



Housing Matters

Newsletter of the **nsw** Federation of Housing Associations **inc.**

ISSN 1442-2360

Vol. 14, Issue 1

March 2008

National rental affordability scheme sets challenging targets

The Federal Government's new National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) is moving closer to becoming a reality. When it does, it will present a real challenge to the sector – as well as being a long sought breakthrough.

The scheme is intended to provide incentives that will attract investment in 100,000 new affordable rental properties over the next ten years. Earlier this month, in response to worsening data on housing affordability, the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd extended the scheme from five to ten years, lifting the target from the earlier commitment of 50,000 new properties.

Incentives will be available from July 1 this year, with 4,500 to be allocated to projects in the first year.

So far only the outline of the scheme released before the election is known for sure. Everything else, including many of the pre-election details, is being negotiated between the Commonwealth and the States in the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) process. A number of the potential problems in the original proposal appear to be being clarified or reconsidered. Some of the original eligibility



(photo courtesy of City West Housing)

requirements are likely to be rethought.

It seems likely that the incentive will be in the form of a refundable tax credit. The Federal Government will provide \$6,000 for each dwelling each year for ten years to help bridge the gap between the return required by an investor and the income available. The States are required to add a further \$2,000 in cash or kind. Housing will be provided to tenants at no more than 80% of the market rent.

The tax credit will be available to NGOs even though their tax liabilities are zero. In fact, this is

the meaning of a 'refundable tax credit'. A consensus seems to be building that management of the dwellings should be undertaken by community housing providers. The original objective seemed to be to attract equity investment from institutional investors. It now seems likely that debt financed projects may also be acceptable.

But other crucial aspects have yet to be finalised. The form of the State contribution has yet to be finalised. It is unlikely to be allowed to replace existing programs to provide additional investment or government sites; but this will be hard to determine. And it may be even harder to value in-kind contributions.

(cont pg 3)

In this edition:

- New regulatory system
 - First round growth providers appointed
 - Homelessness back on the agenda
 - NSW AHO Board
- And more...

CONTENTS

National Rental Affordability Scheme	pg 1
sector changes	pg 4
New regulatory system	pg 4
First round growth providers appointed	pg 5
Homelessness back on the agenda	pg 5
NSW AHO Board	pg 6
Tenant Network welcomes North Coast tenants	pg 7
Move to Common Access system in-train	pg 8-9
Managing conflicts of interest on your Board	pg 10
February Board Mtg	pg 11
Death to the Public Officer - Associations Act	pg 12
Federation staff changes	pg 12
Farewell Lesley Wyatt, welcome new E.O.s	pg 13
Aboriginal Traineeships	pg 14
Community Activity Careers	pg 14
Calendar of Events	pg 16

From the President...

As housing associations move into their second quarter century, the sector is being faced with perhaps its biggest challenge.

Part of this is the sheer scale of the change we are expecting over the next five years. Existing government targets suggest that our sector could triple in that time – almost 25% growth every year.

But the biggest part of the challenge is how this will happen. The vast majority would come from investment generated by the new Commonwealth investment incentive – the National Rental Affordability Scheme – rather than the state programs we have been talking about so far.

Even if a lot of this is only management initially, we are still more than likely to be developing over 1,000 units a year. In fact, if NSW is to take on its share, together with the government and private developers, we need to come up with 1,500 units of development over the coming financial year!

So in the new world that's now on us, we will be creating the deals by working with a range of partners. We will be raising the finance. We will be managing the contracts. We will be driving the design. We will be carrying the risk.

It will be our sector that will be responsible for making sure that the communities of affordable housing tenants in the future are really sustainable, with increased opportunities for their residents.

And at last government is working with the sector to help build the capacity we need to take all this on.

We are close to locking in the support needed to give us the next generation of management systems (IT). The evidence guidelines for the new regulatory code are now being worked on with providers. The growth providers will get access to support to develop capabilities to take on the new kind of business. A single, common access system, across sectors, is being developed jointly with providers.



Nick Sabel

We expect to hear about new rent systems to support income streams, and at the National Conference, the Minister even held out a hint that control over assets might be considered.

This is the year – in fact the decade – in which the sector is going to have to step up and fulfil its promise. The rewards of stepping beyond being a niche provider to making a substantial difference to low income households will be huge. But, starting now, it will be a huge ask.

Just when we thought the sector would be competing for scarce resources, we look like we find ourselves struggling to deliver all that's on offer. This can only help us keep the cohesive sector that has been so important in the past.

