AGM

AGM to be held on 21 November at the beginning of the Housing Associations Meeting.

ACTION: Board agrees to invite the Minister to speak at the AGM. If he is unavailable, invite Mike Allen.

12. Rule change

The board had a discussion re the term: “properties” vs “tenancies” vs “units”.

Motions:

1. The Board agrees that the following rule change be put to the members at the AGM: Rule 2.1 to be amended in the following way:

Replace 2.1 (a) *“A Full Member will be a NSW community based organisation whose core activity is the direct provision of long-term social housing;”*

With *“A Full member will be a community based housing organisation operating in NSW whose core activity is the direct provision of long-term social housing.”*

Replace 2.1 (b) *“An Affiliate Member will be a community based organisation that: Provides housing but this is not the core activity of the organisation; OR Provides housing, either as a core activity or not, but is based outside NSW”*

With *“An Affiliate Member will be a community based organisation that: Provides housing but this is not the core activity of the organisation; OR Provides housing, either as a core activity or not, but not in NSW.”*

2. The board agrees that Policy 3.3 be amended to:

(a) include the 2008-09 fee structure and

(b) to add the words “Fees charged per housing unit will relate solely to housing units in NSW” and “Housing units managed on behalf of another full member of the NSW FHA will not be included in the calculation of the annual membership fee.”

3. The board agrees that the procedural side (ie defining which housing units are to be counted as part of the calculation for membership fees) will have to be worked out, (including changing the membership form to define which type of properties/housing units are used for calculation of fees).

Moved: Greg Budworth

Seconded: Bobbie Townsend

Accepted.

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Action: For future discussion: Board to consider a different formula, based on annual turnover, rather than number of properties.

13. Expertise requirements for 08/09 board

Greg Budworth is tendering his casual position on the board.

Motion: That the Board accepts Greg Budworth's resignation.

Moved: Beverly Wiggins **Seconded:** Mohamed Ibrahim. Accepted.

The Board would like to fill casual vacancy left by Kelvin Allen:

Motion the Board appoints Greg Budworth to fill the casual vacancy (to Nov 2009)

Moved: Nick Sabel **Seconded:** Bobbie Townsend Accepted

Desirable areas of expertise for the Federation Board:

- Aboriginal representation
- representation from all areas of the sector

Action: Send list of desirable areas of expertise to members to assist in voting.

A more complete discussion of skills requirements can take place along with strategic planning.

14. Community Housing Advisory Committee

Nazha Saad has been nominated and it is assumed she will be on the CHAC.

15. Executive Director report

- In NSW the change of Premier and Housing Minister will have major implications. Meeting with Minister will be in 10 days.
- NRAS applications – assessment has been delayed by at least 2 weeks. The Greens putting questions may cause delays.
- Tax rulings – One ruling makes it pretty clear that being involved in a model where there is a return to investors, HAs will lose their charitable status. (even if it's a partnership, and the financing is coming from a private entity where returns are made to investors)
- Affordable Housing Agreement – Adam and Andrew attended a national lobbying exercise in Canberra.
- Review of Housing NSW – still haven't had results.
- Title – this discussion will have to be initiated with the new Minister.
- Funding – What criteria is OCH using in adjusting interim funding? There hasn't been any word about new cost structures. Need to find out from members how these discussions have been going. OCH has not been releasing information on KPI's or benchmarks.
- CRA calculations – there are some differences between Centrelink benefits and CRA calculator calculations.
- Federation had a small role as an NRAS facilitator. In the future this could become bigger, and procedures need to be established. CHFA has been funded in

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a brokerage role. The Federation needs to negotiate with them about that role within the state.

16. Strategic plan discussion

ACTION: It was agreed that the board needs to have a discussion regarding the Federation lifting its policy input. (ie become more proactive).

The board went through “important questions:

- *What do we think will be the nature of the industry in the future?*
- *What is this industry?*
- *What is our role? What business do we need to be in?*
- *Who are we here to service?*
- *What are the most important collaborations for us in the next period?*
- *What are the most important areas of our work?*
- *What will be our model of operations in the future?*

Building blocks already in train: Moving towards title, independence. Looking for more than government financing. What role does the Federation need to play in this environment? What is new business, what structure is needed?

Greg highlighted the need to go forward and watch out for competing with larger organisation which may begin providing certain services, (accreditation, RTO, or if the Federation becomes a ‘deal maker’ and takes a deal from one member for it’s own).

Need to define what role belongs to the Federation and what belongs to the sector.

The Federation may have a role in finding deals with financiers.

Nick emphasised - the world is changing and we need to embrace that. We need to be positioning ourselves to respond quickly. If we continue as we are now, we may see a diminished role. Things seem to be becoming more nationally based.

Bobbie agreed, we’re in another big period of change. There will be new players coming in. All the players and future of existing players is not yet known.

Nazha warned that, we don’t need to be closed and say we are a discrete sector. Our strength might be in new business areas, and some of that business might be with aged care sector, or at a national level, but this does not mean we have to be their representative body.

We should be heading more towards being an industry body.

It’s not our role to develop not for profit housing.

Adam indicated that: numbers of organisation might not go down due to new associations, but the scale will increase. What happens to SAAP? The Federation and Aged Care may see that they serve two parts of the same industry. If AHO doesn’t

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maintain a separate identity there will be a gap for supporting Aboriginal housing providers. Maintain NSW focus, but broaden focus to include national agenda.

The Board agreed that we really do have a role in shaping the future of community housing, and it's not just dependent on government. We need to have the resources to engage our own consultants to do research, etc.

Hopefully, in future, the sector will see the value in having experts on the board.

Our members are the ones to make decisions about whether we open our membership up to other sectors.

Same applies to disability, as it does to aged care, although there is less of it in NSW. There may be a need for asset management with DADAC, Is there a role for the Fed to directly negotiate services by members to the broader sector. – a business development role on behalf of the sector.

ACTION: The Federation has a development committee that has never met. Federation staff is developing new services which need to be tested with the members. This committee should be reactivated to give oversight of development of new tools, and any business development issues that emerge from the strategic planning discussion. The board agrees that if there are vacancies, Greg Budworth be nominated to the committee.

Important areas of work include: setting benchmarks for sector workforce. Need to build capacity within the office, and make sure we can afford to purchase in (outsource) when necessary. Federation needs to get feedback from sector about what new tools, resources they need that cannot already be purchased easily elsewhere.

17. Sector issues

None.

18. Membership

Motion: That the Board accepts Sergon Building Consultants as an Associate member, and accepts Mission Australia Housing as a Full member.

Moved: Beverley Wiggins **Seconded:** Greg Budworth Accepted.

Renewals – noted.

19. Code of practice

Noted.

20. Other business

None.

21. Next meeting(s)

- AGM – 21st November 2008

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- 12th December

Meeting closed 3:05 pm

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