

# Housing Matters

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## Title at last

On June 25 Housing Minister David Borger announced the transfer of title to community housing providers for the first time in NSW.

The NSW Cabinet has approved the transfer of a majority of the new properties developed under the economic stimulus and 500 of the existing portfolio managed on behalf of Housing NSW. It is understood that this is a first step and that there could be further consideration of the rest of the portfolio.

“This is fantastic news” says Nick Sabel, President NSW Federation of Housing Associations and Executive Officer of Wentworth Community Housing.”

“Title will provide the sector with increased opportunities to generate additional finances through leveraging from our assets. This in turn will enable us to acquire and develop more housing for people with a housing need in NSW”.

Minister Borger said “This is a crucial and bold step in our strategy to increase options for people on low incomes.

“We are committed to helping the sector grow because it has a strong track record in managing social housing with high levels of tenant satisfaction and can deliver more



The Hon. David Borger,  
Housing Minister

housing than any government can alone.

“We will keep an ongoing interest in the transferred properties and approval will be needed to redevelop or sell any of the properties to ensure that the numbers of social housing homes in NSW don’t drop. Our new policy follows new regulations that we introduced in May to protect tenants and ensure community housing organisations deliver consistent, high quality services.”

It is believed that Housing NSW will select the providers who will receive title to properties on the basis of their experience in managing a large portfolio of assets and providing support to high needs tenancies and their commitment and capacity to undertake development and borrowing activities.

The sector has waited over 25 years to hold title to the properties it manages, since the inception of the Community Tenancy Scheme and the co-op program in the early 1980s. While title alone will not ensure access to new debt finance, together with improved income streams, it will allow providers to secure finance against the whole portfolio and to leverage any increases in the value of the assets.

This comes at the same time as a consensus is emerging nationally, that in the medium term a substantial part of the social housing portfolio should be managed by community housing. Speaking at the recent Shelter conference, Minister Borger envisaged the complete devolution of public housing in the long term.

### In this edition:

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# From the President...

## Changes in the sector

The announcements never seem to stop. Step by step we seem to be putting the building blocks for a stronger community housing sector in place.

The recent Cabinet decision to transfer title of both the new stimulus properties and 500 of the existing capital portfolio is a major breakthrough. It will provide the basis for new kinds of financing and will make it easier to make the portfolio work to meet the needs of tenants.

We look forward to a new decision to transfer the remainder of the portfolio onto association balance sheets

Of course, we should also recognise that there are risks and costs associated with greater independence and stronger balance sheets – and we will have to make sure we focus on managing them well.

We are also rising to the challenge of supporting the economic stimulus initiatives. The sector has performed extraordinarily well in achieving the maintenance spending targets, which demonstrates our very strong capacity in this regard.

But we also have been trying to ensure that there are no 'legacy issues' from the large number of redevelopment projects needed to achieve the stimulus targets.

Of course this is all going on while a number of associations are preparing for large scale transfers. One of the exciting things about these is the far more flexible approach that will be taken to managing upgrades. Again, this is a vote of confidence in the sector.

But we still have a number of challenges. The Federation is pursuing the need to get a support payments added to the new approach to CHLP funding. This will be essential if we are going to meet the new targets for responding to homelessness.

A major challenge for the sector as a whole is to begin to establish a pipeline of new developments. This is what title transfer is supposed to generate; and NSW has lagged behind other states for some years.



Another challenge will be to actively use the new Affordable Housing SEPP (probably announced this week) which will enable providers to seek planning bonuses to deliver social and affordable housing.

Finally, the Federation is working very hard to provide support for the sector in all these new directions. We've delivered a strategic asset management workshop, a fraud policy workshop and we are providing support for the new registration system as it rolls out over the next 18 months.

There will be a lot more new support and training coming.

Nick Sabel  
President

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## Accelerated stock transfer program offers made

The management of at least 3,000 public housing tenancies will be transferred to housing associations over the next year.

The Community Housing Division has recently made offers of additional properties to sixteen community housing providers as part of an Accelerated Stock Transfer Program (ASTP).

The ASTP will represent a significant ramping up of the stock transfer process, with 1,000 properties expected to be transferred in 2009 and 3,000 by the end of June 2010.

The program has been negotiated with Housing NSW and is aimed to reduce duplication in a number of areas where both Housing NSW and community housing currently have a presence. The transfers are taking place in all regions, in 17 local areas and a range of locations in Sydney.

One smaller housing association has been included in the ASTP. Two organisations will double in size if they choose to accept all

the properties they are being offered, seven others will increase by 20 and 40 per cent.

CHD recently held a workshop to share providers' experiences of stock transfer and to learn from the successes the sector and Housing NSW have achieved. They also discussed areas where previous transfers proved problematical and discussed ways where the process could be improved.

