



# Housing Matters

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

ISSN 1442-2360

Vol. 13, Issue 1

January 2007

## Housing heats up as potential election issue

Two months out from a state election, housing has become a regular front page issue.

While the nature of the affordable housing crisis has been widely acknowledged for some time now, the amount of press the issue is receiving is new. This

will add pressure for the major parties to release their strategies for addressing the issue. Most articles centre on predictions about the cost and availability of affordable housing, with some discussion of planning issues.

Of particular interest is the emergence of reporting on unaffordable rental accommodation with some sensational headlines such as "Tenants get the blues as landlords rub their hands". While there would appear to be a certain amount of 'talking up' the rental market in these articles, the fact that rent is even on the front page is completely new.

On the home buying front, reports of an expected interest rate rise and the impact on first home buyers and investors continue.

development in growth centres along the coast, reporting on the strategies also shows the growing media interest in housing issues in the lead up to the election.

With the election closing in and a continued media interest in housing issues, commentators are beginning to predict that

for the first time in years, housing could become an election issue.



The issue, along with new federal government legislation on superannuation is now being linked to investment drying up and rents increasing.

Again, while potential causes of any increase or falls in property are overly simplistic, links being made in the media between property prices, rental prices and, federal and state government policy levers are relatively new.

Planning issues are also getting some media attention with discussion of the mid-north coast and far north coast strategies. With a focus on increasing density and

### In this edition:

- **Registration**
- **New landlord proposed for Broken Hill**
- **New Federation Board**

And more .....

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# From the President...

A happy new year to all Federation members and friends!

For the government, the beginning of this year is going to be dominated by the election campaign.

That means that many of the major initiatives we have been expecting action on – the Community Housing Strategy, the legislation, rent setting policy, the next steps on CHLP funding, and any affordable housing initiatives – are all caught up in election calculations.

This would be bad news if it means further delays in very crucial decisions for the sector, like the options for a new CHLP funding formula.

But it also presents an opportunity to encourage the government to bite the bullet on some major housing policy initiatives. It would be very disappointing – and electorally surprising – if the Premier doesn't make his long promised affordable housing strategy announcement.

For the first time in a very, very long time, we have seen mainstream newspapers editorialise about rental affordability and business groups saying that they are losing employees because of housing costs in Sydney. Everyone except the Government seems to have made housing affordability an election issue.

The Federation has been pointing to these problems for years and working hard to see meaningful strategy developed. This will mean much more than just the land supply promised in the State Plan. It must include a combined effort by all tiers of government to see much more investment flow to the bottom ends of the housing market – including the rental market.

The Federation adds its voice to that of peak bodies like Shelter and NCOSS who have written to the government and are raising public awareness about the urgent need for promised Government action.

On a different note, I'd like to say how pleasing it is that the relationship



between the Federation and the Department of Housing - particularly the Director General - is going from strength to strength.

It was great to have Mike Allen address our AGM and to make it clear how supportive he is of the sector and the significant role it is going to have in the future.

Mike has followed up with a very gracious letter to me noting the major contribution to the sector made by the outgoing board members, and looking forward to the Department working closely with the new Federation Board. The Board looks forward to this too, and to the exciting challenges of the new year.

Nick Sabel,  
President

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**Printed by**  
Pegasus Printing

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## Sector closures and amalgamations

In the last eighteen months five housing associations have either closed or are in the process of amalgamating with another provider. The five providers involved are Albury, Glen Innes, Moree, Upper Hunter, and Wellington.

In all cases steps have been taken by the associations involved and the Office of Community Housing (OCH) to maintain tenancies and to try to minimise the disturbance to tenants. To date all the stock has been transferred to other NSW community housing providers.

The closures have come about for a variety of reasons. In the case of one small association, the board made a carefully considered decision that they would not be financially viable for more than a few months if they met their maintenance liabilities. They decided to close rather than to risk having insufficient reserves to meet employee entitlements.

For other providers the challenges involved in meeting the standards required under the Performance Based Registration System (PBRS) were overwhelming. Registration is vital to ensure that providers are well governed, viable and managing a good service to tenants. However, some associations have been asked to make major changes in the way that they have

traditionally done things, in a short period of time. Registration has been particularly tough on small organisations with few or only one member of staff. The stress involved and the need to change to meet the higher standards required have led to the boards of some organisations deciding to close their organisations. To date, no organisation has received a second C grade in registration and had their properties transferred to another provider by OCH, because of this.