Nick Sabel
President

Editor & Managing Editor
Laurel Draffen/Adam Farrar

Production Manager
Wendy Rockwell

Layout & Design
Sarah Bradshaw

Publisher
NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc.
Suite 301, 64-76 Kippax Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Phone/FAX
(ph) 02. 9281 7144
(fax) 02. 9281 7603

e-mail
nswfha@communityhousing.org.au

Website address
www.communityhousing.org.au

Printed by
Pegasus Printing

The material contained in this publication is general comment and is not intended as advice on any particular matter. The Federation, its officers, the editor and authors expressly disclaim all and any liability to any persons whatsoever in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by any such person in reliance whether in whole or in part upon any of the contents of this publication.

National rental affordability scheme (cont from pg 1)

In the long run, the NRAS may be administered by the States, but in the first year it is most likely to be directly administered by the Federal Government – at least a large proportion of it. It looks like most of the NRAS will be allocated on submission of project proposals and will not be divided up proportionally between the States and Territories. In effect, the first year's subsidies will go to projects that can be developed and delivered quickly – perhaps by building on work already in the pipeline.

The greatest unknown is what other measures might need to be packaged up in a project before the tax incentive will be sufficient to provide the return required by investors. Part of the difficulty is that the answer varies depending on location, whether the investment is debt or equity, and what yield is required regardless of the projected capital gains.

What does seem certain is that in many locations where affordable housing is most needed, other contributions will need to be packaged up into a project as well the NRAS. These could be land, direct investment by government, various guarantees to take out of the equation some major risks that would otherwise push up the required return.

This problem is particularly acute in NSW, where in very many locations the cost of developing new affordable housing is far too high for returns to be bridged by the tax subsidy. If the standard affordability benchmark of 30% of household income is also applied, the rents charged (at 80% of market) would also still be too high.

Additional contributions will certainly be needed to enable providers to purchase properties outright, so that they are not lost to the system after ten years. These additional contributions might be state land and existing state programs like the Affordable Housing Innovations Fund in NSW. Equally, there is some suggestion that the NRAS itself should be varied to take these high cost locations into account.

Until there is some clarity about access to these other components, the projects that can benefit from the NRAS will, at best, be very unevenly spread.

All of these issues are being worked through by a COAG working group, chaired by the new Housing Minister, Tanya Plibersek. At the same time, a number of states are undertaking modelling to see what the subsidy would be able to achieve in their states. One of the main questions is what return investors will actually require – in particular, how they will assess the risks of these projects.

Ultimately, the answer will only emerge when project proponents go to financiers with possible projects. A handful of organisations have already done this, but the information is simply not well understood across the board yet. Another suggestion has been to develop 'charge sheets' which can be agreed on and to take them to a range of investors to see how they are priced – and who offers the best deal.

The Commonwealth government is due to release a technical paper on NRAS by mid April, and States are also undertaking modelling.

Despite the number of issues that must be resolved for the NRAS to deliver on its targets, the opportunity it provided is huge. If the new supply financed in this way is ultimately spread proportionally between the states, the community housing sector in NSW would be managing (and often developing) 32,000 additional properties. This is double the growth projected under the State Planning for the Future strategy, and together they would see the sector grow by 45,000 tenancies over the decade. This is 15% growth year on year for ten years.

Increasingly it has looked as though associations in NSW would be competing for very scarce resources. Now the challenge is exactly the opposite: to find ways to take up the opportunities for growth.

Changes in the sector

On 12th February, Matt Brown, State Minister for Housing announced that Compass Community Housing Services was the successful bidder to manage community housing in Broken Hill.

Broken Hill, an important western NSW township with a viable housing portfolio, is now serviced by a single housing provider.

According to Greg Budworth, CEO of Compass, "this outcome represents confidence by Housing NSW in the community housing sector of NSW. Compass is pleased by the result for itself, the clients, other stakeholders and general community of Broken Hill and for our community housing peers and colleagues in NSW."

The Broken Hill office will be open for business on April 7th.

Affordable Community Housing, a new entity resulting from the amalgamation of Cumberland Community Housing and Western Suburbs Housing Co operative,

was formalised on March 7th. Marc Clifford, Business Developer Manager says "The larger entity can offer wider service throughout the entire metro area, providing both social and affordable housing." Affordable Community Housing now manages 1500 properties and currently maintains two satellite offices in Bankstown and Pendle Hill.

In other news, members of Burwood Area Community Housing voted to close the office on 11th February 2008. South West Community Housing is currently under administration and future management of properties in Wagga and Griffith has not yet been resolved.

Shoalhaven Community Housing is currently in ongoing discussions with Eurobodella Community Housing at Bateman's Bay to amalgamate.

Queanbeyan Community Housing Ltd is now in the final stages of winding up. It is now officially an outreach office of Argyle Community Housing.

New regulatory system taking shape

The new Regulatory Code is due to begin operation from the middle of this year.

The two main steps to achieve this are the gazetting of the regulatory code and the finalisation of a new set of evidence guidelines. The new Registrar and their staff must also be appointed.