One of the most significant changes was the introduction of a 'prospectus' that will be given to providers pre-transfer to help them decide whether to accept the properties. The prospectus will include the maintenance history, occupancy level and arrears for the area along with other key data for the provider. A more flexible approach will be taken to management and funding of upgrades to the properties being transferred.

The Australasian Housing Institute has been consulting with providers who will receive the bulk of the stock transfers to map any areas where they may need to build capacity.

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## New registration system in place

The new registration system for community housing providers in NSW is now in force and rolling out. The new regulation came into force in May and assessments under the new Code are now underway.

The pilots for the new system have been completed, and although the evaluation has not yet been released, housing associations fared well.

The main area for further development is more integrated strategic planning, total asset management and more sophisticated risk management. Some of the stronger requirements in the new Code, such as fraud prevention, have been singled out and the Federation has distributed advice and held a very successful workshop on this and strategic asset management.

For the first time, more than 500 organisations receiving support from Housing NMSW will be required to be registered. The Federation, in partnership with Homelessness

NSW, is providing free training and a set of support materials for those preparing their registrations. Nada Goodacre is the new project officer coordinating the training and support workshops and materials.

The Registrar has held seven information sessions throughout NSW during May and June. These gave an overview of the new regulatory arrangements and were attended by more than 100 organisations.

To help signal the independence of the Registrar and the regulatory oversight, the Registrar has moved to a new office at Burwood. Apart from the new location, most contact details (except fax number) will stay the same.

New address for the Registrar  
Ground Floor Offices 5-6  
1-7 Elsie Street  
Burwood NSW 2134

New Fax: (02) 8741 2522

## **New National Standards**

The new edition of the National Standards for Community Housing is currently being drafted following sector consultation.

Queensland Department of Housing has been managing the review, and reports that a draft of the updated manual should be available by July 2009.

Following the release of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition draft, a further round of consultations will be held with stakeholders across all States and Territories.

Adam Farrar continues to represent the NSW FHA on the steering committee of the review. As one of only two NGO representatives on the steering committee, Adam maintains that input from providers on the ground is critical to an effective review process.

Nazha Saad, the EO of St George Community Housing Ltd, and Bobbie Townsend, EO of

Women's Housing Company, also represented the sector at consultations as part of the NSW FHA Board earlier on this year.

Ben Wong, Program Manager of Global-Mark, is looking forward to the new draft of the NCHS and hopes it will contribute to the setting of, and maintaining, the high level benchmarks of the rapidly growing community housing sector.

He will use the draft to measure the potential impact on the accreditation process, and to assist in continuous improvement on service delivery in the sector.

More information on the Review of the National Community Housing Standards can be obtained through the Federation's website [www.communityhousing.org.au/S1\\_Members\\_section.html](http://www.communityhousing.org.au/S1_Members_section.html), or events page.

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## **Community housing recognised by Minister "Room for more: boosting providers of social housing"**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of March, 2009, the Hon Tanya Plibersek, the Federal Minister for Housing spoke on the necessity to increase the capacity of the community housing sector, as part of reforms to the public housing system under the Federal stimulus package. This is the first time that a federal housing minister has committed publicly to the growth of the community housing sector as a viable addition to public housing.

As well as outlining the opportunity for reform under the stimulus package, Tanya identified a vision where involvement in social housing means better quality of life outcomes for tenants, and social, affordable and community housing providers that are creative, efficient and responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. This includes a commitment to develop and support mixed housing communities, where social and private housing dwellings exist together. A

focus would be on creating sustainable renewal with positive social, environmental, economic and housing outcomes.

This requires sophisticated, commercially viable business approaches to enter new and emerging models of affordable and community housing. This may include affordable rental housing under the NRAS scheme, construction of new homes, and the potential for models of shared equity. These emerging business models require a large scale approach, and the rapid growth of the sector suggest that we are well placed to move forward into these new opportunities.

A significant part of maximizing the opportunities becoming available in community and social housing includes recognizing, and supporting the diversity of service providers in our smaller, regional, rural and metropolitan areas as the sector continues to grow, thrive and change.

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## Farewell to two shining stars

We say goodbye to two exemplary women who have been leaders in the development of the NSW community housing sector.

Sheila Astolfi has been in the sector since the beginning. Her unending dedication to the sector and the protection of the rights of people needing affordable housing has marked her journey throughout her career in housing.

Sheila was always a strong grass roots activist for community housing, she picketed outside parliament in order to keep community housing from being defunded. She was the CEO of Pacific Link for twelve years, managing an amalgamation and the growth of the organisation. Sheila went from managing less than fifty properties before the amalgamation, to over eight hundred by the time she retired.

