



**Metro Community Housing**

**Co-op Ltd**

**Annual Report 2010/2011**

# Metro Community Housing Co-operative Ltd

## Location

Metro operates from premises at 48a Norton Street, Leichhardt.

## Office hours

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday: 10.00am – 4.00pm.  
Wednesday 1.00pm - 4.00pm

*Please note:* Tenants are able to make appointments outside these times.

**Web:** [www.metrohousing.org.au](http://www.metrohousing.org.au)  
**Mail:** PO Box 551, Leichhardt 2040  
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**Fax:** 9560 8027

*Thank you to all who have contributed to  
the co-operative over the last year*

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**Published by:** Metro Community Housing Co-operative Ltd

For a copy of the Metro Community Housing Annual Report please contact us on 9560 5331 or e-mail [reception@metrohousing.org.au](mailto:reception@metrohousing.org.au),

The report can also be downloaded from [www.metrohousing.org.au](http://www.metrohousing.org.au)

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# **Agenda**

## **Annual General Meeting 2011**

1. Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of previous meeting
4. Matters arising from the previous minutes
5. Reports:
  - a) Chairperson's report
  - b) Treasurer's report
  - c) Manager's report
6. Motion for acceptance of reports
7. Secretary's advice re Co-op membership
8. Appointment of Returning Officer
9. Election of Board of Directors
10. Appointment of Auditor
11. New business

# Metro Community Housing Co-Operative Ltd

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 23 November 2010

### *Meeting held at Herb Greedy Hall, Petersham Road, Marrickville*

1. Chairperson Eanna O'Ceallachain opened the meeting at 5.30pm, welcomed everyone to the AGM and checked that attendances had been recorded.

**Present:** David Abello, Susan Taylor, Eanna O'Ceallachain, Malcolm Pollard, Mark Gell, Nigel Head, Elizabeth Sharaq (Board Members)

Julie Harrison, Nermin Odemis, Sue O'Neill, Maree Arkell, Madeleine Russell, Robert Waters, Amy McMurtrie, Nita Mala, Alan Mathew (staff),

Josie Evans, William & Cholladda Delaney, Catherine Deacock, Jennifer Croton, Yarrie Sillah, Siu Miu Law (Tenants)

Barb McKenna (Housing NSW), Des Walsh (We Help Ourselves), Ian McHugh (NFP Consulting) (Members/Guests)

2. **Apologies:** Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Bernard Newman, The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt MP, Jean's Place, Marian Centre

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting:**

Motion: That the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Metro Community housing, held on the 24th November 2009 be accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Moved: Sue Taylor  
Seconded: Nigel Head

Carried unanimously

4. **Matters arising from previous minutes:** None.

## **5. REPORTS**

**5.1 Chairperson's Report.** Enda presented the Chairperson's Report as tabled in the Annual Report and available in the papers distributed.

**5.2 Treasurer's Report:** David began by thanking the members for the opportunity to complete his first full-year as Treasurer for the organisation. He then presented the Treasurer's Report as tabled in the Annual Report and available in the AGM papers distributed.

**5.3 Managers Report:** Julie Harrison presented the Manager's Report as tabled in the Annual Report and available in the AGM papers distributed.

Motion: to accept all tabled reports.

Moved: Malcolm Pollard;  
Seconded: Sue Taylor

Carried unanimously

## **6. Appointment of Returning Officer**

Motion: that Alan Mathew be appointed as Returning Officer for the meeting.

Moved: David Abello  
Seconded: Sue Taylor

Carried unanimously. Appointment accepted by Alan.

## **7. Election of Board of Directors:**

Alan Mathews checked the nomination forms and advised the meeting that there were 7 valid nominations for the position of Director. The names of the nominations were read out: They were:

- Sue Taylor
- David Abello
- Elizabeth Sharaq
- Eanna O'Ceallachain
- Malcolm Pollard
- Nigel Head
- Mark Gell

Alan explained that as the number of valid nominations was less than the number of positions on the board, all those who nominated were declared elected unopposed. This leaves a current vacancy on the board. There being no further nominations from the floor Metro will fill these by way of appointment to casual vacancies when suitable candidates are identified.