The regulatory code is currently being finalised. The main outline of the Code was based on work undertaken by officers on a national regulatory framework. Significant elements of this were informed by the approach of the existing NSW Performance Based Registration System (PBRS), but there were also significant new elements and objectives.

After extensive advice from the Development & Implementation Advisory Group (made up mainly of representatives of peaks), there have been a number of changes, bringing the code closer to the current PBRS, but building

on new areas of business. The outcomes have also been made progressively less onerous for different classes of provider, with lower risk.

Once the draft has been thorough the legislative drafting process and approval, there will be a short period for public comment.

The other main piece of work has now also begun. This is the development of the new evidence guidelines for registration. Again, much of this document is based on the evidence required for PBRS. There are some places where there have been substantial changes which are entirely new.

Working groups, broadly corresponding to the four classes of provider, have begun detailed work on the draft guidelines. While these do not have to be presented to Parliament, they will need to be ready by the time the new Code comes into effect. The membership of the

(cont next pg)

First round growth providers appointed

St George Community Housing Co-operative and Affordable Community Housing Ltd (the new company formed in the amalgamation of Cumberland and Western Suburbs) were both appointed as Growth Providers in the recent tender.

These providers will have the leases on 200 capital properties extended to 35 years. The aim of these long term leases is to provide an income stream to facilitate leveraging and debt funding for affordable housing development. The Growth Providers will also receive a high proportion of new supply in the metropolitan area over the next four years.

The Office of Community Housing has indicated that the program will be extended

if this initial pilot results in a net increase in community housing at no extra cost to the government.

The Office of Community Housing will release a second tender soon that will be open to registered community housing associations that already manage a large property portfolio and meet required performance criteria. While initially this round was intended to identify Reserve Growth Providers, it will now seek another group of Growth Providers.

Because a third provider was not immediately identified in the first tender, it is likely that one of the second round providers may also participate in the long term leasing pilot.

Homelessness back on the agenda

If recent weeks are anything to go by, homelessness is back on the political agenda, particularly at the national level.

Heralding a 'new approach' to homelessness, the prime minister has established a committee headed by Brotherhood of St Laurence executive director Tony Nicholson to develop a white paper to examine and identify new ways of tackling homelessness. This follows a commitment made during last year's election campaign to allocate \$150 million to crisis accommodation.

It is thought that the white paper will have a strong focus on prevention by looking at issues such as mental health and education problems. The Prime Minister said that the problem is far broader than funding crisis accommodation and required a 'genuinely holistic' approach.

In a further sign of changes to come, commonwealth, state and territory ministers agreed to in-principle reforms of Special Purpose Payments (grants provided for specific recurrent and capital purposes such as the CSHA and SAAP). A heads of treasury working party is to develop a new framework for special purpose payments for consideration at a meeting of treasurers in March. There was agreement by treasurers to 'rationalise the number of SPPs...without reducing their value.'

Until the white paper and treasury working party reports are finalised, it is unclear what will be done in relation to homelessness. It is clear however, that at the very least homelessness is starting to attract some long overdue attention in the political sphere. Hopefully, these developments will lead to positive changes that help alleviate the appallingly high numbers of homeless people in Australia each year.

Regulatory (cont from pg 4)

working group for housing associations
 – covering the first two classes of provider
 – has been largely drawn from a working group under the old PBRs.

A key further piece of work that has not been progressed so far is to review the current data collection, KPIs and benchmarks. It is possible that this will be significantly reduced. But the sector representatives on the old PBRs group and the new working group have stressed that a proper evaluation of the data and benchmarks is fundamental to the effective working of the system.

NSW Aboriginal Housing Office Board

Since its inception in 1998, the Aboriginal Housing Office Board has provided strategic advice to the Minister for Housing and the Aboriginal Housing Office to achieve significant milestones in the NSW Aboriginal Housing Sector.

On the 1st October 2007, the Hon. Matt Brown MP, Minister for Housing, appointed a new Board following a merit based process. Mr Tom Slockee was appointed as Chairperson and other members include Ms Lois Towney, Ms Cathy Craigie, Ms Michelle Craig, Mr Robert Carroll, Mr Andrew Hegedus and Mr Jim Allen.

“All Board members have excellent experience and skills to develop effective strategies for the strengthening of the NSW Aboriginal Housing Sector. I look forward to working with the NSW Aboriginal Housing Office Board and ask them to build on the excellent work of past Board members. I challenge them to look outside of the square and develop new and innovative ways of doing business with the sector”, Minister Brown stated.