Sheila was Electorate Woman of the Year for Gosford in 2005, which is awarded to women who demonstrate outstanding achievement and leadership in their community. She has now retired and can feel proud about her valued contribution to the development of the community housing sector. The Federation

thanks her for her hard work and ongoing legacy, and wishes her well for the future.

Coral Garratt came to North Shore Community Housing (NSCH) in 1989 when the organisation had one full time worker and one part time worker. The original office was at the back of the church in Crows Nest, managing around 52 properties.

During her time at NSCH, Coral developed significant relationships and worked tirelessly with local councils and state government pursuing housing opportunities for low and moderate income households. Thanks to her commitment and perseverance, when Coral left in March after almost 20 years, the organisation had more than 320 properties under management (with more than 360 units of accommodation).

Also the Federation would like to give a special thanks to Coral, who was Treasurer on the Federation Board from 1998 to 2002 and a Director from 2006 to 2008. Coral continues her passion for the area and for social justice as she is now managing the Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre. We wish her luck and thank her for her great efforts.

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## Engaging social housing providers with climate change

Tenants are a key resource in tackling climate change in social housing. They are often more experienced in managing limited resources and minimising their carbon footprint, in comparison with more affluent sectors of our community. Calling on this "latent cultural asset" was recognised in a recent discussion on how social housing providers could engage with climate change.

The Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) is taking the lead in investigating options for awareness raising about sustainability for social and community housing providers. A

"think tank" forum was recently held at the University of Technology Sydney, facilitated by Laurel Draffen from NSWFA, to explore the key issues. Representatives from the institute for sustainable futures, UTS, Centre for Integrated Sustainability at University of Sydney, Housing NSW, and AHI discussed a wide range of issues on the theme.

In the coming year AHI is aiming to run a number of lunchtime seminars on sustainable housing for both public and community housing providers to keep practitioners informed of innovations and good practice.

## Energy and water savings for NSW homes

The NSW Government's Climate Change Fund has been established to help business, households, community groups and government save energy and water.

It includes \$100 million for residential rebates to make homes more water and energy efficient. As well as rebates for climate friendly hot water systems, the program also provides rebates for rainwater tanks, insulation and washing machines.

### Hot Water Systems

The Hot Water System rebate aims to reduce carbon pollution and electricity demand by helping households to switch from electricity to gas or solar, for water heating. It helps to overcome the barrier to buying a more energy efficient hot water system, which is the higher upfront cost.

Switching to a more climate friendly system will not only reduce carbon pollution, it may also save money on household energy bills.

The Climate Change Fund offers:

- \$300 for a gas hot water system with an energy rating of 5 or more stars
- Up to \$1200 for a solar or heat pump hot water system.

The rebate for a solar or heat pump system is based on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions it will save, measured by its eligibility for Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs).

### Rain Water Tanks

Up to 40% of a household's mains water use can be replaced with rainwater. Rainwater Tank Rebates of up to \$1500 are now available from the NSW Government's Climate Change Fund.

To maximise water savings, the rebate is scaled to provide the highest amount for tanks connected to toilets and washing machines. The rebate is \$500 for a tank larger than 7000 litres, \$500 for connection to one or more toilets and \$500 for connection to a washing machine. Houses not connected to mains water are also eligible for a rebate for the tank only.



### Insulation

Space heating and cooling accounts for around 17% of household energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Installing ceiling insulation can reduce carbon pollution, save energy and save households money on their energy bills, without compromising comfort.

The Climate Change Fund offers:

Up to \$300 to a maximum of 50% of the total installed cost of ceiling insulation that meets a minimum thermal insulation level.

The ceiling insulation rebate is available for the purchase and installation of new insulation in the whole ceiling of a residential property. The insulation must meet a minimum R-value and be purchased in full.

Because the Federal Government's insulation rebate covers the entire cost of installing ceiling insulation, the \$300 NSW insulation rebate will end on 30 June 2009, except where properties are not covered by the Federal rebate, such as public housing.

### How to Apply

Application forms and details are available from the Department of Environment and Climate Change at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/rebates](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/rebates) or by calling 1300 361 967.

Note that insulation, rainwater tanks or hot water systems installed to comply with BASIX ([www.basix.nsw.gov.au](http://www.basix.nsw.gov.au)) are not eligible for a rebate.

## Where next for the Tenant Network?

The Community Housing Tenant Network has been developing since it was formed back in 2005. The group has had some real achievements as well as the odd up and down along the way. For example, the Network now has 170 members from 16 organisations, they've been holding quarterly workshops which regularly attract up to 50 people for two years and they have an effective representative committee.

