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**GOVERNANCE,
CORPORATE,
RESPONSIBILITY AND
ADMINISTRATION**

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GOVERNANCE

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to describe Metro Community Housing's Management Model. This is intended to delineate the roles and responsibilities of 1) The board of Directors, 2) the Manager and staff, and 3) the Co-operative's membership.

Board and Members

The Co-operative is managed and controlled by its Board of Directors. The rules of the co-operative specify that there must be a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 Directors.

Directors are nominated by members and elected at the Annual General Meeting (held no later than 30 November each year as required by the Registry of Cooperatives).

Metro Community Housing has determined that there will normally be 8 directors. A change to our constitution approved at the Annual General Meeting for 2009 states that Directors will serve a term of 2 years with half of the directors (4) standing down at each Annual General Meeting as from 2010. The powers and responsibilities of the Board are set out in the Rules of Incorporation. (See rules 38 - 59).

Nomination to the Board

Prior to the Annual General Meeting details will be placed on our website and on Tenant Portal. Information about the nomination process will be sent to all current co-operative members. Anyone nominating to be a Director must be a member of the organisation.

Membership to the Co-operative

All Metro tenants are automatically entitled to apply for membership of the Cooperative upon signing their lease. Non-tenants wishing to become a member of the Co-operative must apply in writing to the Board of Directors using the standard Membership Application Form and provide information outlining how their membership "will advance the interests of the co-operative".

Members can apply as an individual or as a representative for an organisation, and they must reside in NSW. Members must be over eighteen years of age to hold office or vote. Each member is entitled to one vote only.

Members must also meet the "active membership" provisions to retain membership. This requires members to attend the Annual General Meeting or one board meeting per annum. If members do not meet this criteria they will be removed from the membership list after two years.

Application Process

Applications for membership must be made on the prescribed form, and lodged at Metro Community Housing.

The application is put to the Board for approval at the first Board of Director's meeting after the application is received. If approved, the applicant's name and details are entered on the 'Register of Members'. If refused, the applicant is sent a letter informing them that their application has been refused.

The Board shall not refuse any application on the grounds of race, sex, class, financial status, religion, political belief or sexual preference.

If the Board does refuse an application for membership it does not need to give a reason, but must return the membership form. The Board must also document its decision and notify the applicant in writing.

Board Composition

The full Board shall elect Executive members to hold the positions of:

- Chairperson
- Deputy Chairperson
- Secretary (and Public Officer)
- Treasurer

The remaining position holders are titled “ordinary members”. Persons are nominated for Executive positions and voted for/endorsed by the full Board at the first Board of Directors meeting following the Annual General Meeting.

Representation

The Board, and in particular the Chairperson, will undertake regular reviews of the membership of the association to ensure that it is representative of the community served and the membership of the association.

Representation on the Board must also take into account the need to have members with relevant skills and expertise in areas such as legal, financial, asset and business management, tenancy and community services, and community development.

Board Procedures

The Board of Directors will establish written procedures for the conduct of its business. This information will be compiled in a Director’s Kit issued to all Board members. These procedures are also publicly available.

Monitoring

The association will monitor its procedures and performance on a regular basis and will make such information publicly available through production of an Annual Report which is made available to all members, and distributed at the Annual General Meeting.

Delegations

The Board of Directors will establish reporting procedures and lines of delegated authority within the association to clearly outline the respective roles of the Manager and the Board of management. The association will maintain a written Schedule of Delegations.

External Reporting

All registered community housing providers are responsible to the independent Registrar of Community Housing. Board members and staff must be aware of their obligations and must be familiar with the processes to report to the Registrar any incidents or situations that may damage the reputation of Metro Community Housing or the broader community housing sector. Complaints and Notifications procedures can be found at www.rch.nsw.gov.au:

1. Click on “Enquiries, Notifications and Complaints” banner
2. Select “Enquiries, Notifications and Complaints” form

3. Follow the instructions for submission

The Registrar for Community Housing can also be contacted on: 1800 330 940, or at: registrar@housing.nsw.gov.au

Reporting to the Registrar

The Regulatory Code is designed to ensure that 'a registered community housing provider must notify the Registrar, in a timely manner, of any incident relating to its operations that damages, or may damage, the reputation of the community housing sector' (taken from Reputation of Community Housing Sector, www.rch.nsw.gov.au).