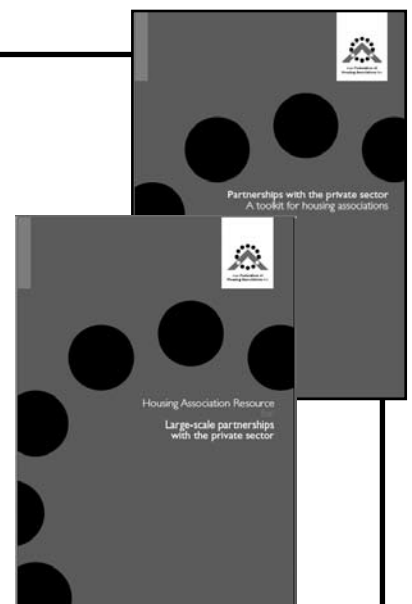
Two principal issues have emerged from the recent closures. The first was the process for identifying alternative providers where an organisation has decided to close. Because closures are seldom anticipated, the process has necessarily been hurried. However, the process for identifying alternative providers needs further examination and discussion with the sector. The second issue is the challenge that distance has presented with some of the amalgamations. The associations that have closed have all been in regional and rural areas. The new organisation faces very significant challenges in providing a local service where travel times between towns can be several hours. The community housing sector is diverse and it offers locally tailored approaches. The greatest challenge for all involved will be maintaining the diversity and local relevance in a larger organisation.

### 2 New HOUSING ASSOCIATION RESOURCES:

- **Large Scale Partnerships with the private sector**
- **Partnerships with the private sector - A Toolkit for housing associations**

These new resources published by the Federation will assist housing associations to assess the implications of entering a partnership with a private sector organisation for the delivery of affordable or social housing. Learn how to assess your readiness to enter such a partnership by using this step by step guide for considering, and entering into a commercial partnership.

Order online: [www.communityhousing.org.au](http://www.communityhousing.org.au)  
or by phone: 9281-7144.



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## **New landlord proposed for Broken Hill**

The Office of Community Housing (OCH) recently proposed that a new non-governmental landlord be set up to cover Broken Hill and the surrounding region. This new landlord could be responsible for the Department of Housing stock, the properties managed by Broken Hill Community Tenancy Scheme and potentially some of the homes managed by local and regional Aboriginal providers, if they so wish. This would create a regional provider with responsibility for around 190 homes.

The Department of Housing has recently advertised for a project manager to oversee the process of establishing the new landlord. This could take around 12 months.

There is controversy about the role of the

existing Broken Hill Community Tenancy Scheme. After a year of extremely hard work, they have achieved a B grade in Registration. They believe that despite this OCH will remove their properties and transfer them to the new NGO landlord. If this is the case then this is a major departure from previous stock transfers, where properties have been transferred from the Department of Housing without taking properties away from the community housing sector. OCH insist that the Community Tenancy Scheme will be able to participate in the steering group that is to be established to map out the future organisation. Some clarity is urgently needed about what options are open for Broken Hill and the sector needs to understand the precedents that may be set for other areas.

## **Tanya Plibersek appointed new Shadow Minister for Housing**

In December, Kevin Rudd replaced Kim Beazley as leader of the federal opposition. The shadow ministry was re-shuffled, and Tanya Plibersek was given the new responsibilities of Housing, Human Services, Women and Youth.

The housing portfolio was previously the responsibility of Kim Carr. In December 2005 Carr released the "Australia's Future Cities" discussion paper which sought contributions to aid in the development of policies for Labor's 2007 Federal Election campaign.

Plibersek's office has indicated that policy work on the new portfolios will be undertaken



over the next few months, and that she intends to continue with existing Labor housing policy.

Plibersek has previously engaged in discussion of housing issues such as affordability and homelessness prior to this appointment.

## **Community Housing Trainee nominated for traineeship award**

Rachel Healey was recently nominated for the Northern Area Trainee of the Year Award. Rachel completed a Business Administration traineeship with North Shore Community

Housing last year and was nominated by her training company – MEGT. She is now completing her Certificate IV in Social Housing with the NSW Federation of Housing Associations.