Recently the group has been taking much more responsibility and the Federation's role is to back them up. The last newsletter and the most recent workshop were both organised almost entirely by the Network itself. These are great signs. The Network has also been expanding with tenants from Tamworth, Lismore, Newcastle and Mudgee attending recent events. They have also successfully pioneered a video link for the North Coast representative.

Tenants have been learning a lot from each other and from outside agencies and they have started to find their feet and their voice as a group.

So it seems like an appropriate time to open an ongoing discussion with the sector about how the associations see the group developing. First and foremost it is the tenants' group and it is they who set their priorities – but the group are interested in your views and want the Network to develop co-operatively with the sector.

The group wants to know how it could assist your tenants to find out more about

tenant participation and get involved with your organisation. It also wants to get representation from all housing associations across the state and wants to know what it can do to help them get involved. Please send your ideas to [susanlucock@hotmail.com.au](mailto:susanlucock@hotmail.com.au) and [adamwest@communityhousing.org.au](mailto:adamwest@communityhousing.org.au).

The group also wants to raise the issue of their reasonable expenses for attending Network meetings. Some associations are covering travel costs and making a contribution towards phone and internet bills when acting as the associations' tenant representative. Others are not and this means that some volunteers are making a significant financial contribution to participate. There is also the need for a small pool of funding to help pay for some training and possibly for things like web cameras and internet access. What's the best way to arrange this?

And finally a reminder that the tenant network election season is upon us again. The tenants have voted on a change to the election procedures this year; they have asked that all associations either arrange a special election meeting or conduct a postal vote to give their tenants the chance to elect the representative they want. If possible the group would like to be able to ratify the representatives at their 22<sup>nd</sup> June Annual General meeting. More information will be circulated to the sector when the network's new constitution has been adopted.

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## Housing providers participate in registration pilot

Six Housing Associations are breathing a small sigh of relief after participating in the pilot of the new Registration system. They are now awaiting the outcome of their efforts and providing feedback to the Registrar's Office about their experience.

The Community Housing Regulation 2009 was proclaimed as part of the Housing Act 2001 on May 1<sup>st</sup>. All providers who are currently Registered under the previous

registration system are now automatically covered and bound by the new Regulatory Code.

The Housing Associations who participated in the pilot were Western Plains Housing Scheme, Affordable Community Housing, Women's Housing Company, North Shore Community Housing, Sapphire Coast Tenancy and the Housing Trust. Their involvement in the Registration pilot was covered by a confidentiality agreement.

## Environmentally sustainable

Housing sustainability and climate change are important issues for social housing. Low income households will be impacted by rising energy costs and many can not afford the upfront costs of energy and water efficiency measures which would ultimately save them money.

On 11 December 2008 the Minister for Housing, David Borger launched Environmental Sustainability in Housing NSW 2008/09 – 2013/14, which sets out an agreed direction to reduce Housing NSW's carbon emissions and resource consumption. Importantly, it also identifies ways to influence and support social housing residents, Aboriginal and community housing providers, and maintenance and building contractors to adopt environmentally sustainable practices.

Housing NSW's strategic priorities for environmental sustainability include:

Support sustainable communities - Programs that assist low-income and socially disadvantaged communities reduce their energy and water use are important to ensure they are not burdened by climate change impacts such as increases in energy, water and living costs. Building partnerships with government agencies, community interest groups and research organisations promotes information and resource sharing, collaborative solutions and delivery of environmental sustainability outcomes. Working with social housing residents, the Aboriginal Housing Office, community housing providers, and maintenance and construction contractors will be result in

reducing their environmental impact. Staff engagement is vital to assist Housing NSW reduce our own environmental impact.

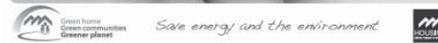
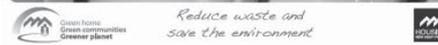
Be innovative in building design and maintenance - There is great potential to incorporate environmental sustainability into the way we design, build and adapt dwellings. Sustainable buildings are water and energy efficient, minimise waste and are designed for safety and security. Houses properly suited to climatic conditions can conserve water and energy, be more comfortable and healthy to live in, and lower operating costs for occupants.

Conserve our natural resources - Reducing water and energy use, generating less waste, protecting biodiversity and reducing pollution all help conserve our natural resources. Housing NSW can conserve natural resources by reducing waste generation in construction, promoting greater re-use and recycling of resources, planting native landscapes, and using water and energy more efficiently.

Adapt to climate change - Preparing for climate change impacts such as higher temperatures, lower rainfall, more extreme weather events and constrained water supply need to be considered by Housing NSW to ensure the safety of its dwellings and the wellbeing of occupants.