Significant milestones of the Aboriginal Housing Office Board and the Aboriginal Housing Office include:

- The purchase or construction of in excess of 1,000 quality dwellings;
- Provision of housing for more than 12,000 Aboriginal people in 4,350 properties owned by the Aboriginal Housing Office
- Introduced a performance based registration and funding regime;
- Established strong consultative mechanisms with the Aboriginal community;
- Developed employment strategies for Aboriginal people in the construction of AHO and/or Aboriginal Community Housing Provider dwellings.

(cont. next pg.)



L-R (Front Row): Cathy Craigie, Tom Slockee (Chairman), The Hon. Matt Brown MP (Minister for Housing), Michelle Craig.
L-R (Back Row): Andrew Hegedus, Robert Carroll, Lois Towney, Jim Allen, Russell Taylor (CEO, Aboriginal Housing Office).

Tenant Network welcomes North Coast tenants

For the first time the Community Housing Tenant Network has involved tenants from outside the metropolitan area. The Network is planning to consult different associations around the state to see how it can help promote tenant involvement across NSW. As a first step, the Network has been talking to North Coast Community Housing (NCCHC) and encouraging their tenants to join.

At the Network's Christmas workshop North Coast tenant Delores Close and staff member Kate De Marco gave a presentation on their association's Tenant Council. The NCCHC Tenant Council has been operating very successfully since 2006. It

aims to bring tenants together across the wide geographical area covered by NCCHC by selecting representatives for the Tweed Heads, Grafton and Lismore areas. Kate and Delores gave an inspiring presentation and members were delighted to meet representatives from a regional housing association.



Kate De Marco from North Coast presents to the Tenant Network

AHO Board (cont. from pg 6)

"The new Aboriginal Housing Office Board is determined to bring about change and growth in the Aboriginal Housing Sector", Tom Slokkee stated.

"The Aboriginal Housing Sector is so much different than mainstream Community housing and Housing NSW. The Board's main focus will be on the development of Regional Aboriginal Housing Management Services. These Services will manage the houses owned by the Aboriginal Housing Providers, so that we can address the Repairs and Maintenance backlog needs and provide a much better management service to our tenants and properties so that we can increase the housing stock and develop innovative products such as home ownership".

The workshop was well attended, with 49 tenants making their way to Ashfield. They also heard a presentation on tenant employment projects in Victoria from David White from the Regional Tenants' Resource Service and had an opportunity to make a submission on the proposed changes to the Residential Tenancy Act.

And finally, the Network can now announce that tenants from all 15 metropolitan associations have either attended an event or signed up to the Network. Anyone wishing to join the Network can download the registration form from the Network website: www.communityhousing.org.au/tenantnetwork.html or call Adam West on (02) 9281-7144 (ext 211) for more information. Tenants from non-metro associations are welcome to join and will be sent the Network's newsletter and other information directly to their home.

Move to common access system in-train

After years of debate, Housing NSW has begun work on developing a common access system for social housing.

There has long been a need to improve ways of accessing the range of options available in the social housing system. Currently in NSW, there are multiple entry points to the system – public housing, long-term community housing, transitional housing and crisis accommodation. People in housing need are required to apply for each program type separately and in the case of non-government providers to each individual organisation. While largely historical, clearly this situation is less than ideal. As a result, increasingly policy makers are looking to simplify arrangements for entering the system.

This of course has implications for how each part of the system goes about their business. Most notably, in assessing and maintaining a register of eligible applicants. To improve access to the system, some commonality in these processes is required so that applicants can access the range of options available without having to apply at each provider organisation. One of the challenges in doing so is to maintain the important aspects of having a diverse system - responsiveness to local area needs, flexibility in allocations policies and choice, while moving towards common registers and assessment processes.

Developing a common access framework is an action in the community housing strategy Planning for the Future: New directions for community housing in New South Wales 2007/2008 – 2012/2013, and an area of work for Housing NSW. This work has begun. Housing NSW is investigating a Common Access Strategy (CAS) for community housing and

public housing.

The focus of the CAS is firmly on the applicant's perspective and streamlining the process they go through. Currently, access arrangements in NSW vary across social housing providers and include a variety of application processes, assessment methods and waiting list systems. To maximise their chance of getting housed in a property that meets their needs, applicants need to apply to a number of different housing providers and re-tell their story each time.

Under Housing NSW's five-year strategy for community housing Planning for the Future:

New directions for community housing in New South Wales 2007/08 to 2012/13, community housing stock will increase from 13,000 to 30,000 properties. This shift in social housing resources is a further reason that it is timely to investigate strategies that will



give all clients seeking housing assistance a fair opportunity. Common housing registers, a key part of common access systems, are now well established in the UK, Scotland and Canada and are currently being implemented in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.

The CAS is being developed in three stages, each resulting in a discussion paper. A Social Housing Steering Committee which includes community housing providers is overseeing this process. Key stakeholders, including the NSW Federation of Housing Associations and a range of community housing providers, are being involved in targeted consultations at each stage. This collaborative process will develop and refine options for possible common access models, and a preferred option will be recommended to Housing NSW in late 2008.