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## New Board for Federation

Mike Allen, Director General of NSW Department of Housing was the keynote speaker at the Federation's AGM. He expressed his appreciation for the work of housing associations and indicated his strong support for relationships into the future.

The Federation's AGM was held on 24th November 2006, at the Mercure Hotel Sydney, in conjunction with the housing associations meeting.

The Federation Board farewelled three directors this year - two very long term members: Vice-President, Karen Andrew from Central Tablelands Housing Association, and Treasurer, Bobbie Townsend from Women's Housing Company. Bobbie served on and off since the original State Council in 1994, and Karen since

2002. Both Karen and Bobbie have made a tremendous contribution to the Federation board. In addition the board said goodbye to Director, Brian White whose valuable contribution, particularly as a member of the Internal Audit & Risk sub-committee, will be sorely missed.



*Departing board members Bobbie Townsend and Karen Andrew (Brian White not available for photo)*

The vacancies on the Board were filled by members from both regional and metro areas: First time board members include: Ern Phang, director of Western Suburbs Housing; David Matthews from North Coast Community Housing; and new Vice-President, Beverly Wiggins from Lithgow

Community Housing. Coral Garratt from North Shore returns to the board after her previous two terms ending in 2002. Finally, Director Patrick Yeung from St George Community Housing has stepped up to fill the position of Treasurer.

## North Shore Community Housing –change of name

North Shore Community Housing is the new name for the organisation previously known as Community Housing Lower North Shore. The name was developed in consultation with tenants and aims to recognise the wider boundaries of the organisation.

Coral Garratt, CEO at North Shore Community Housing, explained the need for a name change:

“We felt like the name wasn't reflective of where we operated. We decided against a corporate name in favour of an easily recognised name that identified what we did and where we did it.”

The new name, and a new logo, was launched at their AGM in November. All other contact details remain the same.

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## Union campaign ramps up

Unions and workers across the nation were out in force for a national day of protest on the 30th November 2006. Over a quarter of a million people joined the protest against the federal governments so called Workchoices legislation.

For over a year now, the union movement has been busy fighting the Federal government's industrial relations changes. The approach has involved three key strategies – challenging the constitutional legality of the IR legislation in the high court (along with a number of state governments); a continued national campaign against the changes; and individual unions working to exclude their members from the legislation.

This approach has had mixed results. On the 14th November the High Court ruled 5-2 that the federal government could use the corporations power to implement the legislation. This effectively shut down any legal avenue to repeal the laws.

Contrary to this set back, to date the national campaign (if judged by public sentiment through polls) would appear to have been quite successful. Of course, given the High Court outcome, the goal of the campaign now is for a change of federal government at the next election – that being the only way to ensure the legislation is changed.

At a state level, the NSW government amended the NSW industrial relations act in March of this year. It is now possible for employers and employees to agree to continue to have their industrial matters dealt with under the state system. To do this employers and employees agree to sign a 'referral agreement'. A 'referral agreement' is an agreement between an employer and – in the case of our sector – the ASU in which they agree to have all matters dealt with in the State Industrial Commission.

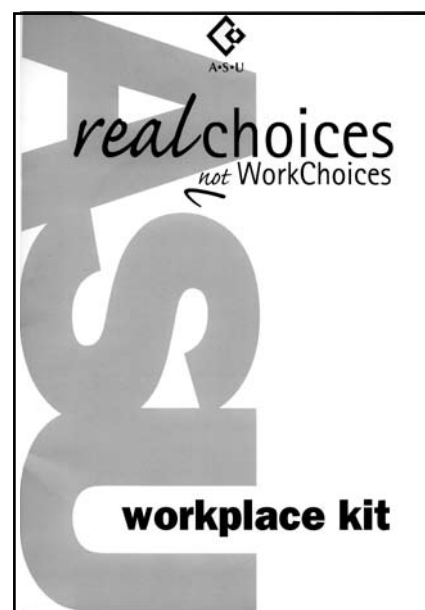
One benefit for the community sector is that an employer (board) can agree to enter into such an agreement without regard to whether or not they are a constitutional corporation.

