



**nsw Federation of
Housing Associations inc**

ABN 86 488 945 663

Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting
Held 12th December 2008
at the Federation offices.

Meeting opened: 9:15am

Welcome

Present: Nick Sabel, Nazha Saad, Toni Comber, Karen Andrew, Nicola Lemon, John Nicolades (9.45am)

Apologies: Bobbie Townsend, Mohamed Ibrahim, Greg Budworth

In Attendance: Adam Farrar, Wendy Rockwell

1. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None

2. Briefing for new directors

Welcome to the new board members, Toni Comber, Karen Andrew, Nicola Lemon and John Nicolades.

President briefed new board members on: meeting dates, sub-committees, conflict of interest. Also, reported where the board and organisation are up to in developing the next strategic plan.

ACTION: Request to update the travel policy, (particularly rates)

Include policies and procedures (on disc) with Induction Kit.

ACTION: Give each board member a copy of policies & procedures on disc.

Nick suggested that Mark Nutting be invited to the next board meeting to give an update on the common access.

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President:

Date:

3. Minutes of last meeting

Change to 10th Oct minutes: Nazha Saad was present (not an apology).

Motion: That the board accept the minutes (including the correction above) for the meetings held 10th October 2008, and Special meeting held 10th November 2008, as a true record.

Moved: Nick Sabel

Seconded: Nazha Saad

Accepted

4. Business arising

Development committee – want to revitalise this committee.

Review of Federation structure - The Federation is hoping to get pro bono work done on looking at the Federation's organisational structure and business structure.

ACTION: send letter of thanks to departing board members.

Federation Advocacy - The board needs to set more of an agenda.

John Nicolades suggested reporting (by ebulletin? or otherwise) on key areas of work currently being done by the Federation, in order to inform EO's and boards of housing associations on the Federation's activities.

5. Correspondence

Funding agreement has been signed off. The board should be aware that this agreement includes a moderate increase in the amount (which was usually given for specific project funding, beyond the core amount). This amount is not guaranteed for future years. A different approach was also taken with regards to pricing the work we will do for them.

C21 shares – revaluation was carried out, with a significant increase estimated. It is not recommended that this new amount be shown on the balance sheet,

Standing Committee on Social Issues – Inquiry into homelessness and low-cost rental accommodation – Media Release. This could include issues around title.

ACTION: speak to Leonie King at OCH to find out what work they have done on this.

6. Financial monitoring

Adam directed the new board members through the structure of the financial reports.

Note: The budget *has* been finalised (typo in briefing paper indicates it has not.)

ACTION: For monitoring purposes the board would find it useful to receive separate reports on large non-core projects.

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

Moved: Karen Andrew

Seconded: Nazha Saad

Accepted.

ACTION: Only include a copy of the annual budget, rather than printing the MYOB annual P&L to show annual budget. Also investigate MYOB version 12 to find out if improved reporting capabilities will allow this within MYOB reports.

Revised projections occur (rather than budget revisions) at certain times throughout the year.

7. Business Plan monitoring – exceptions report

Adam indicated that reporting is provided to the board at three levels of detail.

ACTION: send Nazha Saad an electronic copy of the ‘time spent’ spreadsheet.

The Federation and/or board may want to look into existing software packages to streamline the management side of this tool.

8. Summary of service evaluations

Noted.

ACTION: Adam to check policy on whether the board is automatically informed of formal complaints made by training participants, or not.

Morning Tea

9. Community Housing Advisory Committee

Nothing to report.

10. Executive Director Report

State - State government has taken on a restrictive stance – mini budget was very negative. However the Housing review will provide strong encouragement to devolve public stock to the community sector.

John Nicolades - discussion around SEPP opportunities.

ACTION: Contact Kristina Keneally - Highlight the profile of the community housing sector. Indicate as we are seen as a housing provider in legislation and therefore should be considered as a potential recipient – Housing NSW should not have a monopoly and is should not be seen as the only player. Make sure funds are being used more generally, rather than Housing NSW only.

Tax treatment issue – advocacy will now have to focus on the Henry review and to the outcomes of the Senate Standing Committee on Economics, Report on Disclosure Regimes for Charities and Not-for-profit Organisations.

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NAHA – has been broadly signed off by COAG. It maintains the existing CSHA funding and SAAP in a core SPP and specific National Partnership agreements (NPs). In addition there will be three National Partnership Agreements covering Remote Indigenous Housing, Homelessness and Social Housing Growth. KPI's have not been finalised. There is a strong indication that SAAP will go to Housing NSW.

ACTION: get Sue Cripps to attend next HAM to speak about homelessness issues.

Title – the new Minister has indicated his strong support for title.

Funding and growth – There has been an indication that this has been put on the back burner, with an assurance that no one will be worse off. The Federation has requested access to information in order to do modelling, so that providers can be properly informed about the impacts of various options.

OCH is putting out a rent policy and an eligibility policy (as demanded by legislation).

Regulations – are now being consulted on.

Previous arrangements were all internal to OCH. All reporting came through one point and was then funnelled out to appropriate place.

Now all reporting will be under Regulator, although OCH may have a collection role.

Contracts and clients will still be under OCH's domain.