A number of consultative workshops have already been held with community housing providers, resourcing agencies and Housing NSW staff in stage 1 of the development process. Through these it is clear there is agreement that a common access strategy could make access easier for applicants and also have benefits for individual housing providers. Potential benefits for providers include better use of resources through reduced duplication of assessment processes and information management.

Stage 2 of the CAS is currently underway, in which a System Design Working Group comprised of both community housing and public housing practitioners has been established. This working group has begun, through a series of workshops, the task of formulating the core business processes that could form the basis of a common system in the areas of:

- Information, advice & referral
- Application
- Assessment
- Ranking
- Wait listing

A preference has already emerged for individual providers to continue to match and allocate tenants to properties themselves, according to their own local allocation policies. Including individual tenant transfers within a common system is also being explored. Initially, a common access system would not include some types of housing assistance that have unique legal and operating arrangements (for example Aboriginal community housing, tenant-managed co-operatives and Crisis Accommodation Program properties) – linking these housing types to the common system may be negotiated later.

Ongoing communication with the community housing sector and consideration of IT implications are considered to be crucial to the development of the CAS. The CAS Team will provide further updates to the sector as this project progresses.

Information for this article provided by Mark Nutting, CAS Project Manager, Housing Assistance Policy

Change, challenge, innovation, inclusion

A joint NSW Community Housing Conference & Aboriginal Housing Summit

Tuesday 9th - Thursday 11th September 2008

Day 1: Tuesday 9th September - Aboriginal Housing Summit

Day 2/3: Wednesday 10th - Thursday 11th September -
Community Housing Conference

Citigate Central Sydney

169-179 Thomas St Sydney

Managing conflicts of interest on your board

According to some members of the Federation's Directors' Network, managing conflicts of interest continues to be a key issue for directors of community housing providers. Experienced board members need to remain vigilant, and ensure new board members join an active culture of disclosure.

Legally, directors have a fiduciary duty to the organisation, and are therefore required to put the interests of the organisation ahead of any other interests (such as personal, financial business or other interests). A director must also not make any personal or professional gain from their position

The most effective strategy to manage conflicts of interest is the early identification of potential conflicts. Conflict of interest should be a regular board meeting agenda item and directors should not be afraid of raising any doubts or concerns at each meeting. Directors are obliged to disclose any conflict of interest as soon as they become aware of it.

The perception of conflict of interest is just as important to manage as an actual conflict of interest. Community housing providers manage public funds and are accountable to clients and the community for the appropriate governance of the organisation. The perception that a board has made a decision inappropriately can be damaging, even if the perception is unfounded.

Tenant directors are particularly vulnerable to the perception of conflict of interest. As a board member, a tenant director must act in the best interests of the organisation, that is as a landlord. Tenants must be doubly cautious about how their decisions are seen by clients and the community

Specific conflicts of interest might include individual directors or their family or friends benefitting directly through their involvement with the organisation; or specific groups or organisations receiving preferential treatment as a result of individual board members representing their interests.

Organisations must have a policy on managing conflicts of interest that includes: processes for disclosure; the responsibility of directors to abstain from participating in decisions (in the case of one-off conflicts) or resign from the board if made necessary by an ongoing conflict; and processes for ongoing awareness and monitoring of interests. It is important that board meeting minutes reflect how conflict of interest is managed by the board. Minutes are the key legal document for recording board member decisions.

The Federation offers training for their directors to ensure that they fully understand their duties, and how to identify and resolve conflicts of interest.

NSWFHA Board of Directors

President	Nick Sabel	(02) 4731-5851	nicks@wach.org.au
Vice Pres.	Beverly Wiggins	(02) 6353-1184	lithch@bigpond.net.au
Treasurer	Patrick Yeung	(02) 9822-8520	patrick.yeung@chl.org.au
Secretary	Mohammed Ibrahim	(02) 9790-3093	mohamed@chcl.org.au
Director	Coral Garratt	(02) 9439-1399	chlns@tpg.com.au
Director	Bobbie Townsend	(02) 9281-0148	bobbie@womenshousingcompany.org
Director	Kelvin Allen	(02) 6772-5133	KELVIN.ALLEN@housing.nsw.gov.au
Director	Nazha Saad	(02) 9585-1499	nazha.saad@sgch.com.au

February Board Meeting

The board noted David Mathews' resignation (having left North Coast) and agreed to circulate an EOI for members who would like to fill the casual vacancy on the board.

Major Items

The major items at this meeting were initial strategic planning for 2008-09 and discussion of key policy developments.