The Legislation states that the provider must notify the primary Registrar for the provider of the occurrence of any of the following within the time specified:

- A decision to appoint a voluntary administrator to the provider or a decision to wind-up the provider – as soon as practicable after the decision*
- The appointment of a receiver to the provider – as soon as practicable after the provider learns of the appointment*
- A decision to apply for the cancellation of the provider's registration – as soon as practicable after the decision and at least 28 days before the application is made*
- A decision to conduct a vote at a meeting on a matter that could affect the provider's eligibility to be registered or its category of registration – as soon as practicable after the decision and at least 28 days before the meeting is held*
- A change in the affairs of the provider that may have an adverse impact on its compliance with the community housing legislation – before or no later than 72 hours after the change. Any other occurrence notified in writing to the provider by the primary Registrar – within the time specified in that notice*

The Responsibilities of Directors

The primary duty of a Director is to act in the best interests of the whole organisation and to ensure the organisation is properly managed:

- 1) Financially – to ensure that the organisation remains solvent and manages its finances responsibly.
- 2) Legally – to ensure that the organisation operates within the law and honours all contracts
- 3) Constitutionally – to ensure that the organisation follows the rules and objectives of its constitution

At each meeting the Board will be presented with the following reports:

- Financial reports
- A Profit and Loss statement for the preceding period giving a clear account of income and expenditure
- Cheque Register showing cheques written by the Co-operative for the preceding period
- Rent arrears reports showing tenants in arrears/amounts and actions taken
- Balance sheet – showing assets and liabilities. This gives a good indication of how the organisation is travelling financially
- List of debtors – usually post tenancy debts/water usage costs – the Board may be called on to write off these debts at a later stage
- Cyclical maintenance expenditure – approval for predicted future costs

- Correspondence
- Major/important correspondence that should be notified to/considered by the Board
- Staffing
- An update of staff issues – leave requests, significant issues affecting staff/organisational activities.

Role and Purpose of Subcommittees

Subcommittees are established to deal with tasks that are outside the scope of matters dealt with at regular Board meetings. Board members will nominate themselves to a sub-committee based on their areas of expertise and/or interest. The full Board of Directors formally appoints the subcommittee and outlines its responsibilities and powers. Subcommittees will have clear terms of reference setting out their delegated authority.

In most instances sub-committees will have an investigatory/advisory role and will refer recommendations back to the full Board for decisions to be endorsed.

Standing subcommittees will be formed to focus on the following areas:

- Finance, Risk and Audit – to oversee and monitor the financial operations of the cooperative. To liaise with the Accountant in the development and regular review of the annual budget.
- To ensure that Risk Management plans are appropriate to the scale and operations of the organisation and appropriate preventive and remediation strategies are in place to manage risks that may affect the operations or financial viability of the organisation. This Sub-committee will include the Treasurer, Chairperson and Manager.
- Policy – board members will be delegated to develop and review policy areas in response to changing circumstances or needs of the organisation, our tenants, the operating environment or at the request of the BOD. The sub-committee will generally review policies every two years. The relevant board member will ensure processes are in place to consult with tenants/stakeholders in relation to significant changes. Policy changes or new policies will be brought to the full BOD for endorsement.
- A sub-committee consisting of at least 3 board members will be formed as required to deal with disputes referred to the Board – these will generally relate to complaints about the actions of, or appeals against the decisions of the Manager.

Duty Statements for Directors

As a Responsible Director you must:

- Keep up to date on the activities of the Co-operative.
- Participate fully and ensure responsibilities are shared equally.
- Understand how any proposed action will affect the Co-operative – particularly if it involves large expenditure by the Co-operative.
- Do not agree to any decision that you do not fully understand – get outside professional/independent advice if you need more information.
- Ask questions – all office bearers and sub-committee members should be asked to explain their areas of responsibility.
- Communicate openly and honestly with other Board members, Co-operative members and the Housing sector
- Raise any concerns about the actions of staff or other Board members with the

Chairperson (or with the Deputy Chairperson if your concerns relate to the Chairperson), ie do not raise these matters at a Board meeting without first advising the Chairperson and/or request that it be placed as an agenda item for the first available meeting.

- Do not interfere in daily operational matters

Chairperson

The Chairperson has overall responsibility for managing the Board of Directors and co-ordinates the work of the Secretary, the Deputy Chairperson, the Treasurer and ordinary directors. The Chairperson acts as spokesperson for the co-operative and liaises regularly with the Manager regarding the operations of the organisation.

Skills: Knowledge of community housing sector; able to lead and mentor other board members and staff; able to conduct meetings in an impartial, firm and structured manner; good communication and negotiation skills and able to promote positive image of the co-operative

Core Tasks:

- Chair Board and general meetings to facilitate discussion and participation, ensure relevance and promote good decision making
- Ensure that meetings proceed in a timely manner, adhere to the agenda and maintain an appropriate balance between business and social activities.
- Co-ordinate the work of the Board and sub-committees, staying in touch with the operations and broad activities of the co-op.
- Ensure that Board members fully understand the purpose of their role, and have sufficient information and the necessary skills to perform their duties.
- Be aware of organisational history, rules of incorporation and decision making processes and make sure the Board acts within these principles.
- Represent the organisation and act on behalf of the Board in emergency situations

Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for the communication within the Board and with the membership.

