



NSW Federation of
Housing Associations inc

Federation Bulletin



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Remembering Frank Walker, 1942-2012

Staff and the Board of the Federation of Housing Associations is deeply saddened by the death of Frank Walker, former NSW Attorney-General, federal minister and a strong supporter of the community housing sector in NSW.

In his long political career, Frank was an Arts, Housing, Youth and Community, and Aboriginal Affairs minister and Attorney-General in the Wran Government in NSW. On a federal level, he was named a special minister of state by the then Prime Minister Keating.

It was as NSW Minister for Youth & Community Services and Minister for Housing 30 years ago that he made his great contribution to the creation of community housing. His long term vision and reform of public housing enabled the emergence of first Community Tenancy Schemes in the state.

It was the extraordinary efforts and vision of then Housing Minister Walker to respond in this way to the activism of the previous years about the households excluded from public housing. When presented with an opportunity to create a new community housing system by Sandy Halley, he saw the need for alternative, more community led form of affordable housing, to be also available to people who would not be able to access the traditional Housing Commission homes.

His deep commitment to the reform of public housing in NSW was based on his own early childhood spent in a Coogee Housing Commission home, before his family relocated to New Guinea in 1948.

Based in the Community Development Bureau of the Department of Youth and Community Services (later to become DOCS), the new Community Tenancy Schemes program was part of a suite of community based initiatives developed in the Bureau under Frank's leadership, such as community transport, community development and neighbourhood centres.

Frank Walker continued with progressive reforms in his later portfolios during his federal political career, when he helped implement the Mabo legislation.

He retired from active involvement in politics six years ago, and has dedicated his time supporting the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia and Schizophrenia Fellowship NSW, of which he was a president.

Frank Walker died at age 69 in Sydney. A state funeral was held today at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He will have a lasting place in the history and memory of the community housing sector in NSW.

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