The board identified a number of areas of our strategic plan that should become priorities this year. They include: working with other service systems; increasing control by providers of their assets and financing; workforce sustainability; support for new areas of capacity needed for growth and areas of specialist activities; and supporting structures for small associations.

The board noted that the pace of new policy initiatives has greatly increased. They included: the process and sector involvement for developing evidence guidelines for the new regulatory code; timelines for the Code and public consultation; the work on IT options for the sector (the Federation was invited onto steering committee and is working actively with the consultants); the Common Access Strategy (Nick Sabel is now on the steering committee and Adam Farrar is on working group); and growth providers capacity building panel, on which Adam is a member.

The board also discussed Maura Boland's response to issues raised at the HAM; the likely tender for the new accreditation body; and the expectation that the government will advertise for new members of the Community Housing Advisory Committee soon.

The Board discussed the increased importance of the Federal policy environment for the sector; and noted that the Federation is building strong relations with the Federal Minister. It also flagged potential issues for the sector arising from the Federal Government's new emphasis on homelessness.

At this meeting, the board began a new process of explicitly noting the Federation's relation with external stakeholders. It was reported that our relationship with Minister's office continues to strengthen, and that we are continuing to build strong relationships with the AHO and new board. The Federation was invited to attend a forum hosted by Infrastructure Partners Australia on social housing in NSW with the Minister as the special guest, and that we continue to be involved in the work of the National Affordable Housing Round Table. More broadly, it was noted that churches are now entering the affordable housing arena; and that the Federation may have an opportunity to establish stronger relationships with the aged care sector.

The board also discussed emerging issues for the sector. It was suggested that the sector's engagement with local government is becoming a very important issue that the Federation should focus on. It was also suggested that consistency and clarity about the transitional costs and funding during amalgamations is becoming an important issue.

It also maintained a watching brief on the ongoing reshaping of the sector.

Business items

In a couple of key developments, the Federation will meet with Maura Boland to discuss respective roles of the Federation and OCH; and the new Aboriginal Advisory Committee will meet before the next board.

The board also discussed a number of business matters: the Executive Director appraisal; indexation of Training Fees business case; the half yearly revision of financial projections; the Funding Agreement; a vacancy on the Audit & Risk management committee; the governance cycle & reporting calendar and staffing.

Board Minutes are posted on the Federation's website - Next meeting 11th April 2008.

Death to the Public Officer

Associations will no longer be required to appoint a Public Officer under proposed changes to the Associations Incorporations Act 1984. An expanded act has been drafted - the associations incorporation bill 2008 and is available for comment. Under the draft Act the role of the secretary will cover the roles previously covered by the Public Officer. There will also be no need for a common seal and the secretary will automatically become the authorised signatory. The draft bill also proposes that statutory duties of care, diligence, honesty and disclosure of interest

are explicitly included as responsibilities of directors, so that directors will be liable for breaches. The bill also proposes that associations with a turnover of over \$200,000 must have their annual financial statements audited and that the financial year must end on 30th June (unless specified as Dec 30th in the constitution). A summary of the major changes contained in the associations incorporation bill 2008 can be found at www.fairtading.nsw.gov.au Comments on the draft bill are due by April 11th 2008.

Federation staff changes

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Danielle Merrett and Sarah Bradshaw.

Danielle Merrett, who has now returned to work at University of Sydney, was employed as a temporary policy team member, and brought with her considerable skills and knowledge. We would like to thank Danielle for her work at the Federation and wish her luck in the world of experimental economics.

The Federation's Administration Assistant, Sarah Bradshaw recently resigned so that she could return to her home up north. Sarah joined us through the Aboriginal Traineeship Program at the beginning of last year and worked four days a week while she completed her training at TAFE. She brought a friendly and professional approach to her work and was a valued member of the Federation team. We thank her for her contributions to the Federation and wish her well in her endeavours.



Danielle Merrett



Sarah Bradshaw



Allira Wood

The Federation has successfully filled the administrative assistant position through another Aboriginal Traineeship.

Allira Wood joined the Federation in early March, and is a welcome addition to the team. Allira will be working 4 days per week in the office, and going to TAFE 1 day to study Certificate III in Business Administration.

Allira comes from the Timbery family in La Perouse (on her Nan's side). She finished Year 12 in 2007 and is looking forward to furthering her studies.

Allira can be contacted at (02) 9281 7144 (ext 207) or email: allira@communityhousing.org.au

The Federation encourages any associations interested in creating opportunities through Aboriginal traineeships to contact us.

Farewell Lesley Wyatt & welcome new EOs

The Federation welcomes three new Executive Officers to the sector while also saying farewell to a much respected long term EO, Lesley Wyatt.

