



**nsw Federation of
Housing Associations inc**

ABN 86 488 945 663

Minutes Board of Directors Meeting Held 13th February 2009

Meeting opened 9:15 am

Welcome

Present: Nick Sabel, Karen Andrew, Nazha Saad, Toni Comber, Nicola Lemon, John Nicolades, Bobbie Townsend, Mohamed Ibrahim.

Apologies: Greg Budworth

In Attendance: Adam Farrar, Wendy Rockwell

1. Declaration of conflicts of interest

None

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

- Nicola – omitted from list of new board members welcomed.
- Meeting closed time is missing.

Mohamed expressed difficulty attending Friday afternoons. Discussion about changing meeting day from Friday, or tightening up meetings, or having more meetings, or attending by teleconference.

Meeting agreed to tighten up and try to finish earlier, and deal with ‘meaty’ issues earlier in the meeting. Can also deal with regular business at a teleconference.

Motion: That the board approves the minutes of the meeting held 12 December, with the addition of the above dot points.

Moved: Karen Andrew **Seconded:** Toni Comber Accepted

Actions –

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President:

Date:

- Adam to still send Nahza 'time spent' spreadsheet
- Mark Nutting, unlikely to attend this meeting.
- Leonie King to come at end of lunch

3. Business Arising

Noted

4. Correspondence

Adam Farrar will be meeting with Minister on Monday next week.

5. Financial Monitoring

Change the report to say that the budget has been finalised.

Treasurer spoke to the finance report. The organisation is in surplus and there are no areas of concern. Treasurer recommends the report be accepted unless there are any areas of concern by board members.

Cash flow report tabled.

Motion: That the board accepts the financial reports as presented for the period ending 31st January 2009.

Moved: Bobbie Townsend **Seconded:** Mohamed Ibrahim Accepted

ACTION: To raise the process and transparency of the tendering process with Leonie King on Tuesday

6. Mid year revised financial projections

Motion that the board approves the revised financial projections as presented.

Moved: Nahza Saad **Seconded:** Karen Andrew Accepted

7. Business Plan Exceptions report to Jan 09

ACTION: Community Building Project – Adam Farrar to get terms of reference to the Federation board.

- Housing NSW contract has been renegotiated.
- ACT contract has been renewed for the next financial year.

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Re-considering approach and content of many resources (Housing Hints, Good Practice Guides, Across the Board Bulletins, etc) for example, may used a members only web section, rather than printed matter.

8. Progress report on major projects

Noted.

9. OCH Projects

Noted.

10. Community Housing Advisory Committee

No decisions made on the new committee.

11. Executive Director Report

National Regulatory System - Commonwealth is pushing for national regulation in order to assure the sector's capacity. Federation is not sure this is the best approach: Not sure they would be able to get it up; it could be very costly; and, would not have the capacity to intervene, since most monitoring is at the state level.

Board would like more information regarding the Commonwealth's intentions before taking a board position. Also, timing means this may not be an urgent issue at this time (ie won't inhibit the sector's ability to access funds currently available). Counter point – make sure it isn't already locked in before we make our position known.

ACTION: Monitor the situation and try to ascertain more details about what a National regulatory system might entail.

Strong support for sector growth and devolution of Public Housing:

Minister also indicated broader eligibility than target by “Reshaping Public Housing”.

Also indicated expansion of number of identified growth organisations.

NRAS – State rejected the chance to invest in the next round of NRAS proposals.

Title - Although there is support from Minister and Premier's Office – Cabinet has yet to be convinced by the sector's capacity to manage the asset.

100% of stimulus package should come with title (assured by Commonwealth Minister)

ACTION: The Board agreed that a group of high profile directors from housing associations meet with select members of the Budget Committee of Cabinet to lobby for title.

What exactly do we want to ask the Government for – there are many issues: perception by government re CH capacity, financial restrictions,

Issue needs to be resolved – are we advocating for 9,000 new properties should go on the balance sheet, or stock transfer, or all capital properties, or all housing associations, or not some housing associations?

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Capacity building – need enough resources on the ground. State government to support initial stage financially.

Need to identify risk profile and viability model for title transfer.

In summary, 3 stage proposal:

1. Title should come across with new money/stock
2. Accelerated/future stock transfer should come across with title. Have to focus on how to look at the risks. There has to be an acceptable level of upgrade, but not necessarily only the best stock.
3. On a business case basis – look at organisations that can demonstrate capability and what they will do with transfer of title.

Housing NSW Executive changes - Maura Boland now ED of Strategy & Policy, and Leonie King is the new ED of Community Housing Division. (It will now be a division rather than an office).

NSW Govt Stakeholders -

- Meeting with Rennie Gay re a range of capacity building initiatives. One particular proposal would involve Resitech and a few growth providers.
- Meeting with Debbie Kearns – IT (at meeting on Tuesday, need to flag that this is urgent and developing a business case needs to be accelerated.
- Insurance – OCH no longer brokering this, (or requiring it). Marsh (insurance) wants to maintain relationship, but will be negotiating directly with the sector.
- Accreditation – Global Mark won the tender, the committee will be reestablished as an internal committee. They are contacting peer assessors and contacting organisations regarding accreditation, however price may be an issue.
- Discussed funding model to be put up to Housing NSW. Nazha noted that the timing of changes to capital funding methodology didn't allow associations to budget appropriately for it. (Adam to pursue this problem at future meeting with OCH)

John Nicolades departed meeting 12:00

Economic Stimulus Package -

Economic stimulus package is not the only thing affecting the sector over the next 1-4 years. Also social housing growth money; accelerated stock transfer program; and NRAS.

Social Housing Co-ordinator is Mike Allen.

The state is saying they will do 9,000 properties (only required to do 6,000).

2,500 will be purchased off the plan from existing developers.

