



## **Strategic Goals 2004-2009**

Our strategic goals outline our directions for the next five years and beyond. Because the Federation is a vehicle through which its members work for the collective benefit of the sector, our strategic goals are first, goals for the sector, and consequently, goals for the Federation to support the sector to achieve its objectives.

### **The future for housing associations**

Over the past two decades community housing has grown from being marginal in terms of social housing provision to now being 10 percent of the sector. However, this is still far lower than our potential contribution to building a sustainable, responsive and diverse social and affordable housing system would suggest.

In five years time housing associations will be a substantial part of the social and affordable housing sector. They will control all aspects of their business – including their assets and financing. They will be skilled, confident leaders, respected by government, Housing NSW, and the private sector. They will work closely with other parts of the social housing and human services sectors to overcome social exclusion and to provide opportunities for their tenants.

Housing associations, and the sector as a whole, will be sustainable in all aspects of their business – their workforce, their assets, their finances and their tenancy management.

The sector will be registered under its own legislation. In five years time a majority of housing associations will be registered at the highest level, all will be accredited and will be committed to continuous quality improvement, and all will have adopted the industry code of practice. The governance of associations will be best practice.

A small but growing number of housing associations will have developed specialist activities as affordable housing managers, affordable housing developers, long-term supported housing providers, and community development organisations.

A small number of housing associations will have grown to manage up to 5,000 properties. In order to deliver the variety of housing responses needed by the community and to include the specialised expertise necessary.

Smaller housing associations will have a strong and respected place in the sector for their ability to respond to local need – particularly in smaller rural communities. Where appropriate, group

structures will have been established to provide efficiencies and the capacity to develop specialisations and expertise through shared activities.

In the future all housing associations will be required to be registered. We will work with associations to ensure that they are supported to achieve registration and that the regulatory system does not over-burden associations and provides tangible benefits to associations.

### **Our focus**

The Federation's focus will be to work with its members to ensure that all registered housing associations are supported to build the business systems and capacities required in this new environment.

We will target our resources to three broad areas of activity:

Pushing forward – to provide expertise, research and support for organisations that are driving forward;

Supporting – to provide the high quality resources, training and representation to enable the sector to maintain its effectiveness and respond to new challenges;

Helping out – to provide assistance to a small number of organisations experiencing difficulties in sustaining their operations or achieving the standards required for registration or accreditation.

### **Working with our members**

The Federation is the face and voice of housing associations in NSW. It is, therefore, only able to be effective if it is owned by, draws on and represents its members' knowledge and aspirations. We provide leadership for the sector by drawing on the leading edges of practice and aspirations in the sector, reinforcing this with research and development, and engaging the sector in the development of the directions that emerge.

It will be more important than ever to ensure that the Federation's federating and representative role is unquestioned by all external stakeholders and by the sector itself.

Over this five years the Federation will give particular priority to enabling the expertise within the sector to be tapped through peer support, utilising sector experts and drawing representatives from the sector.

At the same time, we will broker in external experts to provide training or develop resources in areas where the expertise is not available within the sector or the Federation staff.

Finally, we will continue to build the expertise of the Federation staff to provide a resource for the whole sector that is firmly based in an understanding of this industry. To ensure that this is genuinely grounded in the sector, we will seek secondments or other substantial connections between staff and member organisations.

Finally, we will place a priority on building a comprehensive communication strategy that ensures that our Board and all parts of the Federation engages in a clear dialogue with members, and that the sector can meet together to debate and share information.

## **Working with partners**

Over the next five years there will be a greater emphasis on partnerships in delivering effective housing services. The Office of Community Housing aims for 20% of tenancies to involve formal support agreements – more than triple current levels. The Federation will give priority to working with other service systems that have a central role in the development of effective partnerships.

Our objective in doing this will be to build mutual understanding of, and respect for, the roles of each service system. It will also be to ensure that the practices that are needed to make partnerships effective are developed.

## **External environment**

Beyond our direct partners, our strategic alliances will become more important than ever. They will be needed to ensure that we have the strongest possible information base, and that we are included in wider discussions and debates that may create opportunities for the sector. It will be essential that in the very uncertain but highly volatile environment that will exist over the next five years decision makers see the Federation as an equal and the sector as a key player.

We also aim to strengthen our position as part of the community services sector in order to influence the wider debates in the sector and to strengthen our overall capacity to advocate by participating actively with our wider peaks such as CHFA, Shelter, NCOSS and ACOSS.