### **8. Election of Tenant Network Representatives**

Requests for nomination to the two tenant network positions were sent out to all tenants with the advice of the Annual General Meeting.

As at the AGM only two nominations had been received. These were from:

- Malcolm Pollard
- Josie Evans

Alan advised that as the number of valid nominations was equal to the number of positions for Metro Community housing representatives on the Tenant Network, the two nominees were elected unopposed.

Josie gave a brief overview of her reasons for nominating and history as a Metro Tenant and Malcolm (who has been the Metro representative for the previous 12 months) outlined forthcoming events and gave a brief overview of the role of the Tenant Network.

### **9. Appointment of Auditor:**

Motion: that our current auditors - Parlett, Chave and Rowland be reappointed as the auditors for 2010/2011.

Moved: David Abello  
Seconded: Eanna O'Ceallachain

Carried unanimously.

The Treasurer thanked Bill Ng of Partlett, Chave and Rowland for his commitment to Metro over several years.

### **New Business:**

#### **10. Explanation of Rule Changes passed at Special General Meeting:**

The Chairperson and Manager clarified that as a result of the rule change passed at the Special General Meeting in February 2010, Board Members would serve for a minimum of two years as opposed to the current tenure of one year in order to offer continuity and certainty for the organisation and ensure that the experience/skills of the Board are retained for a longer period.

As this was the first AGM since the Special General Meeting, half the Board would stand for re-election one year, and the other half for two years.

The four newest board appointees (Nigel Head, Mark Gell, Eannon O’Ceallachain and David Abello) would serve terms of two years and the three longest serving board members (Sue Taylor, Elizabeth Sharaq, Malcolm Pollard) would serve a one year term and stand again at the next AGM.

### **11. Sustainability Program**

Julie outlined our involvement in the *Sustainability on a Shoestring Program*. Metro is partnering with Canterbury and City of Sydney Councils in this program which aims to provide resources and advice to help low income earners reduce their energy and water usage costs.

A series of workshops will be held in early 2011 to show tenants how to conduct “energy audits” and other strategies to reduce costs and contribute to environmental sustainability.

Tenants who participate in all workshops will be able to access funds to contribute to purchasing replacement white goods which are more energy efficient and cost effective than their current goods.

The AGM was preceded by a workshop which provided an informative and enjoyable introduction to the program by highlighting ways that tenants could reduce costs at Christmas time. Participants were shown examples and then created their own decorations, gift wrapping, and presents by using readily available recycled materials.

There will be updated information on our website and mail outs advising tenants of future events. The program is being independently evaluated by consultants engaged by the Councils.

### **12. Scholarship program**

The Chairperson outlined our intention to introduce a scholarship program to assist our tenants to access vocational training. Metro will meet course fees and the costs of textbooks for tenants who successfully complete a vocational training program aimed at providing people with the skills to enter the workforce.

We also want to look at a number of smaller scholarships to assist those who face barriers in accessing such training due to not having the necessary qualifications for enrolment. These smaller scholarships would provide assistance to enrol in pre-tertiary skills programs or provide tutoring in areas such as English or Maths.

Tenants will be asked to provide feedback about the way these programs will operate and further information will be on our website and included in the next newsletter.

### **13. Policy Review**

Julie advised the meeting that our policies are not currently available on our website as we are undertaking a review of our Policy Manual to ensure it reflects changes to operational arrangements for allocations, transfers, transitional housing and the status of tenants in leasehold properties.

We expect the new policies to be completed in draft form by mid December and there will be a period of consultation before the final version are uploaded in mid January 2011.

### **14. Housing Pathways**

As Chairperson and Manager had both spoken about the impact of the Housing Pathways processes in their respective reports, Julie stated that despite the resourcing costs, she wanted to emphasise our commitment to this program as a positive step in promoting enhanced access for applicants.