Initiatives currently being undertaken by Housing NSW to improve the environmentally sustainability of new and existing dwellings include:

- Developing a hot water heater replacement policy that considers the phase out of electric



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## social housing

storage hot water heaters larger than 80L proposed by the Federal Government and includes a program to replace 12,000 electric storage hot water heaters with solar hot waters over the next three years.

- Developing a policy, and secure funding, for the installation of ceiling insulation in dwellings managed by Housing NSW, Aboriginal and community housing providers to increase comfort levels and health benefits for residents living in extreme cold and hot climates.
- Installing water saving devices in all Housing NSW dwellings
- Updating environmental sustainability requirements in Housing NSW's Design Requirements Version 6.2.1.
- Researching the installation and maintenance of rainwater tanks for multi-unit dwellings.
- Installing solar photovoltaic systems to 100 dwellings as part of the Blacktown Solar Cities Project.

Other environmentally sustainable initiatives to assist social housing residents, maintenance contractors and Housing NSW staff to adopt environmentally sustainable practices include:

- Piloting a series of environmental workshops on saving energy at home and sustainable living for social housing residents in partnership with the City of Sydney and Marrickville councils, the Department of Environment and Climate Change and the Watershed (a Sustainability Resource Centre in Newtown).
- Piloting an illegal dumping prevention program with the City of Sydney Council through the installation of temporary storage/ collection areas for unwanted household items and education programs.
- Conducting Go Green Office seminars for staff, establishing Green Teams in offices, undertaking energy audits and environmental ratings for office buildings and developing staff environmental posters on reducing energy and paper use.

Improving the energy efficiency and thermal comfort of new and existing dwellings, and supporting social housing residents to adopt sustainable lifestyles, are new challenges for social housing providers. These programs will have upfront capital costs but their ongoing benefits to low income and disadvantaged households will be substantial in an era of rising energy costs.

Community housing providers interested in improving their environmental sustainability should consider:

- Establishing a vision and long-term goals for sustainability that align with existing corporate strategies.
- Understanding their environmental footprint and look for ways to reduce energy, water and waste and use less raw materials.
- Explore options and funding opportunities to improve the energy and water efficiency of dwellings through ongoing maintenance programs.
- Develop a plan to deliver sustainability goals and outcomes.
- Engage with staff, residents and other stakeholders to implement sustainability plans.

Partnerships with Aboriginal and community housing providers are important to help support the uptake of environmentally sustainable initiatives. Housing NSW is committed to promoting information exchange, training and support for Aboriginal and community housing providers to adopt and implement environmentally sustainable practices and explore funding opportunities to retrofit social housing dwellings with environmentally sustainable products and devices.

For further information on environmental sustainability programs for social housing, please contact Susanna Savolainen, Manager Environmental Sustainability, Housing NSW on (02) 8753 9477 or [susanna.savolainen@housing.nsw.gov.au](mailto:susanna.savolainen@housing.nsw.gov.au).

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## Relaunched Directors' Network bulletins

The Federation has relaunched the directors' ebulletins and will be aiming to get a series of director and sector specific news items and resources to directors over the coming months. The first will feature a web cast from the Registrar of Community Housing that lets directors know about the governance implications of the new registration system.

We would encourage all community housing directors to join the directors' network to ensure they receive information directly from us. Go to [http://www.communityhousing.org.au/A7a\\_Directors\\_Network.html](http://www.communityhousing.org.au/A7a_Directors_Network.html) to download a joining form.

### **Governance implications of changes to regulation**

The Regulatory Code will replace the current Performance Based Registration System (PBRs) once the Housing Regulation 2009 is passed by the NSW government. Directors will need to be aware of the implications for their organisation and for their own governance practice.

### **The Regulatory Code**

The Registrar of Community Housing regulates the community housing sector based on five key principles: transparency; proportionality; accountability; consistency; and co-regulation.

### **Registration**

Registration will be completed by self assessment and validated through information or evidence. On-site inspections by the Registrar's staff may also be conducted to gather further information.

A provider's application will be assessed according to Evidence Guidelines which are aligned with the requirements in the Regulatory Code.

The level of requirements for each performance area is proportionate to the scope and scale of operation associated with the registration class of a provider. Importantly, not all classes of provider are required to meet every requirement.

Four registration classes have been established to reflect the scale and type of activities that providers are engaged in.

They are:

1. Growth provider
2. Housing provider
3. Housing manager
4. Small housing manager

### **Sound Governance**

The draft Housing Regulation 2009 contains the following requirements for sound governance arrangements:

**12 Object:** The object of this Part is to ensure that community housing providers have sound governance that supports confidence in the community housing industry.

**13 Expertise of governing body:** A registered community housing provider must have a governing body that, in the opinion of the Registrar, is effective and has a range of expertise that is sufficient for the scale and scope of the community housing provided.

