



**nsw Federation of  
Housing Associations inc**

**ABN 86 488 945 663**

# **Minutes Board of Directors Meeting Held 12 June 2009**

*Meeting opened 9.15 am*

## **Welcome**

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**Present:** Toni Comber, Nick Sabel, Bobbie Townsend, Karen Andrew, Nazha Saad (left at lunch), Mohamed Ibrahim (9.20), John Nicolades (9:35am), Nicola Lemon (morning tea)

**Apologies:** Greg Budworth

**In Attendance:** Adam Farrar, Estelle Lohman

Tabled resignation from Greg Budworth read out.

**ACTION: President will contact Greg and thank him for his contribution.**

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

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None.

## **2. Minutes of previous meeting**

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Amendment to minutes of the meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> April 2009:  
Held date missing on front page of minutes – noted.

**Motion: That the board approves the minutes of the meeting held 17<sup>th</sup> April 2009 with the above amendment included.**

**Moved:** Karen Andrew    **Seconded:** Bobbie Townsend    Accepted

Actions: noted.

Lack of resources within asset management section of the Community Housing Division continuing to be a big issue particularly in the area of approval and

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President:

Date:

scoping. Individual members will take their issues up with CHD and Federation will also follow this concern up with them.

Unusual work load across the board for all housing associations noted.

**ACTION:**

- To put in timelines and prioritise actions at next Board meeting.
- Methodology for calculating future numbers of stock – check that this has been done as reported in actions list.

### **3. Business arising**

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None.

### **4. Correspondence**

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Re social housing tenants and stimulus: Concerns raised regarding redevelop proposals, especially in regional areas – i.e. high density/condensed sites planned for some of these regions which are not workable. Also concerns around consultation tactics and fast tracking of plans, which is also causing negative community backlash and media attention.

Level and timing of involvement in development stages needs further clarification so issues can be identified and strategies for managing the process can be implemented.

Discussion on what areas of the process the sector can realistically target to flex their influence. Through RFT's process there is scope and strong need for influence on design. The other area identified was the management of community reactions, attitudes, prejudices against CH tenants. HA's need to be equipped to handle this.

**ACTION:** The Federation to research resources for appropriate media training.

### **5. Financial monitoring**

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The Treasurer reported that the organisation is in a sound financial position and that the recommendations be accepted.

Noted correction on pg 5 – 07/08 should read 08/09.

Noted that accruals will happen at the end of financial year with a genuine commitment to spend these accruals.

It was reported to the meeting that the Federation's 09/10 budget is in hand and the end of year financials and audit are all on track.

**ACTION:** A detailed report on accruals will be provided for discussion at the next meeting

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**Motion: That the board accepts the financial reports as presented for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> May 2009.**

**Moved:** Karen Andrew     **Seconded:** Mohammed     Accepted.

## **6. Business planning – Exceptions reporting to June 09**

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Reported risks on current business plan:

- Some projects will not be finished in the projected timeframes – noted.
- Housing NSW 3 yr contract to deliver Cert IV training now finishing with no new contract in the offing, however a further \$150,000 has been secured in the renegotiation of the existing contract.
- Housing NSW looking to e-learning option only which generates a markedly reduced level of income.

**ACTION:** Undertake a risk assessment around the implications of this and look at strategies for replacing this contract through other avenues.

The Board noted the enormous amount of activity that the Federation has undertaken during the current business plan and congratulated the Federation on how it has managed this.

## **7. Progress report on major projects**

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Results of the sector survey on salaries reported. Now looking to put salary benchmarks up on members only part of the Federation's website.

Issue was raised that the Human Resource Good Practice Guides have information that is problematic because it is out of date as advised by JobSkills Australia.

**ACTION:** Review these Guides and identify whether they should be taken off our publications list or if they require an amendment attached to address outdated information.

## **8. Service evaluations**

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Meeting noted rising trend in participant satisfaction and the reported number of Certificates/ Statements of Attainment issued by the Federation in 2008.

## **9. Community Housing Advisory Committee**

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Update provided on national KPMG review to the meeting. The resulting report has apparently been finalised but is not yet available.

## **10. Executive director report**

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Oral report available only.

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- The Federation has been contacted by the Property Council and we are now looking to build a relationship with them.
- Meetings with Retirement Living and Housing Committee: Outcome is an MOU between the Federation and this committee with skills transfer and partnerships potential, as well as a joint advocacy role.
- Evidence provided to the Inquiry.
- Submission to tax inquiry completed and sent in.
- Consultation with CHD and increasingly with HNSW. Genuine desire for a partnership, however still some questions around areas of responsibilities.
- Steering Committee of RFT's (Request for Tenders) –talked through process.
- Issue that if targets aren't met then HA's lose the \$'s noted as a critical one for the members, especially when timeframes are very pressured.
- Resource allocation policy has refocused on the stimulus with Treasury now involved. The result is a shift to a competitive tendering process. Challenge is to have a competitive tendering process that doesn't hinder the desired outcomes. No resolution to date or proposal on how to do this. This significant change noted by the meeting.
- Reported on meeting with the Minister. In particular raised new CHLP approach and loss of specific funding for support discussed.
- The Federation has been asked to comment on the new eligibility policy for tenants getting into community housing.
- Reported to meeting that the Common Access system is now being fast tracked.
- The Federation has been playing an observer role in capacity building pilots. Results of this will be a mentoring program with associated tools for capacity building and dealing with the procurement process.
- Access to Resitech contractors to provide a directory for housing associations has been requested through Leonie King. Awaiting decision.
- State homelessness action plan. Not a lot of confidence in this. Big issue for sector how this affects requirements for homelessness across number of areas. Fed keen to partner with Homelessness NSW.
- Agreement that we will run training and support in partnership with Homelessness NSW on Registration Support
- National Standards Review: final draft of revised standards now available. The Federation has been funded to run a consultation at beginning of new financial year.
- Registration requirements – issue was raised that the required housing needs analysis was too resource intensive for some members. Flagged as a potential project to look at how the Federation can support members to meet this requirement of registration.