Julie reiterated the expectation that once staff of all housing associations and Housing NSW had become familiar with the new arrangements we would see greater efficiency and fairness in allocations.

The Chairperson thanked all those who attended and the meeting was declared closed at 6.40pm.

# Our values

## To create a better community by:

- ✓ providing housing and related resources to people in our community who are in high need;
- ✓ empowering our tenants and enhancing their life choices through access to affordable, appropriate and secure housing;
- ✓ making links and working collaboratively with other housing providers and community service providers to help us achieve these aims; and
- ✓ actively participating in the social housing sector and the broader political process.



# Metro Community Housing Co-operative Ltd

## Overview

### **Who are we?**

Metro Community Housing is one of 30 community housing associations in NSW that receives leasehold subsidy and operational funding from the Community Housing Division of Housing NSW (formerly the NSW Department of Housing).

### **Where do we operate?**

The majority of our properties are located within the inner west metropolitan area, primarily in the Ashfield, Canterbury, Leichhardt and City of Sydney Local Government areas. We also have a smaller number of properties across another 12 local government areas in housing stock that ranges from studio apartments to 6 bedroom houses.

### **How are we governed?**

Metro is incorporated as a not-for-profit, co-operative of members with Public Benevolent status. Membership of the co-operative is made up of all Metro tenants (except for those housed through time limited transitional arrangements) and other persons with an interest in community housing or the provision of housing to low income earners. Metro has an elected Board of Directors to oversight strategic planning and ensure we meet our fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities to the public and to our funding body.

### **Accountability**

Metro is Registered as a Class 2 Housing Provider by the statutory Registrar of Community Housing. We undertake Registration on an annual basis and are required to demonstrate that all aspects of our operations comply with the standards required by the independent Registrar.

We also provide detailed financial and governance data on an annual basis to the NSW Registry of Co-operatives, Department of Fair Trading, and report on key performance data in relation to tenancy management, maintenance of our assets and overall financial position on an annual and quarterly basis to the Community Housing Division of Housing NSW (our primary funder).

Metro has also undertaken independent accreditation and has been fully accredited by *GlobalMark* for a 3 year period from January 2010.

**How do we operate?**

Our purpose is to provide long term, subsidised accommodation to people on low incomes in need of affordable housing. We also provide transitional housing for up to two years for people referred through support partnership nominations who require short-medium term assistance to prevent homelessness when exiting in-patient psychiatric services, crisis refuges, drug and alcohol programs, or the criminal justice system. Through a program run in collaboration with Area Health and Community Mental health teams we also provide transitional housing to tenants who need to demonstrate independent living skills in order to be approved for priority housing from the Department of Housing.

**Who do we house?**

Metro is a generalist housing association but our Strategic Plan for 2011-15 commits us to an objective of increasing tenancies offered through support partnership nominations for those in high need from 25% to 40% by 2014.

An amendment to our rules passed at a Special General Meeting held on 28 February 2007 inserted a clause into our Objects of Association to ensure that approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of all tenancies are allocated to single men. This reflects an acknowledgement that this client group is generally under-resourced in the provision of affordable housing, and our commitment to the ongoing needs of this target group following the amalgamation with Resamen Men's Housing.

We have historically allocated between 10-15% of our properties to Aboriginal tenants and approximately 50% of our tenants were born outside Australia.

# A Snapshot of Metro Community Housing

## Board of Directors

Metro's strategic direction and the oversight of our operations are the responsibility of an elected Board consisting of 8 independent Directors. Board members have a mix of skills in law, disability advocacy, public administration, community support, financial and strategic management and property development.

The Board meets every month to monitor the implementation of the key plans (Strategic Plan, Business Plan, and Risk Management Plan) which provide the framework for our operations. Their role is to ensure the good governance and financial viability of the organisation.

At each meeting the Board is presented with information in relation to our key performance indicators in the areas of arrears, asset maintenance, income and expenditure and significant tenancy issues. The Board is provided with profit and loss and balance sheet statements for the preceding quarter and month and the accountant attends several board meetings each year to respond to any board enquiries about our financial position.