**14 Decision-making:** class 1, 2 or 3: A class 1, 2 or 3 registered community housing provider must ensure that its operations are subject to such arrangements, controls and decision-making processes as are satisfactory in the opinion of the Registrar.

**15 Compliance with legal and other requirements:** A registered community housing provider must comply with such legal and regulatory requirements, professional standards and guidelines as are, in the opinion of the Registrar, relevant to its operations.

**16 Planning:** class 1, 2 or 3: A class 1, 2 or 3 registered community housing provider must undertake planning that, in the opinion of the Registrar, adequately identifies the priorities and resources necessary to sustain the long-term delivery of community housing.

### **Further information**

If you have questions about the regulatory framework, please contact:

Tel: 1800 330 940  
Fax: (02) 8753 8294  
Email: [registrar@housing.nsw.gov.au](mailto:registrar@housing.nsw.gov.au)  
Web: [www.rch.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rch.nsw.gov.au)

# Board Report

## April/June Board report

At its last meeting the board received the resignation of Greg Budworth due to work pressures and thanked him for his contribution.

The last two board meetings have dealt with a large number of policy issues, areas of work with the sector and with finalising the Federation strategic plan.

It discussed areas in which we have represented the sector: Meeting with the Minister, where we raised the new CHLP approach and loss of specific funding for support: our submission and evidence to the Legislative Inquiry into low cost housing; our submission to the Henry Tax review; and the CH Advisory Committee; the State homelessness action plan.

The board also discussed three areas in which we have been working with government. We have been asked to comment on a new eligibility policy; we and sector reps have provided input to a new resource allocation policy; and the National Standards Review. The final draft of revised standards is now available and we have been funded to consult with sector in July.

The Board specifically discussed four emerging policy issues to help establish a position: The impact of the new CHLP funding model; the latest development with the Common Access Strategy; implications for the sector of substantial redevelopment, including the decanting of tenants, with community housing providers; and the involvement of the sector in redevelopment briefs, to guard against legacy issues (ie inappropriate densities)

The Board noted that relationships are being strengthened with a number of related sectors,

particularly the Aged Care sector, and after a number of presentations and discussions, it was agreed that we will explore an MOU with the Aged and Community Services Associations. It was also noted that we have recently had more contact with the Property Council.

Key activities reported to the board included: the sector survey on salaries, the results of which will go onto the members-only part of the website; the Asset Managers Network meeting; a video presentation with the Registrar circulated to sector directors.

Following from the procurement capacity building pilots, the Federation has been funded to develop resources and support in procurement for the wider sector.

Project to support the roll out of the Registration system, jointly with Homelessness NSW

One of the main discussion was on role to be played by the Federation in representing the sector during the transition year from compulsory insurance under the Community Housing Insurance Scheme.

The board signed off on our draft strategic plan. The next step is to take the redraft back to members, the Community Housing Division, and others for feedback. Directors also welcomed the three new policy staff recently appointed. The board also discussed the priority risks to the Federation for the coming year. It was decided that strategies to replace all major revenue producing projects should be developed as part of risk management.

*Next meeting is 14<sup>th</sup> August*

### NSWFHA Board of Directors

President	Nick Sabel	(02) 4731-5851	nicks@wentworth.org.au
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Secretary	Mohammed Ibrahim	(02) 9790-3093	mohamed@achl.org.au
Director	Nazha Saad	(02) 9585-1499	nazha.saad@sgch.com.au
Director	Nicola Lemon	(02) 9724-0554	nicola.lemon@humecha.com.au
Director	John Nicolades	(02) 9699-6055	j.nicolades@swish.org.au
Director	Toni Comber	(02) 6772-5133	tonic@homesnorth.org.au

## Inaugural Asset Managers' Network meeting held



The first asset managers' network workshop addressed the most important asset related issues for the sector.

In a packed two day agenda, guest speakers provided their insight on contracting arrangements, environmental sustainability and property insurance. Fire safety and the new Housing NSW asset standards and maintenance contract were also addressed.

The Registrar of Community Housing made participants aware of the asset management and maintenance requirements of the Regulatory Code and the Community Housing Division briefed the sector on the latest on the stimulus package. Harvey Norman Commercial let the sector know about their products which appear to be competitively priced. The event was also a great opportunity for asset managers to network and to share their approaches to the challenges of their roles.

It is difficult to choose the main messages out of such a diverse and informative event, but three areas stood out:

Firstly, the sector needs clarification about what Federal environmental rebates will be available to community housing where state governments own the property. A sector campaign may be needed to persuade the Federal Government to allow housing associations to access the full range of rebates.