Skills: Knowledge of the community housing sector and the operations of the organisation; good organisational and communication skills; knowledge of meeting procedures.

Core Tasks:

- Assists with the work of the Board in conjunction with the Chairperson
- Ensures that all necessary records are kept eg. Register of members, copy of constitution, signed copy of attendance at Board meetings and general meetings
Acts as the principal executive officer in the absence of the Chair

Deputy Chairperson

The Deputy Chairperson supports the Chairperson and other Board members in their responsibilities.

Skills: Good communication skills, knowledge of the community housing sector and the operations of the organisation

Core Tasks:

- Liaise with the Chairperson and Board members to keep up to date with the operation of the organisation and assist with identified tasks
- Chair meetings, and represent the co-operative when the Chairperson is away or unable to fulfil their responsibilities
- Welcome and encourage new Board members and others at meetings, guiding them through the process

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for overseeing financial management of, and keeping members informed about the financial situation of the co-operative.

Skills: Well developed financial management skills; ability to understand, interpret and explain budgets, balance sheets and profit and loss statements; good organisational and communication skills.

Core Tasks:

- Ensure that an annual budget is prepared and check spending and income against the budget on a regular basis
- Make sure that there are proper financial procedures and checks in place • Make sure that the book-keeping and financial records are kept up to date.
- Make sure that the funding body receives all required financial documentation, ie quarterly reports and annual financial returns/audit.

The Treasurer should ensure that the following reports are made available to the Board of Directors at each monthly meeting:

- Monthly Financial Statement
- List of all cheques written in the previous month
- Arrears list
- List of debtors

Each month the Treasurer should:

- Review the financial statements prepared by the accountant and discuss any queries
- Check the monthly Cheque List
- Review the budget in the light of the latest financial statement before each monthly Board of directors meeting and make suggestions to the Board regarding appropriate financial management of the funds.

Ordinary Directors

Ordinary members are required:

- To act in the interests of the organisation at all times
- To ensure the Co-operative operates in an efficient and responsible manner
- To ensure the Co-operative operates in accordance with its rules and legislative/regulatory requirements.

Skills: Knowledge and understanding of the organisations rules, policies and procedures; understanding of local community issues; possession of specialist skills identified as necessary to the effective governance of the organisation (ie legal, financial, property, community development, mental health).

Core Tasks:

- To attend board meetings and listen to the information presented and make decisions in the best interest of Metro Community Housing
- To read all reports, minutes, and notices distributed to members in order to keep informed and contribute ideas and views to the Board.
- To contribute time to planning processes and the work of sub-committees as reasonably required.
- To carry out any tasks assigned to them in a timely manner.
- To support all decisions made by the Board even if they personally disagree with the decision made by a majority of board members.
- To represent the organisation in a positive way in all dealings with external agencies/individuals
- To undertake any required training or professional development to enhance their skills and improve their ability to make a positive contribution to the organisation
- To participate in organisational planning and evaluation activities
- As a signatory to bank accounts, to check that information on the cheques matches that on the cheque requisition forms and that an invoice in an appropriate format is attached.
- To ensure all other legal obligations are met

Management Model

The distinction between governance and management can rarely be constant or immutable and strict boundaries can create the risk of establishing unachievable distinctions which do not acknowledge the organisation's stage of development, the number and skills of staff, and the qualifications and skills of Directors.

The board's level of involvement in the day to day affairs of the co-operative will vary, but generally the Board's roles and responsibilities are confined to setting and monitoring compliance with strategy and policy, supervising management practices and providing support to the Manager.

It is expected that the Manager and staff will be responsible for carrying out their delegated responsibilities (as set out in their respective duty statements) and managing the day to day operations of the co-operative. Legislative requirements and the Co-operative's Rules require the Board to defer certain decisions to members at general or special meetings.

Responsibilities of the Manager

As an employee of the co-operative, the Manager is precluded by the Rules of the Co-operative from serving on the Board of Directors. The Manager's functions will generally (but not exclusively) cover the following areas:

- Serving the co-operative (directly or through delegation to other staff) by ensuring that the strategies determined by the Board of Directors are implemented

- Being familiar with the Organisation's objectives and complying with all relevant policies designed to further these objectives
- Selecting, training, supervising and supporting other staff
- Managing the organisation's assets effectively by ensuring the maintenance of an effective business structure and compliance with operational and budget requirements
- Developing and/or maintaining adequate accounting and record keeping systems (this will be done in conjunction with the Accountant)
- Ensuring sound purchasing and contracting practices
- Researching and reporting to the Board on areas of interest to the organisation
- Identifying the need for and recommending to the Board the acquisition of external sources of assistance to resolve problems affecting the organisation.
- Meeting all reporting obligations to funding and regulatory bodies

Responsibilities of the Members

Legislative requirements and the Rules of the Co-operative require the Board to defer certain decisions to members of the Co-op at General or Special Meetings. These decisions include:

- Changes to the rules of the co-operative
- Acquiring or disposing of certain of the Co-operative's assets
- The election (or appointment) of members of the Board of Directors
- Changing the Co-operatives structure or winding up of the Co-op

Legislative and Regulatory Context

NSW Government - Housing Act 2001 and Housing Regulations 2009

NSW Government - Co-operatives Act 1992 and Co-operatives Regulation 2004

National Law (Community Housing Providers – Adoption of National Law Act 2013

Part 3, Section 15 (2) National Regulatory System for Community Housing Providers

Related Policies, Procedures and Documentation:

Metro Community Housing Co-op Ltd – Rules of Association

NSW Federation of Housing Associations – Code of Conduct

NSW Department of Family and Community Services – Policy and Procedures

Metro Policy - Conflict of Interest

Metro Policy - Reducing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption,

Metro Policy - Whistleblower

Financial Management

Objective: to ensure accountability and transparency in decision-making processes with regard to all aspects of the Co-ops work.

Statement on Financial Management

The Co-op will implement policies and procedures in relation to its financial management to ensure the ongoing financial viability of the organisation. The Co-op will ensure the following processes are in place:

- Ten year cyclical maintenance plan with estimated costs
- Annual budget and a rolling 10 year budget forecast
- Provisions set aside annually for staff leave, maintenance, cyclical repairs
- All appropriate insurances
- Effective arrears and debt management processes

Budgets

The Co-op will have in place a detailed annual budget approved by the Board of Directors. The budget shall be developed in consultation with the Finance, Audit and Risk Sub-committee, the Manager and the Co-operative's Accountant and will ensure compliance with our funding guidelines. The board will monitor financial performance against the budget on a monthly basis.

Finance, Audit and Risk Sub-Committee

No less than three Directors (one of whom shall be the Treasurer) will form the Finance, Audit and Risk Sub-Committee. The sub-committee may, from time to time, be delegated responsibility by the full Board to make financial decisions in consultation with the Co-op's Accountant and Manager. The FAR Sub-Committee shall report back to the Board when decisions have been made on financial management. The sub-committee will be responsible for ensuring:

- The audit is finalised on time
- The annual budget is presented to the Board of Directors
- The quarterly return is signed off and finalised on time
- Cyclical maintenance plans are in place and expenditure approved
- Adequate funds are set aside to meet liabilities
- Insurances are paid in full and on time
- Debts are reported to the Board
- Undertake staff salary and Enterprise Bargaining Agreement negotiations

Financial Reporting to Funding Body

The Board will ensure that all financial requirements of the funding body and other relevant authorities are provided within the specific timeframes set down by those authorities.

The Co-ops financial reporting shall meet the requirements of the National Accounting Framework set down by the funding body and general Australian Accounting standards.

All reporting will be endorsed by either the Chairperson or Treasurer.

Procedure to ensure accurate financial reporting:

Activity	Responsibility	Regularity
Bank reconciliations are prepared and independently reviewed	Accountant/Treasurer	Monthly
Fixed asset registers are reconciled to General Register. Depreciation is charged. Physical inventories are performed against Asset Register	Accountant	Annually
After EOFY accruals are reversed to ensure Expenditure recorded in correct period	Accountant	Annually
Provisions are only made to cover specific costs incurred (generally staff entitlements only)	Accountant/Treasurer	Quarterly
Bad debts are written off after being approved by BOD	Accountant/Manager to propose recommended write-offs. BOD to approve	Quarterly
Supporting documentation is appropriately filed (ie work orders with Cheque requisitions; approval for new properties)	Assistant Accountant	Daily
Asset sales are recognised in the period the sales takes place (as accrued income if necessary)	Accountant	Quarterly
PAYG Payroll Transactions and salary sacrifice benefit payments are effected every 2 nd Monday for payment into employee's bank accounts on Tuesday of each fortnight	Assistant Accountant prepares payroll/Accountant checks. Payments transferred by Netbank by Manager	Fortnightly
Information relating to payroll/salary matters is secured	Accountant	Fortnightly

Investments

The Board will ensure that all cash reserves not required for everyday operating purposes are invested into a fixed term deposit, with a minimum one-month expiry period. Such accounts are to be held with the Co-op's nominated bank. The Board will ensure that the minimum amount of cash to be held in such an investment account should not fall below \$400,000.00

The fixed term account cannot be broken without the approval of the Board and authority to break the account must be signed by no less than two Directors, including the Treasurer.

Expenditure delegations

The Manager can approve expenditure for amounts up to \$10000.00 and must obtain consent from at least one other Director for amounts above \$10,000 unless it is for planned maintenance work as per the Asset Maintenance Plan.