Lesley Wyatt has retired as Executive Officer at Hume Community Housing. Lesley has worked in the community housing sector for over 24 years. She has overseen the growth of Hume Community Housing from its beginnings to a provider now managing over 1000 properties in Western Sydney. "Lesley has been a leader in creating the sector we have today," says Adam Farrar, EO of the Federation. Lesley was instrumental in setting up the Federation, was active on the board of Shelter and was involved in the pilot of the Accreditation standards. She leaves the



Lesley Wyatt
Hume Community Housing

Nicola Lemon has been appointed by Hume Community Housing to take up the role of Executive Officer Business Development and Finance. Nicola has worked extensively in housing associations in the United Kingdom, particularly with Leeds Federated Housing Association - one of the larger Associations with title to 4,500 homes. She has had considerable experience of leading renewal projects in the UK. She brings a first hand understanding of how Housing Associations can be a lead agency in the community, in addition to the key role of providing tenancy management.

Jack Murphy was recently appointed as CEO of Garrigal Housing Association, having held senior executive roles in the Aged Care

Industry. He brings a depth of experience in managing and developing business in community services. "We are extremely impressed with Jack's understanding of managing a service delivery business at the macro level, but he is also very hands on in his approach", says Sonja



Jack Murphy, CEO of
Garrigal Housing Association

Walters, Garrigal chairperson. Jack was also involved for over 20 years with the state peak – Aged Care and Community Services NSW & ACT. Jack brings a strong sense of how a sector can maintain a collaborative and co operative approach to the provision of services in a competitive environment.

Mark Dansie has taken up the role of Executive Officer at North Coast Community Housing. Mark worked for ten years for Southern Cross University, managing their commercial and private business projects. He has recently returned from the US where he provided business advice in using alternative energies with start up businesses. He has a strong track record of managing enterprises and growing them, combined with a passion for social justice. Mark says "I'm not sure if I'm a capitalist with socialist tendencies or a socialist with capitalist tendencies!" Mark sees one of the biggest challenges in the North Coast area as the lack of supply – the percentage of social housing available in relation to the population is inadequate. His vision is to find alternative ways to generate new stock in the area, particularly through local partnerships.

We look forward to a long and productive working relationship with Nicole, Jack and Mark.

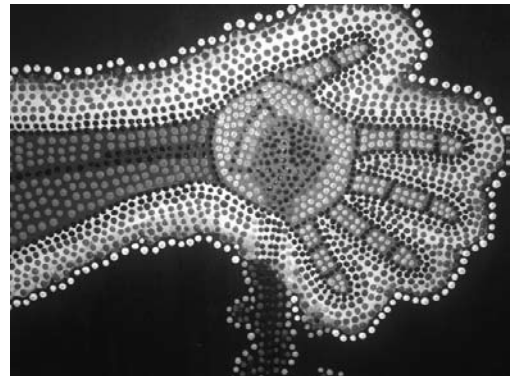
Aboriginal Traineeships

NSW Federation of Housing Associations continues to promote and support Aboriginal Traineeships.

Aboriginal Traineeships provide a great opportunity to improve access for Aboriginal people by employing Aboriginal staff.

An information folder has been developed and includes resources and information for our social housing employers – the booklet will provide the relevant information on what you need to know as an employer of a registered trainee in social housing. It also provides information on advertising for a trainee and what resources are available to support the traineeship – such as financial incentives and mentoring. An additional information guide for the trainees is also included, along with additional factsheets and a copy of the Australian Apprenticeship & Traineeship Act 2001, contacts and websites, and other relevant resources.

A trainee employed by a social housing provider would also be enrolled in off the job training in the Certificate IV in Social Housing with the NSW FHA (using the business name Centre for Training in Social Housing).



Traineeships give people a start in an industry, such as social housing – with training both on the job, and with a Registered Training Organisation (such as the Federation). This is particularly important to Aboriginal people who may face greater barriers to employment.

If your social housing provider is interested in employing an Aboriginal trainee, for further information you may contact Rita Hampton on (02) 9281 7144 (x204) or alternatively via her email: rita@communityhousing.org.au

The Aboriginal artist, Rodney Matthews, has provided his painting ‘Spreading the Message’ to be reproduced on the Aboriginal Traineeships presentation folder and documents.

Community Activity Careers

Community Services and Health industries are growing faster than any other Australian industry. There is a real risk that we are facing one of the highest skill shortages across Australia. The social housing industry lacks a high profile with young job seekers. One strategy for workforce development is to promote the industry more effectively to young people and build learning and work pathways for people to pursue a career in social housing.

The Community Active Careers website (www.communityactivecareers.com.au) attracts a high number of young people

searching for quality information on jobs in community services. Job profiles or brief job descriptions are needed to build up a picture of the range of jobs available in social housing. Please go to the website www.communityactivecareers.com.au and click on the “Create a job profile” link. You can profile as many job roles as you like to help put social housing on the map for young jobseekers!