Secondly, some organisations may need to extend their asset management practices to enable them to plan for the whole life cycle

of properties under the new Regulatory Code. This includes using demographic projections to meet future housing needs in their communities by providing appropriate property types.

And thirdly the sector will need to conduct some detailed planning on an option to meet its future insurance needs after the one year transition period.

Participants also helped the Federation plan its future support for asset managers by providing data on their future training needs. The Federation is preparing a quick response to meet the priorities identified.

Our thanks go to Tony Peake from Pacific Link for all his hard work in developing the agenda and securing the many excellent speakers at the event.

### Correction to last issue

Following our article on Marsh in the February edition of housing Matters, We would like to make the following correction: Marsh is not an Insurer, Marsh an insurance broker and risk adviser, independent of any Insurance Companies.

On CHIS Marsh acts solely as the agent for the Insured Parties under the policies. As part of the process of arranging the covers Marsh has obtained quotations from various insurers, in the past these have been submitted to OCH for decision on cover placement.

In the future, working with the groups, a marketing strategy will be agreed each year and Marsh will report on the outcomes.

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## New staff at the Federation

The Federation warmly welcomes the following people.

Kirrilee Phillips replaces Stacey as Admin Assistant while she is on maternity leave. Kirrilee previously worked with a fashion footwear label as office administrator. She is currently studying the Diploma of Colour Design and has taken on this position so she can have a more grounding view on life, become more socially aware.

Many of you will know Rachel Louttit, who has worked in the community housing sector for the last four years, including managing Resamen and working part time in the Good Practice Unit of the Federation. Rachel now joins us full time, dedicating the remainder of her position to the Policy Unit. Rachel has an interest in community development and partnerships in social housing. Rachel has a Masters of Counselling and is working on a research Masters Degree.

Angela Pitts is an urban planner, with a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from UCLA and more recently has completed her PhD. She has worked extensively with the Aboriginal Housing Company on the community social plan and the proposed redevelopment plans for The Block. She has also worked on and coordinated various inner city Sydney Indigenous Homelessness projects. Angela's experience includes over 15 years of research and consultancy work in urban, regional and community development in the US, UK, Africa and Australia. She is now employed full time in the Policy Unit.

Lam Huynh has a Master of Social Policy and has primarily focused his employment in the youth area. He has worked with homeless young people, has been an adolescent and family counsellor and has been working on a project with the youth peak, YAPA. Lam also joins the Policy Unit full time.

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## Praise for Mimi - Professional Profile

To recognise long term commitment and professional achievement in community housing, we profile the career of Mimi O'Reilly, senior housing manager at Central Tablelands Housing Association (CTHA).

Mimi's career spans 25 years from her initial role as housing officer for the Bathurst Community Tenancy Scheme, managing 30 properties, to her current role where she leads 7 employees who provide quality tenancy management services for over 585 tenancies.

According to Karen Andrew, Executive Officer of CTHA "She is a well respected and highly valued member of our team."

Among her achievements are the Centenary Medal for service to the community through community housing administration in 2003 and inaugural President of the NSW Federation of Housing. She has achieved the Graduate Diploma of Social Science (Housing Management and Policy) from



Mimi O'Reilly

Swinburne University of Technology and is currently undertaking the Leadership Management Australia, Performance Edge Training Course designed to change and improve the way in which people think, work, act, interact and live.

Mimi's strong sense of community and commitment to Social Justice is reflected in her active community involvement including past Chairperson of the Women's Housing Program Management Committee, past Chairperson of the Bathurst Domestic Violence Committee, Treasurer of the Bathurst Interagency and Chairperson of the Josephite Foundation – No Interest Loans Scheme.

Thank you Mimi, for your ongoing commitment to the community housing sector.

## Goodbye to Ellen and Andrew

The Federation sadly farewells Ellen Adele and Andrew Meehan from the Policy Unit.

Ellen Adele has been with the Federation for three years and has greatly contributed towards the rapidly changing face of the sector. Ellen initiated the Director's Register, facilitated the Director's Network, established and convened the Federation's Aboriginal Advisory Group and organised a number of HAMS and the sector's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday party. In terms of consultative participation, Ellen was involved in the OCH Aboriginal Advisory Group, the Common Access System and the NGO Reference Group. Ellen wrote a number of research papers in a range of areas including common access, rent, workforce and internal tenant transfer for HNSW. Ellen has now joined ACOSS's Policy Unit.

Andrew's six years with the Federation has been marked by a strong commitment towards sector development and forging strategic alliances.