For any amount above \$10,000.00, at least 2 quotes must be sought. The Manager can recommend to the Board the preferred quote, but cannot authorise expenditure without the authority of at least one Executive Director. In cases of urgency, consent may be given verbally or by telephone but must be minuted at the next Board of Directors meeting.

Housing workers can authorise expenditure in relation to work orders up to \$500.00 for responsive maintenance (ie where no quotes have been obtained). Work orders will specify to contractors that if costs are expected to exceed \$500.00 they are required to contact the Asset Officer for approval of expenditure up to \$1000.

The Asset Manager can approve expenditure in relation to work orders of between \$500 and \$5000. Expenditure above \$5000.00 will be referred to the Manager for approval.

Cheque Requisitions

All cheques must be accompanied by a 'cheque requisition form', which will contain the following information:

- Date of cheque
- Cheque number
- Amount of cheque
- Details of cheque
- Code number for accounting system
- Details of debtors to the expenditure
- Address for expenditure (if applicable)
- Signatures to the cheque

Signatories

There must be at least TWO authorised signatures to a cheque. Authorised signatories will be:

- Either The Manger and ONE authorised Director, or
- Two authorised Directors (one of whom, where possible, should be the Treasurer or Chairperson)

Checks and Balances

The following checks and balances will be in place in relation to financial management:

- Two PIN numbers and passwords will be required to transfer funds electronically. The Manager and the Chairperson shall hold the PIN numbers and passwords and neither shall be divulged to the other party. The Board will, from time to time, request that the PIN numbers be changed.
- There will be a password used to order new cheque books or other financial information from the bank
- The Manager will be responsible for ensuring petty cash docketts are filled out with attached receipts and the information recorded in the Petty Cash Book. The Accountant shall transfer this data to the electronic financial systems.
- No forward signing of cheques is permitted
- Cheques can only be signed where an appropriate receipt or tax invoice is available
- No cheque shall be written out to 'cash' except petty cash cheques which will be made payable to 'petty cash'.
- Quotes must be received for expenditure above \$5000.00 and approval must be granted to proceed with quote from Finance Sub Committee member or Executive Board member.
- The Accountant will be responsible for checking the receipts against the bank deposit
- A cheque register will be made available to the Treasurer prior to Board meetings. The Treasurer will table this at each Board meeting.
- The monthly balance sheet will be provided to the Treasurer prior to Board meetings. The Treasurer will then table this at the Board meeting.
- Profit and loss statements and budget shall be provided to the Board at each board meeting.

- The accountant will notify to the Board of Directors (through the Treasurer) any increase over 5% in the monthly payments to landlords.

Accounting Systems

The Accountant will be responsible for entering financial data, printing reports, paying wages and tracking leave entitlements for staff. Financial information shall be entered onto an electronic financial administration system at least fortnightly.

The financial systems will be regularly monitored by the Finance, Audit and Risk Sub-Committee in consultation with the Accountant and Manager, to ensure they are able to produce the appropriate reports required for the Board, the funding body and other relevant authorities.

The FAR Sub-Committee shall, as required, conduct a review of the financial systems and make recommendations to the Board to ensure the systems are operating properly and that appropriate checks and balances remain in place.

Rent collection

Tenant rent payments will be deposited directly into the tenant's designated rental account. However, rent and other payments received at the office should be deposited within 24 hours of receipt and the receipt should be checked off against the deposit book by the Book-keeper.

Debtors

The Board of Directors will consider a list of all debtors quarterly and decide on appropriate action to recover the debt, or where recovery is not possible to write off the debt. The Co-op does not use debt collectors.

Where debts are written off details will still be kept on the Tenant Management system rent and non-rent accounts for that tenant. People owing the Co-op monies, even when the Co-op has written off the debt, may not be eligible for rehousing unless authorised by the Board, and a repayment plan is in place.

Debtors will be given an update at least quarterly with invoices and statements sent to tenants who owe the Co-op monies. Debtors can make arrangements with the Manager to repay the monies owed in instalments and the Accountant/book-keeper shall keep a record of instalments made against monies owed.

Statements sent to debtors shall indicate balances owed and invoices forwarded will indicate new debts incurred (e.g. water usage). Where the Manager feels debts are not being repaid, the Board will determine action.

ADMINISTRATIVE & MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Purpose: To ensure efficient and effective systems are in place to support the day to-day running of the Co-op.

Filing Systems

The Co-op shall have accessible filing systems which will include hard copy information on the following:

- a. Individual Tenant files
- b. Individual Property files
- c. Ex property and Ex tenant files
- d. Personnel files

The Tenant files shall contain the following information:

- Residential Tenancy Agreement (including bond information if applicable)
- Income review information
- Correspondence and file notes/referrals/contact details
- Support agreements (if applicable)
- Invoices for tenant incurred costs (i.e. water usage)

The property files shall contain the following information:

- Residential Tenancy Agreement & bond information
- Correspondence
- Receipts
- Reported maintenance (also kept on database)

Responsibilities

The Administration Manager will be responsible for ensuring the filing systems are maintained. Housing managers will be responsible for ensuring that all tenants details are entered into the tenancy management system (SDM), prior to the commencement of the tenancy and all relevant details correctly recorded.