The day to day management of the organisation is the responsibility of the Manager. The Manager liaises regularly with the Chairperson, attends all board meetings and provides the Board with timely data relating to organisational effectiveness measures such as tenant arrears, vacant/voided property trends, Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal action and implementation of the Asset Maintenance Plan.

## Our Current Board

Directors Eanna O'Ceallachain, Mark Gell and Nigel Head were elected for a two year term at the Annual General Meeting held 23 November 2011.

Directors, Susan Taylor, Elizabeth Sharaq, and Malcolm Pollard were appointed for a one year term at the Annual General Meeting held on 23 November 2011 and have indicated that they will stand again for re-election at this 2011 Annual General Meeting. If re-elected they will serve terms of two years.

James Kennedy was appointed to the Metro Board in April 2011 to fill a casual vacancy on the board following the resignation of a Director. He will stand for election at this AGM. If elected he will serve a term of two years.

## *Eanna O Ceallachain*



Eanna has a long history of voluntary service and involvement in community development and social justice issues. He has previous experience on boards, including a statutory local government body responsible for public education. He recently co-founded a self-help film co-op in Marrickville and works in the area of media access for people with disabilities. Eanna was recently admitted as a solicitor to practice law in NSW.

## *Elizabeth Sharaq*



Elizabeth is a Social Science student at the University of Sydney and has been a sole parent for many years.

“For these reasons, and more, I wish to pursue practical ways to overcome disadvantage.

Secure and affordable housing has the capacity to achieve this end and I am passionate about housing because it can impact positively on many areas of people’s lives.” Elizabeth has served on the board of Metro (and its predecessor MACH) since 2002, serving as Secretary for 2 years. She has been Deputy Chairperson since January 2011.

“The time I have spent on the board has been a valuable learning experience and I have the energy and enthusiasm to use the knowledge gained to continue to address inequity.”

Elizabeth brings pragmatism, empathy and a working awareness of the broader theoretical issues underpinning disadvantage.

## *James Kennedy*



James has twenty five years' experience in operational management and advisory work across the property spectrum. He led the Defence Housing Authority's group responsible for delivering housing solutions to over 17,000 members of the Australian Defence Force and their families and was Program Director for the Social Housing Initiative at the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce – overseeing the delivery of 6,300 new homes.

James' professional focus is on improving the operational and financial performance of large property portfolios and their management. James is committed to the further development of Metro Housing as a critical element in growing the availability of affordable homes.

## *David Abelló*



David was co-opted to Metro's Board of Directors in July 2008 and appointed as Treasurer in September. He is a social scientist by training and works as a social policy researcher. His work has included the evaluation of a number of social housing programs - particularly those involving partnerships with other providers (such as mental health services). David is involved in disability and gay pride activism and works with, and gives leadership to, a number of disability advocacy organisations. He has previous governance experience in the youth housing sector.

## *Susan Taylor*



Susan has lived and worked in the Marrickville area since 1987. She has many years experience in the housing sector with a particular focus on community housing, co-operatives and supported accommodation – particularly in working with young people aged 16-25.

Susan has served as a Director on the MACH and Metro Boards for over a decade and has held the positions of Secretary and Deputy Chairperson during that time. Her focus over the next twelve months will be on developing and improving our support partnerships.

## *Malcolm Pollard*



Malcolm grew up in the inner west and worked as a horticulturalist until health problems took him out of the workforce. . “In 1998 Resamen Men’s Housing provided me with stable housing and in 2006 I joined the Resamen board. This was shortly before the amalgamation with MACH and in early 2007 I was accepted as a Metro Board member.”

Malcolm’s board experience is fairly recent but he brings enthusiasm and a strong commitment to representing tenants.

Malcolm sees his major contribution to the board as the Metro tenant’s representative on the Tenant Network Association.

## *Nigel Head*



Nigel is an independent management consultant with twenty years experience in property development and construction throughout Australia. Nigel has extensive experience in affordable housing, student accommodation and seniors living, he has delivered major projects for clients such as Housing NSW and RSL LifeCare.