For further information email: info@communityactivecareers.com.au or call Mark Shaddock on 02 9270 6629

NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc



**HOUSING
MANAGEMENT
HOTLINE**

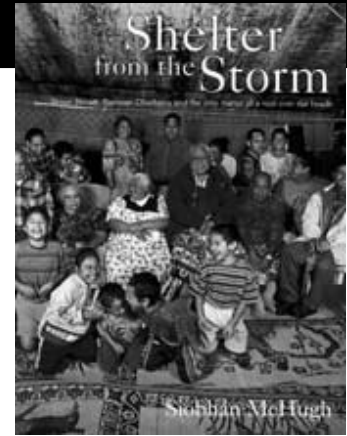
**Non-Metropolitan
Telephone
1800 652 877**

**Sydney Metropolitan
Telephone
(02) 9211 8420**

**The HOTLINE will give
information on:**

- ◆ Tenancy Management
- ◆ Maintenance and Repairs
- ◆ Policy and Best Practice

Operating Hours
Monday to Friday
10.00 am to 1.00 pm



Shelter from the Storm

*Bryan Brown, Samoan
Chieftains and the little matter
of a roof over our heads*

Author: Siobhan McHugh
Publisher: Allen & Unwin

Public housing has provided millions of Australians with much more than just a roof over their heads. In recent years, public housing has attracted more than its fair share of criticism.

The NSW Federation of Housing Associations decided to do something about it and commissioned a book that would tell the stories of former and current tenants of public and community housing. We wanted to show, in a non-threatening way, the pivotal role of social housing in the lives of a range of people.

Shelter from the Storm promotes a positive view of social housing and personalises the experience of social housing. Like all true-life stories, there are the occasional brickbats as well as bouquets. Bryan Brown, Jennie George and Mark Latham are three of the better known stories in the book.

Shelter from the Storm

NSW Federation of Housing Associations copies - *out of print*

To purchase an e-book:
www.ebooks.com/ebookd/book_display.asp?IID=309382



Housing Matters

Federation Members receive a free subscription to Housing Matters newsletter. Additional subscriptions are \$55 per year for members (or 1/2 price for Housing Association Board Members, \$27.50 each). Non-member subscriptions are \$66 per year for 6 issues.

Organisation

Name

Address

Phone Fax

<input type="checkbox"/>	Type	# of subscriptions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-Member	_____ (\$66each)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member	_____ (\$55each)
<input type="checkbox"/>	HA Board Member	_____ (\$27.50 each)

Please send this form and payment to:

NSW Federation of Housing Associations
Suite 301, 64-76 Kippax Street, Surry Hills, NSW 2015
Ph: (02) 9281 7144 Fax (02) 9281 7603
Email: nswfha@communityhousing.org.au
Website: www.communityhousing.com.au



Calendar of Events

Social Housing Training

Orientation to work in social housing CHCCH1C
30 April 2008

Supports and Networks:
Work with other services CHCNET4A plus
Provide support services to clients CHCCS9A
1 May 2008

Manage the delivery of quality client service CHCCS4C
14 May 2008
(diploma level unit)

Co ordinate the work environment CHCORG6B
15 May 2008
(diploma level unit)

Work within a legal and ethical framework CHCCS301A
28 May 2008

Work Safe: Participate in workplace safety procedures CHCOHS301A
29 May 2008

EO Network

All sessions 10 am - 12:30 pm followed by a network lunch
1 May 2008
1 August 2008
31 October 2008

Middle Managers Network

9 May 2008
1:30 - 4:30 pm

Scoping Training

(for Asset Management)
22 & 23 May 2008

If you would like to organise additional training, on a fee for service basis, please contact the Training Co-ordinator Estelle Lohman, at the Federation on (02)9281 7144 Ext. 205 or estelle@community-housing.org.au

COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRES

HELPING SOLVE PROBLEMS BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS

If you are having a disagreement with a neighbour that you just can't settle, it may be best to get some help.

Community Justice Centres have trained mediators who can help you solve your problems quickly and fairly. Mediation can help solve problems between neighbours on issues like:

- pets
- children
- noise
- garbage
- unreasonable behaviour
- family disputes.

What is mediation?

Mediation is where people voluntarily get together with mediators to settle their conflict in a way which is fair and acceptable for everyone involved.

How can Community Justice Centres help?

Mediators are trained to help people to settle their disagreements by:

- Listening to each person talk about their concerns;
- Helping people talk to each other about their problems; and
- Helping people to come up with their own solutions.

CONTACT

If you think mediation can help you, why not contact the Community Justice Centre:

Phone: Client Service Line - 1800 990 777

Website: www.cjc.nsw.gov.au

Email: info@cjc.nsw.gov.au