## **Internal environment**

The Board will be both an example of best practice in governance and the first link between the members and the organisation. As the sector becomes larger and more diverse, the Board will have an even more critical role in ensuring that the Federation as a whole maintains its legitimacy and credibility with the membership. Over the next five years we will have strengthened and deepened the communication between the Board and the whole of the membership.

The Federation will continue to be a good employer, with respect for our employees and their views and will provide a good working environment. We aim to attract the greatest possible level of expertise into the organisation. An important part of this will be to attract staff from the sector itself. Another is to ensure that expertise is transmitted between the sector and Federation staff and within the organisation.

## **Tactical Goals 2004-2009**

Within five years:

- We will have worked closely with government and providers to achieve the four essential ingredients needed to enable the sector to play a more substantial role in the social and affordable housing system – title to a substantial part of the properties managed; a secure income stream sufficient to achieve sustainable new investment; legislation that recognises and enables the development and appropriate regulation of the sector; a clear government

policy framework that explicitly identifies a substantial role for the sector within the housing system.

- Registration and the performance management system will have provided assurance to government and other stakeholders, without imposing unreasonable compliance costs on the sector and, indeed, providing better information for the effective governance of associations. The Federation will ensure that these interests are protected in the roll-out of the system and will have supported members to be registered.
- We will have ensured that accreditation complements the registration system while continuing to be strengthened as a quality system.
- We will have established new financing and business opportunities for the sector with financial institutions, the development industry and with local government.
- The 2003-08 CSHA will be renegotiated during this period. The Federation will seek to be a significant influence on the design of the new arrangements for social and affordable investment or subsidies. Our aim will be to achieve a system that is more able to support a wider range of providers and long-term investment sources.
- We will ensure that there is a clear understanding of the costs, costs drivers, and risks to the viability of housing associations – now and as they grow. We will have ensured that this is reflected in government funding formulas or processes. We will have established a strong expertise in this area in the Federation and across the sector.
- Affordable housing models will be a wider part of the housing system and will be a substantial part of associations' business. The Federation will ensure that housing associations are the provider of choice in this emerging area. A similar outcome will be sought in areas such as long-term supported housing.
- We will have worked with sector experts to spread best practice to enable supported housing to be widely available and appropriately managed. This will include allocations procedures that strike a balance between support partnerships and sustainability; effective support agreements; and transparent referral practices.
- We will have also worked with government to ensure that inappropriate targeting does not affect the sectors' viability and development. A key part of this work will be to respond to the trend to smaller household size, its impact on income streams and the need for more flexible portfolio management.
- Work in housing associations will have become an attractive and credible career. Career opportunities will have been established and conditions achieved that will ensure effective succession and career paths. The Federation will have worked to help broker employment, and to achieve government recognition of the need for an industry that can support appropriate wages and conditions.

- All associations will have access to a fully integrated housing management system at affordable prices. We will have a sophisticated understanding of information systems and will play a leading and co-ordinating role in assisting community housing to develop, access and adopt the most effective technologies.
- The Federation will have developed and regularly reviewed a comprehensive communication strategy. We will supplement the central role of Housing Matters with an e-bulletin and sector co-ordination approaches. Communication between members and the Board will be a key part of this communication strategy.
- The Federation will expand its role as the foremost Registered Training Organisation delivering social housing qualifications. It will establish a centre for social housing studies that will deliver training to the whole of the social housing system in NSW and a range of products to other States.
- We will continue to deliver the basic training needed for social housing workers. We will have established new methods to deliver this affordably to workers in locations across the state. We will also have regularly explored with the sector new areas for accredited training.
- In addition to the core training delivery, we will develop a regular program of training for senior managers and for directors – particularly in aspects of the business requiring new or higher level skills. We will do this by brokering in the most expert training from relevant institutes or institutions.
- The Federation will also establish a network of peer trainers to draw on the expertise within the sector. A particular focus of this will be in asset management, but we will respond in a similar way to other areas that emerge over the next five years.
- Governance will be particularly supported. We will continue to develop resources to support emerging aspects of governance. However we will strengthen the overall expertise of directors by servicing a directors' network, through which the need for new resources will be identified and expertise shared. We will establish a pool of potential board members with a range of expertise to support the expansion of expertise based boards.
- We will have developed a comprehensive data-base of practice information across all aspects of the business. This will be a source for advice, good practice resources, and will be enhanced through ongoing research and sector information. This will particularly enable the Federation to provide consultancy services that are the most authoritative in the industry. We will establish a comprehensive process of review and validation of all our resources and data.
- We will review these goals in 2006-07 to ensure that they are still relevant to the sector and the Federation.