A copy of all correspondence sent to tenants will be saved in the shared "S" drive under "Tenant Files, Name of tenant, Address of Property".

Storage

The filing systems shall be easily accessible and secure. All sensitive files will be kept in secure filing cabinets away from the reception area and office thoroughfare.

The office is locked and alarmed whenever unattended.

Archiving Files

Files shall be kept for the maximum period of time as is required by law/regulations of relevant bodies. Files shall then be archived or destroyed by a specialist company. Files no longer in regular use shall be stored in the organisation's storage unit.

Correspondence

All incoming and important outgoing correspondence shall be recorded on the Coop's database. Significant items of correspondence will be tabled at Board meetings.

All files/data kept on the Co-ops database shall be backed up regularly to an external storage facility (internet or stored tapes) and be virus protected.

Motor Vehicles

Staff that use their own motor vehicle for work purposes shall ensure such vehicles are comprehensively insured and logbooks are kept. A copy of their driver's licence and relevant comprehensive insurance policy will be provided to management and kept on the staff member's file.

Staff shall be paid at the appropriate award rate for mileage for business purposes and the Accountant shall do such calculations and reimburse the staff-member at least quarterly. See also vehicle policy.

Telephone System

Calls will be taken throughout the day between 9.30am and 4:30pm. When staff are not present, an answering service shall be available with the following information:

- Emergency repair information for tenants
- Emergency housing contact information
- Non urgent message information

Non-urgent calls, where possible, shall be returned within 24 hours. Urgent calls shall be returned as soon as they are retrieved.

Database

The tenancy database can only be accessed via a password. Each staff member will have their own log-in.

Data Collection

The Co-op shall keep up-to-date information about its tenants in order to meet our reporting obligations to our funding body. . Unit level data collection is required to be provided to FACS on a quarterly basis and staff are responsible for ensuring that the "extended data" fields are completed for all new/transferring/terminating tenancies to ensure these reports are accurate and comply with contract requirements.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Purpose: To ensure the health, safety and security of staff, tenants, applicants,

Board members, other clients and visitors. To ensure the Co-op complies with the OH & S Act 2000 & the OH & S Regulations 2001 & all relevant industry standards and Codes of Practice.

Organisational Commitment

Metro Community Housing is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its staff and all those who use its service. To this end the organisation will consult its employees, and where appropriate, any other stakeholders (such as clients) to ensure the implementation of safe work practices and procedures.

Staff

Staff responsible for visiting properties/tenants will be provided with the following equipment to assist in ensuring their safety and security:

- a. Mobile phone
- b. First aid kit (vehicle)

Property visits

Metro will maintain a sign-out registry and all staff who are conducting home visits will record the address to be visited, time of visit, expected time of return and the mobile number they can be reached on.

Metro will maintain a risk rating for all tenants and where there is any concern about potential aggression the tenancy management system will note:

- “do not visit alone” or
- “do not enter premises”

Staff can request that a tenant not smoke during a property inspection or visit. This request is to be framed in a polite and sensitive manner taking into consideration that it is at a tenant's home, cultural issues, etc. If a tenant does not refrain from smoking the staff member may offer to reschedule the appointment.

Aggressive clients

If a staff member has to visit a property or tenant, and that staff member feels that such a tenant/client may be potentially threatening or aggressive in any way, at least two people must attend that visit.

If there are not two staff members available, the visit must be delayed until such time as an alternative person/s (ie support worker, known family member of tenant) is available to accompany the staff member.

Dealing with Aggressive clients

Staff must always treat tenants and other clients with respect and communicate with them politely, whether in person or over the phone.

If a tenant or client becomes aggressive or threatening toward staff, whether over the phone or in person, the staff member will, whilst remaining polite and respectful in their manner, advise the person that they intend to terminate a conversation or meeting.

The staff member shall refer the tenant or client to the Board by providing information about our complaints and appeals process.

The Board shall have such matters brought to its attention as soon as possible, and staff (and tenants/clients) will be supported and have their right to be treated with respect upheld.