This takes away the need (and potential risks) of having this decided in court. This is because the arrangement is by consent – the parties agree to give the power to the NSW Industrial Relations Commission of their own choosing. The ASU has developed a standard SACS referral agreement for this purpose.

As the union campaign gathers momentum in the lead up to the next federal election, working conditions across all industries, particularly those captured by the legislation, will attract increasing attention.

While the poor working conditions in the social and community services sector have long been discussed, the change to NSW industrial relations act allowing organisations to refer matters to the NSW Industrial Relations Commission has provided much needed certainty for the sector that at least current conditions under the SACS Award are maintained.

For more information on SACS referral agreements, a copy of the "real choices not WorkChoices" workplace kit (see below), or the campaign more generally go to the ASU website: [www.asu.asn.au](http://www.asu.asn.au)



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## The Department of Housing and OCH win Premier's Awards

The Department of Housing received recognition for three initiatives at the Premier's Awards held on 10th November 2006 at Sydney Conservatorium.

The 2006 Premier's Public Sector Award winners included:

The Department of Housing and the Department of Health won the Service Delivery gold award the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI).

The Office of Community Housing (in the DOH) won the Business, Management and Financial Performance bronze award for Performance Based Registration System: from Regulation to Capacity Building.

The Department of Housing won the Workforce Development silver award for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mentoring Program.

Congratulations!

## Australia Fair initiative launched

ACOSS launched Australia Fair on the 12th November 2006.

The initiative, informed by the ACOSS report *A fair go for all Australians*, aims to provide the tools for people to work towards a fairer Australia. In writing the report, ACOSS surveyed 1600 people from across the country. Over 90% of those surveyed thought that a 'fair go for all Australians' was an important Australian value. A further 77% felt that the gap between rich and poor had widened.

Respondents listed 10 essential features needed to make Australia fair – among which is fair housing. The other features are fair education, fair health, fair welfare, fair environment, fair work, fair community,

fair reconciliation, fair services, fair rights & responsibilities.

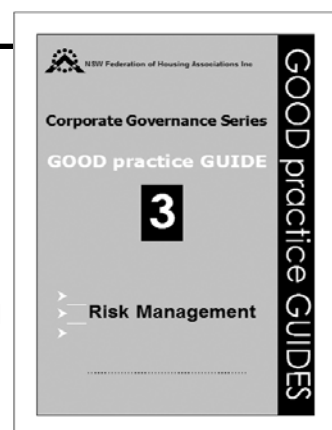
The Australia Fair initiative is designed to give people the tools to talk to local decision makers, share solutions and encourage the Federal Government to create a plan to create a fair go for all Australians. ACOSS is encouraging people to become involved in the initiative by reading and discussing issues of fairness and, acting for a fairer Australia.

The Australia Fair website hosted by ACOSS has a range of tools that can be used in doing this – from generic letters to local members of parliament and the print media to contact details of talk back radio hosts. It also contains relevant information to inform discussion and advocacy. To find out more go to: [www.acoss.org.au](http://www.acoss.org.au)

### NSWFHA - Corporate Governance Good Practice Guide #3 RISK MANAGEMENT

The most recent and third Good Practice Guide in the NSWFHA Corporate Governance series, covers Risk Management. This accessible and highly practical guide has been developed and written specifically for the community housing provider context. A risk management plan template has been included as an appendix, and the publication comes with a soft copy on CD to use as a basis for further risk management planning.

Order online: [www.communityhousing.org.au](http://www.communityhousing.org.au), or ph: 9281-7144.



## Social housing and the

Issues around housing unaffordability are getting good coverage in the lead-up to the state election (see *article on front page*). Most of this coverage has been on issues for people in private housing markets, both homeownership and private rental. This is not surprising, since the overwhelming majority of people in New South Wales live in those tenures. However there are clear implications for the demand for and supply of social housing.