2,500 on re-development sites.

500 to purchase from completed developments not yet on the market.

Not all are guaranteed to end up in the sector. The urgent issue is the sector's ability and appetite to take up this challenge. The sector should be developing, not just spot purchasing.

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Currently it looks like the sector will be playing the part of a passive recipient. However we need to lobby for full participation, including utilising existing relationships with developers.

There is a willingness (by Mike Allen) to meet with the sector, but need approval by board, and interest shown by members. This would be in the form of a special HAM as early as next week.

ACTION: Convene an urgent sector meeting (HAM) to discuss our take up of the greatest expansion of social housing since its establishment over 50 years ago.

Outcomes sought from HAM:

- Need good information about appetite
- Need to identify from the sector – their view about how it ought to be rolled out. Including *where* is it rolled out.

Want to identify (within the next week) quantum of possible developments in the pipeline to be able to give concrete information in discussions with Mike Allen. Don't want detail,

ACTION: Send an email to members, requesting this information

12. Common Access System – Mark Nutting

Mark Nutting unable to attend.

13.Strategic plan discussion

The board agrees with the proposals and comments that came back.

Need to define what we mean by 'affordable housing'. *Adopting a Federation policy position about the sector we are in.* Educating people regarding what affordable housing actually is (the full range, not just high need). Overcoming stigmas.

Mohamed suggest also defining 'community housing' for clarification purposes.

Need to be careful using the term 'sector'. Does 'sector' mean something different to 'industry'? ie sector benchmarks, or industry benchmarks.

Might need to discuss the Federation's role (in light of the accelerated growth), and its inclusion in the strategic objectives.

Need to approve dot points "what's our role"

It was suggested to move the history section in an appendix.

Maintain the priority on state level – (ie when mentioning national and international directions make sure it's not at the cost of losing original focus).

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Agreed to clarify what we mean by 'engaged' at the national level, and get rid of the term 'international'

Strategic advocacy agenda – make sure it captures concerns raised re smaller or regional providers.

Develop the sector – dot 4 “creating new opportunities by promoting the sector to the commercial world” , add promoting the other key community stakeholders.

Agreed to add an appendix – a profile of the sector:-(property numbers, size of orgs, workforce, etc.)

New draft tabled: The board looked at section 2.

2.1 Core roles:

- Change second to last dot point to – replace “the support for” with “its”.
- Add page numbers.

The Board accepts the draft, with the inclusion of the above changes.

ACTION: Full redraft by the next board meeting.

14.Sector Issues

Centrelink

Nicola – Hume had a pilot between Centrelink and tenants. This made CRA transitions easier. The pilot has come to an end, but a large percentage of tenants would like to maintain the arrangement.

Centrelink wants to continue with phase two of the pilot.

Issue – there was an IT issue that makes the other providers not want to continue with phase two of the pilot.

It was suggested that Federation makes contact through OCH with Centrelink. It seems that Public Housing is aiming to make rent deductions directly from Centrelink mandatory. Community housing doesn't want to miss out on this opportunity.

Legislation changes would prevent tenants from cancelling the centrepay payment.

ACTION: The Federation to take up this issue with the sector. (Separating the two issues): 1. Yes the Federation should liaise with Centrelink (without using OCH as a mediator). 2. The issue with mandatory rent deductions has not been resolved. The sector view is not clear.

Police M.O.U.

This has not progressed. There is a real impediment. It has been raised with Mike Allen. An MOU not between two government agencies is not likely.

Now looking to see if there can be a flow-on, via government to providers. Particularly around stock-transfers.

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ACTION: The board agreed the Federation should pursue any avenue which will give more information to housing providers.

Mohamed departed meeting 2:30pm

Manadatory reporting

Still a lack of clarification what obligations are around mandatory reporting. Sought information, but still not clear after receiving the information.

In the past the Federation supported reporting as ‘good practice’.

Community housing has same complex issues as public housing, so unclear why we don’t support our tenants in the same way.

Some staff members have refused to report, therefore we *do* need an unequivocal decision. Also recommend child protection training for people working in associations. And would this apply to contractors as well?

ACTION: Get further advice to get correct information. Also introduce child protection training.

Federation advocacy:

Request from HAM that there is more involvement from the sector re advocacy

Suggest – make a section of the website to report on all areas the Federation is advocating on, and status; letter writing campaigns, etc.

ACTION: The board agrees to implement this.

Non Growth Provider Network

It came from buddy system ring around: see if there is a need for a non-growth provider network.

ACTION: Begin with an issues based meeting, and then see if there is an interest in having this network as a permanent network.

ACTION: Global Mark (Accreditation) - Discuss issues at the HAM.

Self Service Rent Start

This is turning out to be a lot of work for housing associations. Can there be any financial recompense for this? Karen Andrew will be questioning this with local housing authorities, but as the pilot is rolled out through NSW it may become a larger issue.

15.Priority risks review

Deferred.

16.Expertise requirements for board/ skills audit

Deferred.

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17. Review Board calendar

Deferred.

18. Audit & Risk Management Committee minutes

Deferred.

19. OCH quarterly report

Deferred.

20. Policies & procedures

Deferred.

21. Process for EO performance review

Nahza to assist Nick in reviewing the survey used in the EO performance review. Karen has a sample performance review tool that may be useful.

Nahza suggested developing a performance agreement with key target areas that would become the performance tool.

22. New members & renewals

Motion: That the Board approves BRC Recruitment as an Associate member.

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

23. Code report

Deferred.

24. Other business

Terms of reference for the Development Committee – tabled.

25. Next meetings

3rd April meeting clashes with ACOSS conference.

ACTION: Adam to send out alternative date for April meeting.

Teleconference to be schedule before April meeting

Meeting closed: 2.51pm

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