Procedure for dealing with aggressive tenants/clients

If a staff member, Director or support worker feels or is in any way threatened by the aggressive behaviour of a tenant/client, either within the office or at a property, that staff member, Director or support worker shall take the following steps:

- Leave the premises immediately if at an on-site visit
- Ask the tenant/client to leave the office (when possible, the Manager should ask the tenant/client to leave)
- If after being warned, the aggressive behaviour continues, call the Police
- Lock all doors immediately after the tenant/client leaves

Reporting Critical Incidents/Accidents

All critical incidents shall be recorded in the 'Accident and Critical Incident Occupational Health & Safety Book', which is to be kept on the office premises. The information contained shall include:

- Date of incident and time
- Place of incident
- Parties involved
- Details of incident
- Signature of person making entry
- Name of Director notified of incident
- Name/s of Police officers/other authorities/persons contacted about the incident
- Any resolutions in the matter

The critical incident book shall be given to the Board of Directors for follow-up as soon as practicable after the incident, and, if required, the Board shall begin a disputes resolution procedure.

Counselling

Any staff member or persons involved in a 'critical incident' shall be offered counselling/supervision by an appropriately qualified counsellor of their choice.

Training

All staff may be actively encouraged and supported to access to Occupational Health and Safety training. All staff with direct contact roles will undertake specialist training in dealing with aggressive clients.

Regular breaks

Staff must take at least one half hour break per day (maximum of one hour) for lunch each day and are encouraged to leave the office, or use the private space provided to eat lunch. It is recommended that staff take a break from their computer at least every hour.

Return to Work Policy

The co-operative will work with any staff member wanting to resume work after injury or illness to develop a "return to work" plan.

The co-op will endeavour to comply with the wishes of staff returning to work by allocating tasks which are suitable for the staff member to undertake upon returning to work. For example, where a staff member is to return to work, but is unable to perform all of their duties, the Co-op will attempt to ensure that lighter duties are provided for that staff member.

The Manager will be responsible for supervising the return to work protocols for staff members.

Communicable Diseases

Staff should take every precaution with regard to communicable diseases. Staff should always wear gloves in any incident where blood is involved. Staff shall also be kept trained and up-to-date on information involving HIV, Hepatitis etc.

An incident report should be noted in the Accidents and Critical Incident Report Book

Staff will not be expected to clean properties post-tenancy, and all office cleaning shall be undertaken by a professional cleaner.

Contractors & Sub-Contractors

All contractors will be provided with a copy of the OH & S Policy when they are first engaged and will be expected to sign a contractor protocol when they submit an expression of interest to Metro.

All contractors will be advised of their responsibilities under the OH & S Act 2000 and the OH & S Regulations 2001. Further, any sub-contractors used by contractors will be expected to adhere to the same standards.

All contractors will be expected to have a 'Green Ticket' when they apply to become an 'approved contractor' under the Expression of Interest Process. Contractors who do not have a Green Ticket will be encouraged to undertake the appropriate WorkCover Training to obtain such a ticket.

Community Partners

Community Partners are required to have in place OH & S policies and procedures which comply with the relevant legislation prior to partnership contracts being signed. The procedures outlined in this document will also form part of any support partnership agreement.

Roles and Responsibilities

The co-op has designated responsibility for OH & S to all staff and management. The specific roles are delegated herewith:

Manager: The Manager is authorised to act on behalf of the organisation in relation to rectifying any OH & S problems, which may arise to the value of \$10000.00.

Staff: Staff are obliged under law to comply with the OH & S policies of the organisation. All staff shall be consulted on all issues in relation to OH & S matters and are encouraged to report any issues to the Manager or the Board.

Board: The Board has the authority to delegate responsibilities for addressing OH& S issues to the Manager and to the Employment Sub-Committee and are responsible for endorsing the decisions made by the Sub-Committee where those decisions clearly relate to OH & S matters. Any such matters relating to OH & S will be minuted.

OH&S Audit and Other Agreed Arrangement

At least annually, an OH & S audit and risk management plan shall be undertaken with all staff and a board representative. This audit is intended to identify and remedy any outstanding OH & S issues within the office. Such an audit shall be documented for the Board to endorse, and where necessary, make other recommendations to ensure a safe working environment.

The Board representative/s must have the authority to act on any OH & S matters.

The audit shall consider issues such as:

- That the office is fitted with appropriately maintained furniture and equipment
- That the fire extinguisher is working and serviced
- That the first aid kit is supplied with suitable equipment
- That the security in the office is efficient and appropriate to risk levels
- That any hazardous material has a hazardous material safety data sheet to refer to when in use but that where possible NO hazardous materials be used and that only 'green' products be purchased.

The Board will have a 'standing order' at every Board meeting to consider OH & S matters and staff should bring any issues to those meetings.

Consultation Process

The organisation, in consultation with its staff, has agreed that the consultation arrangement will be "other agreed arrangements", which meets the specific consultation requirements of the OH & S Act (2000) and the OH & S Regulations (2001), and is an open, accountable and transparent method of consultation.

"Other Agreed Arrangements" Consultation on OH & S

All employees will be invited to participate in any forums relating to safe work practices. The organisation will encourage all staff members to raise issues which staff feel must be addressed in order to ensure a safer and healthier workplace. Employees will bring such issues to the attention of the Manager, or to the OH & S Board representative, either at monthly staff meetings or immediately if there is an urgent issue, and the issue will be documented and dealt with promptly.