Quarterly reporting requirements – Federation argues that this should go directly to Regulator, and OCH contracts should specify that. This is not decided yet, but OCH is arguing they need the data, and will then forward on to Regulator.

ACTION: Federation to follow up status of Registered organisations (ie when their registration is up for expiry, and there is no arrangement for renewal). OCH had promised a letter, but has not come through.

CHFA – review of structure. Adam is on the national working party. Adam flagged that this throws up substantial questions re the operations of the state industry bodies in a national environment. The Federation needs to make sure it doesn't end up in substantial competition with the national body.

ACTION: The board agrees the Federation to withdraw from Partnerships Against Homelessness NGO reference group.

Accreditation tender – the Federation was unsuccessful in this joint tender with QMS.

The Federation has just put in a tender to deliver training to the Tasmanian housing department. Swinburne has also tendered.

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11. OCH : Federation roles report

The Federation has had formal discussions with OCH to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities. The board needs to discuss the implications of the (draft) outcome report, and in particular any implications and issues for the strategic planning process.

12. Strategic plan discussion

Briefing paper provided:

- An overview of the strategic elements
- A draft text for the context of the strategy
- A proposed outline for the strategic plan

The board to discuss and agree to the next steps in the development of the strategy.

ACTION: Send the methodology for calculating future numbers (see: “moving into the market 2009-2014”), out to all board members.

The question was raised – how are members informed about options available for intensive support offered by the Federation, for organisations who may be struggling.

Feedback:

- Strategic changes; (dot pt.4) - Not sure if ‘international’ should be included (what is our relationship with our national body)
- Developing the sector; (dot pt.5) - by operating nationally (is this something for us to do?)
- Any national or international involvement would have to be not to the detriment of current membership. (Adam noted that there is a risk assessment policy which protects against this).

Nick indicated, as someone who was involved throughout the process, that this captures what was agreed. However, as many new directors were not involved in the process to this point, they may like more time to review the draft outline.

The board mapped out the necessary steps in order to get a timeframe:

- Feedback by board on the development of the draft.
- Draft available to members before the HAM (feb or march).
- Talk to other stakeholders (OCH, etc).
- An ongoing discussion.

Karen noted that, on first observation, it appears to be weighted toward ‘growth’ organisations.

Nick said that he felt as it stands, it applies to the sector as a whole, and it may simply be the use of language/terms that could be misleading.

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Adam pointed out the final paragraph of section 2. which states: “It will be a priority for the Federation to support the cohesion of the sector in the face of great change.”

ACTION: It was agreed that board members provide feedback no later than 12th January 2009.

(John Nicolades and Nazha Saad – departed 1.40pm)

13. Sector issues

Police MOU – Need for MOU between police and Community Housing, similar to the one existing between police and Housing NSW. The Federation to pursue this.

ACTION: For discussion at next meeting: (a) Police checks of community housing workers and (b) Mandatory reporting of abuse – get a shift within the sector: recognising importance and responsibility of community housing providers regarding these issues (and other similar issues)

14. Governance & Development – longer term expertise requirements for board

First identify what skills are desired, then work out how to get these on the board.

The board revisited the idea of changing policy to include expertise on the board, and also discussed the idea of having the board elect the executive from within. This may be discussed and resurrected, and put to members.

The strategic plan might influence thinking on what expertise is required in the long term.

Current audit skills is also required.

ACTION: The board agrees to do skills audit in time for April meeting.
Subject to any decisions taken at the February meeting.

Review the calendar at the next meeting – then lock in some things like: subcommittee membership, areas of expertise for the board, etc.

15. Priority risks review and A&RM membership

Deferred.

Need to fill a vacancy on this committee. Toni Comber indicated an interest.

Action: Adam to send A&RM terms of reference to Toni Comber.

Motion: That the board agrees to appoint Toni Comber to the Audit & Risk subcommittee, pending her agreement after reviewing the terms of reference.

Moved: Karen Andrew Seconded: Nicola Lemon Accepted

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16. Annual returns – for noting

Returns have been sent to Dept of Fair Trading.

17. OCH quarterly report – for noting

Noted.

18. Membership policy

Motion: That the board accepts the changes to the Membership policy (3.3) as presented. And sets the renewal date for 2 years as per usual.

Moved: Toni Comber **Seconded:** Nicola Lemon Accepted

Is there a need to be consistent in all documents where we refer to “housing associations” or “community housing providers” etc. For future discussion.

19. New members and renewals

Motion: That the board accepts:

Blue CHP as a Full member;

South East Women & Children’s Services as an Affiliate member;

Disability & Aged Information Service as an Associate member.

Moved: Karen Andrew

Seconded: Toni Comber Accepted

Motion: That the board agrees, after final reminder, and 2 months notice, to remove nonfinancial members from the membership register.

Moved: Karen Andrew

Seconded: Toni Comber Accepted

20. Code of practice

No report

21. Other business

ACTION: send out terms of reference for Development Committee with next Board papers.

22. Meeting dates

13 February

3 April

12 June

14 August

9 October

AGM 20 November

11 December

Send meeting dates to all board members, and board contact details to all board members

Meeting closed 2pm.

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