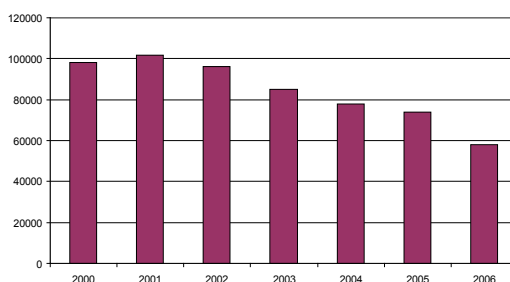
The first of these implications is the impact on waiting lists for social housing from very low and low-income people who cannot find affordable housing (that is appropriate and secure) in the private markets. For most of the 2nd half of 20th century social housing as a 'product' had key features that enabled it to deliver on affordability, appropriateness, and tenure security. However there has been a steady fall in the number of people on the waiting list for public housing – the most available type of social housing – over the last 6 years. This has followed from the effect of

'bracket creep' as the income threshold for eligibility had not increased from a threshold set in 1992 (See graph 1). Since income eligibility for the government's community housing programs is tied to that for public housing, there has been a similar, though not as dramatic, decline in the community housing waiting list (See graph 2). There have also been ongoing and more rigorous reviews of public housing applicants' ongoing eligibility. Changes to income eligibility for public housing introduced as part of the 'NSW Government plan for reshaping public housing' in April 2005 are likely to reinforce this trend in public housing.

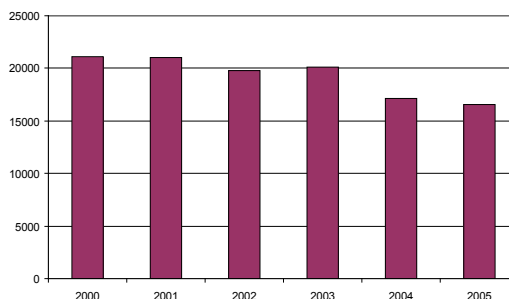
Parallel with (but not because of) declining demand for public housing there has been a decline in the number of public housing dwellings (See graph 3). However, this decline has not been matched in government-owned and managed

Aboriginal housing (with a fairly stable stock of some 4,000 dwellings) and in non-Aboriginal community housing: this latter sector

(1) Public housing waiting list



(2) Community housing waiting list



## Registration shows improvements in sector

Figures from the registration results in 2005 and 2006 show that the sector has made significant improvements in meeting the requirements of the Performance Based Registration System (PBRs). At 30th June 2005 there were 20 A grade providers, 23 B grade providers and 9 C grade providers. By June 2006 there were 23 A grade providers, 21 B grade providers and 6 C grade providers.

Latest figures to August 2006 show further

evidence of improvements in the sector. From 61 housing providers registered year to date 23 associations gained an A grade, 12 gained a B grade and only 1 provider gained a C grade.

One contributing factor was the closure and subsequent amalgamation of four organisations that gained a C grade in the first round of registration. However, other providers who gained a C grade in the first

(cont. next pg)

## state election

by Craig Johnston

has been growing, largely as a result of stock transfers from public housing.

It is not clear that either of the major parties see an expansion of public housing as a key plank in their vision for addressing the state's housing unaffordability issues. The Opposition's main housing announcement, the 'Housing and home buyer rescue package', focuses on access to home ownership and investment in private rental. The Government's main housing policies, as featured on the Premier's special election campaign website, are its 'Plan for reshaping public housing' and an associated statement, 'New directions in social housing for older people'. The dark horses in the Labor party's stable, yet to be let loose (as at mid January), are overdue statements on community housing (draft framework for consultation) and on affordable housing.

The government's 'State Plan' gives a nod towards an increased role for community housing providers to provide a range of affordable housing products, not just the 'traditional' social housing they currently provide. The framework statement on community housing proposes a bold target.

(from previous pg)

round improved to achieve a B grade after a year's intensive work. There is also strong evidence of improvements across the nine performance outcome areas that were assessed by the registration team.