Andrew prepared the Federation's submission to the Upper Housing Inquiry into the National Rental Affordability Scheme, set up the Director's Network, brokered the Affordable Housing Development Course with UWS and co-convened the Affordable Housing Network. He also participated in the Living Community Consultative Committee, the Community Housing External Appeals steering committee, the NCH Forum Policy Advisory Committee and continues to chair on the Shelter Board. Andrew has produced several publications in new areas of business including private sector partnerships, finance, community development and group structures. Andrew has taken up an advocacy position with Oxfam in the Indigenous Programs area.

We wish them both well and thank them for their invaluable contributions to the Federation and the sector.

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## Aboriginal Traineeships - Good News!

A number of Housing Associations have expressed an interest in employing Aboriginal trainees as housing managers in the coming year. This is a key strategy for improving Aboriginal access to community housing.

Wentworth Community Housing is leading the way and are currently in the process of recruiting an Aboriginal Trainee. Staff at Wentworth Community Housing also recently attended a day of the Understanding Aboriginal Culture training, provided by Rita McKenzie from the Federation. St George Community Housing is also planning to hire an Aboriginal trainee in the near future.

An Aboriginal Traineeship - Information Kit (Social Housing Employers Information

Booklet & Information for New Trainees) was launched last year by the Federation. The kit provides information you need to know as an employer of a registered trainee in social housing, information on advertising and what resources are available to support the traineeship – such as financial incentives and mentoring. There's also a guide for the trainees, along with additional, contacts and key websites to access.

For further information contact Rita McKenzie at the Federation (02) 9281 -7144 (ext.204) or email: [rita@communityhousing.org.au](mailto:rita@communityhousing.org.au)



NSW Federation of Housing Associations Inc



**Non-Metropolitan**

Telephone  
**1800 652 877**

**Sydney Metropolitan**

Telephone  
**(02) 9211 8420**

## HOUSING MANAGEMENT HOTLINE

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



## 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.

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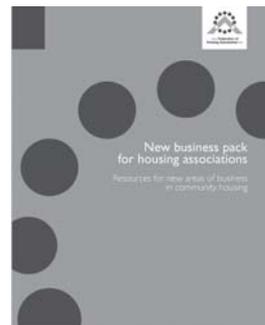
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**Ph:** (02) 9281 7144 **Fax** (02) 9281 7603  
Email: [nswfha@communityhousing.org.au](mailto:nswfha@communityhousing.org.au)  
Website: [www.communityhousing.com.au](http://www.communityhousing.com.au)

## New Business Pack for Housing Associations

Author: Andrew Meehan Publisher: NSWFHA

A new package of resources is now available to assist housing associations to better understand and prepare for emerging areas of business in community housing such as affordable housing provision and community building activities. These publications will ensure informed decision making should organisations wish to pursue these options.

Resources in the package focus on four areas of operations that support new opportunities. They are intended to build understanding of what managers and directors of associations need to consider in relation to partnerships, large-scale partnerships, group structures, community building activities and finance.



### *New Business Pack & Tenant Participation Good Practice Guide*

**To purchase a copy:**

You can download a copy of our publications order form from our website:  
[www.communityhousing.org.au](http://www.communityhousing.org.au)  
and then fax the form to (02) 9281 7603

## Tenant Participation Good Practice Guide

Author: Adam West Publisher: NSWFHA

The Tenant Participation GPG provides practical guidance to involve tenants to build stronger communities and deliver better services. The guide has been written by Adam West who has extensive first hand experience in working with tenants in the UK and NSW.

This good practice guide examines what genuine tenant participation is and the barriers that prevent tenants getting involved in their organisations and communities. It describes inspirational examples of tenant participation from NSW and internationally and provides readers with a tenant participation 'toolbox' full of suggestions for new ways of involving people. It also includes sections on tenant participation in a growing community housing sector, on rural and regional tenant participation and information on the most frequently used methods of tenant participation including Tenant Advisory Groups and tenant planning days.



# Calendar of Events

## Cert. IV in Social Housing Training CH40802

Engaging your Community:  
Apply a community development framework  
CHCCD12D - Compulsory  
Wed 26 Aug 2009

Responsive Maintenance:  
Respond to property maintenance or purchase enquiries  
CHCCH17B - Elective  
Thurs 27 Aug 2009

## Cert. IV in Social Housing Training CHC40908

Provide services to clients with complex needs  
CHCCS504A - New unit from the updated Certificate IV in Social Housing CHC40908 (Compulsory)/ Diploma in Social Housing CHC50808 (Elective)  
Wed 16 Sept 2009

Work effectively with people experiencing or at risk of homelessness  
CHCCH427A - Compulsory  
Thurs 17 Sept 2009

2009 Training Calendar is now online. Visit our Website:  
<http://www.communityhousing.org.au/>

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@communityhousing.org.au](mailto:estelle@communityhousing.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](http://www.cjc.nsw.gov.au)

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