Item 14 shifted up: Federation Role in MARSH Insurance Brokering

Correspondence from Marsh Pty Ltd from 9/6/09 tabled.

Verbal report provided to the meeting on MARSH, CHD and Federation meetings and apparent misunderstanding between parties about agreed outcomes, process and responsibilities. CHD understood that agreement had been reached

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that the Federation would take over the brokering role as of the end of the current financial year. Issues are:

- Major timeframe problem with only 2 weeks till end of financial year – no time to negotiate a better deal, do a risk analysis, seek legal advice, look at workload implications for the Federation etc.
- Major risk that the sector is not insured in 2 weeks time and will lose advantage that group purchasing provides.
- Core issue over whose responsibility it is to negotiate a transitional year – the Federation's or CHD's.
- It means that the Federation represents not only our members, but the wider sector including SAAP, CHD, Churches, Co-ops.
- The draft agreement from MARSH (received day of meeting) is for a 2 year period which is problematic and states that the Federation is unable to enter into negotiations with a third party to negotiate a better deal.
- It's not possible for the Federation to provide the data requested by the agreement.
- The draft agreements states that we are not permitted to comment on the insurance package provided and therefore are unable to make recommendations that are in the best interest of our members.
- The Federation is unable to enter into a contract within the 2 week timeframe.
- The Federation needs a mechanism in place if CHD extend the timeframe for handing over brokering role in order for the Federation to negotiate an appropriate agreement.

**ACTION:**

- Write to Leonie King noting problems of Federation being expected to enter into a contract with MARSH to ensure ongoing insurance by the end of the current financial year
- Voice the Board's concern over the way the transition process was conducted and state clearly that CHD need to solve the gap problem.
- The Federation to set up a group of Board/Audit Risk Committee members to provide analysis and direction from what emerges with MARSH.
- Alert members to insurance risk

## **11. Major policy position discussion**

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**CHLP:** Methodology and taking out of support funding discussed. Subsidies and implications also discussed. Flagged that there are limited benefits from additional CRA for some members and also the need to look at who is disadvantaged by the model in the longer term. Pro-active role for Federation to play with organisations disadvantaged is a top priority

**Common Access Strategy:** Timeframe of April 2010 to have the Common Application form up and running. Assessment for eligibility being done centrally.

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Need to ensure that members are thoroughly prepared in terms of planning, IT system implications, costs etc.

**ACTION:** Need to get clearer information about the implications of this for short term allocations

**Federation's position on forced transfers from public to community housing providers through stock transfers:** Problems / benefits of this change discussed and implications for tenants. For large scale forced transfers majority vote system discussed.

**ACTION:** Options paper on forced transfers looking at pros and cons from housing managers perspective to allow an informed decision across all regions.

## **12. Draft strategic plan finalisation**

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Need to distribute to members and other stakeholders (CHD in particular). Recommendation that it be approved for circulation.

**Moved:** Toni Comber      **Seconded:** John Nicolades      Accepted

## **13. Preliminary 2009-10 business plan outline**

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Tabled Item.

Need to be aware of 3 new significant contracts in document.

**ACTION:** Approve today's 09/10 draft business plan and budget in principle with more detailed budget to be provided for next meeting.

## **14. Federation role in MARSH insurance brokering**

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See above under Item 10.

## **15. New members & renewals**

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**Motion that the board approves the following new memberships:**

- **Affiliate: Campbell Page Ltd**

**Moved:** John Nicolades      **Seconded:** Mohammed Ibrahim      Accepted

**ACTION:** Future membership applications for full membership – provide more background information on the organisation where required.

## **16. Staffing needs**

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The Federation currently has a shallow middle management structure and are looking at structuring more senior roles and management responsibilities within these. Further details at next Board meeting.

The proposal to employ a communications contractor for the newsletter etc to take pressure off top management who are struggling with workloads was tabled. This has no significant impact in terms of resourcing and budget implications are minimal.

**Motion: That the Board approve the employment of a communications contractor.**

**Moved:** Nazha Saad

**Seconded:** Mohammed Ibrahim

Accepted

## **17. Expertise requirements for board/skills audit**

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Deferred

## **18. Review board calendar**

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Deferred

## **19. EO Performance Review**

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Deferred

## **20. Any other business**

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The issue regarding payment to member organizations for staff time spent on committees on the Federation's behalf was raised and discussed. Discussion ensued and noted.

## **21. Next meetings:**

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14<sup>th</sup> August

9<sup>th</sup> October

AGM – 20<sup>th</sup> Nov

11<sup>th</sup> Dec

*Meeting closed: 2.10 pm*

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