For example, there has been a 19% increase in associations achieving an A grade for Outcome 5: "Risk management systems are in place", a 25% increase in associations achieving an A for Outcome 2: "Properties are maintained and used appropriately", a 36% increase in associations achieving A grades

Those new directions are supported in an options paper Shelter NSW produced at the end of 2006, and are referred to in a 'shortlist' of 5 key measures to help the low-moderate income households in Struggle Street:

- ▶ Incentives to increase supply of low-rent private rental housing
- ▶ Just cause evictions in private rental leases
- ▶ Funding for affordable rental housing managed by community housing associations
- ▶ A target of 10% affordable housing in new private housing estates
- ▶ Adaptable housing standards in new dwellings

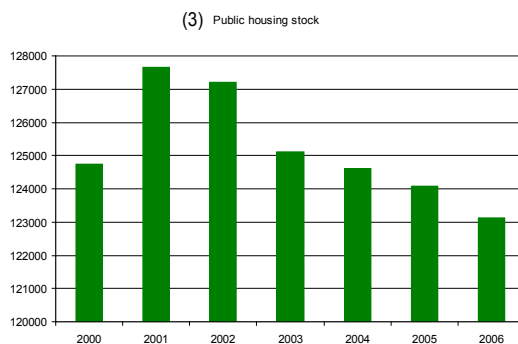
There are no simple solutions to housing unaffordability. And the blame game played by Commonwealth and state governments, and by the political parties, is not helpful. Shelter's advocacy is about what actions might 'turn the curve' for affordable housing across the tenures in a policy setting that has been massively transformed by the 'Plan for reshaping public housing' (which has bipartisan support).

You can find resource documents about housing issues and the state election at the Shelter website <[www.shelternsw.org.au/docs/fly07election-nsw.html](http://www.shelternsw.org.au/docs/fly07election-nsw.html)>.

for Outcome 7: "viable business" and a 53% increase in associations achieving an A for Outcome 8: "Efficient use of funds".

There are still significant challenges facing associations, including the high turnover of managers in the 2 years period of the PBRs' implementation. Thirteen associations have lost staff in executive positions since 2005. This meant that the organisations involved needed to introduce key staff to the core business of supporting tenants, whilst

(cont. pg 13)



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## **Ian McHugh: New director at Cumberland Housing Co-op**

When I retired from my role as CEO of an international building materials company in July last year, I decided to look for some other board positions, including a not for profit organisation.

By chance, at almost the same time, I saw the advertisement for a board position at Cumberland Housing and applied immediately.

Whilst I had never been directly involved in the provision of social housing, I understood the dynamics of the housing market as it had been our major customer segment in the building materials sector. I explained in my interview with the Cumberland Housing Chairman, Bob Mulcahy, that I was interested not only in building houses, but also the human element – providing appropriate accommodation and support to as many applicants as possible.

I was very pleased to be offered a position on the board of Cumberland Housing in August.

I see a lot of similarities between private industry issues and the current situation in social and affordable housing – a rapidly



*Ian McHugh  
Cumberland Director*

changing market, increased professionalism, strategic analysis, staff retention and the need for highly motivated boards with complementary skill sets.

Whether in private industry or not for profit organisations – the vision really is the same – to be consistently effective.

I am enjoying my work, supporting Mohamed and his team at Cumberland Housing, along with the rest of a very experienced and motivated Board.

Ian McHugh

## **Australian Institute of Company Directors Training**

“If a builder build a house for someone and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built fall in and kill its owner, then that builder shall be put to death. If it kill the son of the owner, the son of that builder shall be put to death.” (King L W (translator) Hammurabi’s Code of laws, estimated first published circa 1780 BCE.)

Thankfully times have changed and limited liability companies evolved to protect business owners and company directors.

Julie Garland McClellan, in her book *All Above Board*<sup>1</sup>, includes a chapter on the history of governance. Her book provides insights into the role of governance in the government

sector and is a valuable governance resource for directors of Housing Associations.

Julie Garland McLellan was the presenter at the training session brokered through the AICD by the Federation and held on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2006. Twelve board members from seven housing association boards attended.

“The whole workshop provided me with food for thought in many areas”, was feedback from one participant. The training had a strong focus on community housing governance. The Federation hopes to offer another similar workshop for directors unable to attend, in the coming months.

<sup>1</sup> Garland McLellan 2005, *All Above Board Great Governance for the Government Sector*, AICD

# Directors' Page

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## Directors register a success

Earlier this year, the Federation started a register of potential directors to help match associations with skilled volunteers.

The Federation advertised the register in newspapers and internet sites state wide, as well as advertising locally for organisations having trouble finding appropriate applicants in their areas.

Now AGM season is coming to a close, the Federation is hearing positive reports from member associations that have accessed the register.

So far, three organisations have contacted the Federation to say that they intend to appoint directors that they found through the register.