OH & S is a standing agenda item at Board meetings, and the Manager or OH & S representative will table any issues raised by the staff and the action taken to resolve the matter/s. Staff, clients and other visitors will have access to the organisations OH & S Policy and Procedures and the OH & S Consultation statement.

Review of Consultation Arrangements

Metro and its employees agreed that the type of consultation arrangements agreed upon will be continuously monitored, and with a formal review of the process to be conducted with all parties at least annually. This was decided upon to ensure that the most effective and efficient method for consultation was in place to best address the health, safety and welfare of staff and clients.

SAFETY WORKING PROCEDURES FOR CONTRACTORS

Under Section 8 of the OHS Act 2000 Metro has an obligation to ensure the health and safety of all employees and other persons (contractors) at the place of work. Therefore, when Metro engages contractors at their place of work (including at residential properties managed by us) they must ensure that the contractors are not put at risk by Metro's activities, and that our employees or others at the place of work (e.g. tenants) are not put at risk by the contractor's activities. Similarly, when a contractor comes into a workplace (including a residential property) they must ensure the health and safety of their own employees and not put others at risk as a consequence of their activities.

Metro Community Housing complies with the OH & S Act 2000 & the OH & S Regulations 2001 and we expect our contractors and their sub-contractors to also abide.

To achieve safe working objectives, the following is a number of steps Metro has introduced to ensure all parties understand their obligations under OH&S.

We will provide a written work order to each contractor, for each individual job they are required to undertake. Where there are identified risks associated with work to be carried out, (e.g. aggressive clients) this will be stated on the work order and we will identify systems which will eliminate or control such risks.

If a contractor attends a property and identifies any potential risks, that contractor should notify the Manager of the systems to be implemented to eliminate or control those risks.

Where risks have been identified by either party, both Metro staff and the contractor shall enter into a Contractor Safety Plan, which provides written information about the risks that have been identified, who they effect and how work will be carried out to address the OHS issues identified. Both parties shall sign this agreement prior to the commencement of the work.

If a contractor attends a property and a client is in any way aggressive, that contractor shall leave the premises immediately and not engage with the client. The contractor shall then advise the office as soon as possible.

Metro will advise a contractor of any other hazard that may be relevant to the residential premises (e.g. if a property is currently having renovations done or if a contractor needs to seek permission from a site supervisor before attending).

Metro will expect all contractors to contact clients to arrange access prior to arriving at a property to undertake work. This ensures the tenant can feel safe in knowing the time and date for a contractor. Contractors will need to show identification to clients when they attend to undertake work to ensure tenants feel safe when allowing access.

Contractors shall ask clients to sign the work order form when the work is completed and that work order should be returned to Metro Community Housing with the invoice.

Contractors shall respect the privacy of the clients at all times. If a client complains about the behaviour of a contractor, that contractor shall be notified immediately and an attempt to resolve the problem shall be undertaken.

Metro expects all contractors to have a clear understanding of safe working procedures when entering a residential premises to undertake work, particularly in relation to electrical safety procedures.

Metro encourages all contractors to undertake an accredited Work Cover OH & S Induction Training for Construction Work and to receive a Green Ticket.

When working with hazardous substances, Metro expects contractors to identify and understand those hazards and ensure safe working practices are adhered to. Contractors should inform tenants if any hazardous materials, chemicals or potentially dangerous machinery are to be used to carry out maintenance and to explain this to tenants before proceeding.

Contractors should wear protective clothing when working with hazardous substances or machinery.

Policy and Procedure Amendments:

Date	Page	Subject	Reason	Authorised
Oct 2010	60	Reducing Risk of Fraud and Corruption	Fraud prevention strategy	BOD
July 2011	44	Checks and Balances. Add item to advise Treasurer of variations of more than 5% in landlord rents	Fraud prevention strategy	BOD
Nov 2011	4	Membership of the Cooperative	Clarify the Active Membership provisions	BOD at AGM
Nov 2012	34	Acquisition of Leasehold properties	Improve risk management.	BOD. Finance and Risk C/Tee
March 2014	23	Bond payments	All tenants (including in shared tenancies) to pay 4 weeks rebated rent. Clarify different arrangements for tenants in receipt of Centrelink benefits/waged tenants in relation to bond amount required at sign up and repayments	Manager
March 2014	23	Metro contribution to moving expenses	Clarify that tenants not eligible for contribution where move is a result of breach of lease and/or Metro was required to obtain NCAT order	BOD

March 2016	19	Application of rental caps for leasehold acquisitions	Board reviewed policy following changes to CHLP program funding	BOD
August 2017	30	Use of Section 85 applications	Matter raised by Manager to ensure clarity over use of this provision.	BOD