The Federation would like to remind associations to encourage all directors – new and old – to join the Housing Associations Directors' Network. The Directors' Network is a valuable resource for sector directors to share information, exchange ideas and undertake peer support. Contact Ellen Adele: (02) 9281 7144 (ext. 201), or [ellen@communityhousing.org.au](mailto:ellen@communityhousing.org.au)

## Hume Community Housing Association Annual General Meeting - "Spirit of the Islands"

Hume Community Housing Association held a very successful AGM on 29th November 2006, at the Macquarie Function Centre Liverpool.

148 people attended, 88 of whom were tenants.

The event included a buffet lunch and the entertainment was "spirit of the islands".

Everyone in attendance had a good time.



*The whole group*



*Hume CHA tenants at AGM luncheon*



*Pat Martin and Island dancers*

# Board of Directors

## December 06 board meeting

The President welcomed new Board members; Coral Garratt, Beverly Wiggins and David Matthews. Another new member, Ern Phang, was unable to attend.

As part of its induction discussion with new members, the Board noted that the changing nature of the Federation's role calls for a sector review of its Mission Statement. This will be put to members in conjunction with consultations on the mid-plan review of our Strategic Plan.

In this context, it was agreed that the Federation needs to more clearly define the value of small associations, part of which may be to debunk the myth that large is always more cost effective.

The board also agreed to the new KPIs for the Federations reporting to OCH. The main part of this is will be an annual member satisfaction survey.

The meeting noted that AHO has agreed to participate in the Board's new Aboriginal advisory committee.

The Board confirmed that minutes from Board meetings have been made available on the web, as of the 13th October meeting.

The Board discussed OCH's response to the sectors letter on the interim CHLP, which they felt did not fully answer questions. Nick reported that Maura Boland had agreed to reconvene the CHLP review reference committee at the beginning of the new year to work with OCH on the interim arrangements for 2007-08.

The Board agreed to take steps to ensure that the Federation maintains links with the Community Housing Advisory Committee, following its recent restructure which may remove its formal representative.

Adam reported on the Government's progress with its Affordable Housing Strategy and the new State Plan. It noted that while explicit reference to community housing growth is welcome, the actions and indicators under its affordable housing priority are grossly inadequate.

The Board noted the progress on Federation work to support the sector's development. It noted that that the Federation has received an offer to license "Estate Master" software (for development project feasibilities), which could be available to members free of charge. It also noted that we have received legal advice to support associations participating in the Ahouse affordable housing management proposal.

Adam reported that the Repositioning Accreditation project is now almost complete. It was noted that QMS is likely to be cheaper than the PMU, but associations will still require subsidy.

It was also noted that Adam Farrar, Andrew Meehan and Sue Ogier are on the reference group for the OCH project on sharing backroom functions for small associations.

The Board noted that Adam Farrar has been appointed to the board of the national peak body, Community Housing Federation of Australia.

Finally Board congratulated Laurel on the Federation winning a further two year contract to train DoH staff in partnership with Swinburne. It is also on the "Approved Provider List" with the DET for traineeships.

The Board's Audit and Risk Management Committee reported that the priority risk evaluation for the year will occur in February.

The next Board meeting will be on the 9th February 2007.

### NSWFHA Board of Directors - contact details:

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Director	Coral Garratt	(02) 9439-1399	chlns@tpg.com.au

## Successful turnout at the HAM

The Federation's second Housing Associations Meeting (HAM) for the year was held in Sydney at the Mercure Sydney on the 24th of November 2006. The meeting, preceded by a meeting of the Housing Associations Directors Network, was attended by 35 representatives from 27 housing associations across the state.

There was a full agenda with key sessions on funding issues, registration and accreditation, 'planning for the future: community housing', sector development, the accord and reshaping, and asset issues. There was a focus on seeking feedback from the sector on these issues and communicating that to OCH and other relevant stakeholders.



*President, Nick Sabel, launches new Federation publications.*



*South East Region members farewell Robin Eisman from Monaro.*



*Members enjoying a day out at the HAM.*



*Mohamed Ibrahim from Cumberland Housing Co-op shares his perspective.*

### **Registration** (cont. from pg 9)

facing the pressure of ensuring that their organisations were financially viable, well governed and undergoing performance assessment for renewal of registration at the same time. Some smaller, multi-office and geographically dispersed associations also face ongoing problems. However, registration results show that the sector does understand its risks and is using the PBRS to drive improvement across the board.

## Financial Management Seminar

At a recent financial management seminar, representatives from the Office of Community Housing were asked, "What is the area of greatest confusion in completing quarterly returns for the Office of Community Housing?" According to the officer who collates quarterly data returns the answer is maintenance.

The seminar was advised that an amount of \$275 per property is paid in Quarter 2 as part of leasehold subsidy grant to cover cyclical repairs and maintenance (this includes \$15 per property for insurance).

The subsidy can be used for any repairs and maintenance related expenses, which are not the responsibility of the landlord.

If there are unspent monies, OCH will take the balance out of the next subsidy payment.



If the expenditure is above the allowance, then a claim can be made for reimbursement of additional one off repairs and maintenance costs, subject to a number of conditions.

Once the quarterly data is collected and collated it is then made available to the Performance Management Unit as performance data, and contributes to registration assessors' knowledge of an organisation. The aim for preparing additional evidence for registration is to not only provide documents as evidence, but also to explain

the significance of the documents. Assume that the assessor knows nothing about the organisation.



A number of questions were raised about the requirements of an Asset Management Plan. The plan should show the estimated liability for the organisation. If there are gaps in the implementation of the asset management plan, then explain to the assessor the reasons and what strategies are in place to address the gaps.

As every Asset Plan looks different, it is not possible to identify a generic cost per property.



The Asset management seminar was run by the Federation on 23rd November 2006. As well as OCH presenters,

Stephanie Cunningham, who is the Treasurer at Homes North Community Housing, and also a Federation board member, spoke about financial management reporting from a director's perspective.

The seminar aimed to identify emerging financial management issues for members from an operational perspective.



NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc



# HOUSING MANAGEMENT HOTLINE

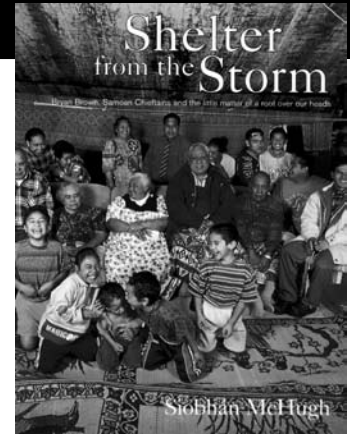
**Non-Metropolitan**  
Telephone  
**1800 652 877**

**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***  
**\$15.00 (inc P&P & GST)**  
**(\$11/\$14 for Assoc/Full members)**  
Available from:

NSW Federation of Housing  
Associations  
Suite 301, 64-76 Kippax Street  
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010  
Phone: (02) 9281 7144  
Fax: (02) 9281 7603  
Email: nswfha@communityhousing.org.au

Subscription for 'Housing Matters'



# 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 2010  
Ph: (02) 9281 7144 Fax (02) 9281 7603  
Email: nswfha@communityhousing.org.au  
Website: www.communityhousing.com.au



# Calendar of Events

## Mental Health First Aid

Wed 28th & Thu 29th March  
at the Federation

## Cert IV in Social Housing

### Introduction to Certificate IV in Social Housing

CHC40802

### Manage and Maintain Tenancies

CHCCH10C (part 1)

21 February 2007

### Manage and Maintain Tenancies

CHCCH10C (part 2)

22 February 2007

### Orientation to work in social housing

CHCCH1C

21 March 2007

### Engaging your community... apply a community development framework

CHCCD12D

22 March 2007

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](mailto: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.

If you think mediation can help you, phone a Community Justice Centre. Mediation is free, voluntary and confidential. Community Justice Centres can be contacted on the following numbers:

Bankstown	(02) 9790 0656
Campbelltown	(02) 4629 9715
Penrith	(02) 4732 1933
Wollongong	(02) 4228 0433
Newcastle	(02) 4929 1211
Wagga Wagga, Bourke, Moree	- Free Call: 008 671 964

**Website:** [www.cjc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.cjc.nsw.gov.au)

**Email:** [info@cjc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@cjc.nsw.gov.au)