Nigel joined the Board in 2009. His experience is being applied to improve and expand Metro's property portfolio

## *Mark Gell*



Mark has worked for over 25 years in areas including strategy, policy and issues management functions for the NSW government and for a number of large publicly listed corporations (including property, banking, steel and metal products manufacturing, transport, logistics, distribution, minerals, environment, energy, equipment hire, building materials, telecommunications and airlines). He has demonstrated leadership expertise across a wide range of industries and geographies with a comprehensive understanding of the strategic approach to work combined with results delivery.

## Staff Profiles

### Julie Harrison



Julie Harrison was manager of MACH from December 2004 and Manager of Metro since March 2007. Julie has previously worked in client service project management, equity and access, FOI and complaint management areas – primarily in the NSW public sector.

### Sue O'Neill



Sue O'Neill has worked for MACH in a relief capacity for several years. Following the merger with Resamen in 2007, Sue returned to permanent part time employment with Metro as the Senior Housing Worker. Sue has recently transferred to the position of Team-Leader, Housing Pathways.

### Maree Arkell



Maree started at Metro in April 2007 and is a senior housing worker. Maree manages the majority of the support partnership tenancies nominated through Mental Health programs.. Maree has had extensive cross cultural experience having previously worked as an ESL teacher and in support roles for overseas students.

### Alan Mathew



Alan Mathew is Metro's long term accountant – he has a sound understanding of all areas of our operations and has been an excellent protector of our financial interests.

## Nermin Odemis



Nermin Odemis has been with Metro since 2005 and has worked across a number of roles. She is now responsible for accounts payable, and tenant rent entries. Nermin has had a diverse work background and brings with her very well developed organisational skills. As a Turkish speaker she is able to help Metro communicate with our Turkish residents and brings a cross-cultural perspective to the organisation.

## Nita Mala



Nita was working as a Case Manager for Domestic Violence women and children for 5 years, Client Service Officer for ESRHA and Housing NSW before joining Metro Community Housing in May 2010. Nita's role in Metro is to assess and interview clients seeking Housing assistance. With her previous experiences, she is enjoying her challenging role dealing with complex clients. She has also completed her Diploma in Community Services Welfare.

## Amy McMurtrie



Amy is our Partnership Project Worker. This is a newly created position which Amy brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to following her 10 year work history in case management within homeless, residential, youth and family support services.

Amy works with our partnership organisations in maintaining and developing suitable housing programs for people with high and complex housing needs. By working in partnership with other Non Government Community Services we aim to increase our capacity to effectively meet the needs of those unable to access the private rental market.

## Sandra Martin



Sandra commenced with Metro in November 2011. She brings a great deal of experience to her role as Housing Worker, having started in the social housing sector in Australia with SWISH (now Bridge Housing) well over a decade ago. Sandra returned to live in the United Kingdom for several years to be closer to family, and during her time in Britain she worked for several large housing organisations and co-operatives in London and the Midlands area, particularly focusing on tenant empowerment and tenant managed housing models. Before commencing with Sandra worked for Common Equity on a contract basis.

## Bob Waters



Bob joined Metro in 2008 and plans the maintenance of our asset stock. Bob was a honorary member of the board of Erskineville youth refuge for 10 years. He had been working as a liaison officer for building maintenance in the veterinary school at the University of Sydney.

## Leigh Batterham



Leigh brings her considerable people skills to our reception desk. She is a strong believer in the power of community, with an extensive background in women's refuges, childcare, youth services and refugee support.

Leigh has trained as a home sustainability assessor and remains passionate about people and the planet.

After 15 years' experience working in university libraries, Leigh has developed well rounded communication skills. She will assess all initial contacts and either deal with your query directly or refer tenants and applicants to the person who can best help them.

# Statistical Information for Metro Community Housing

**Incorporation status** Co-operative, Public Benevolent status  
**Accreditation status** Awarded full accreditation for 3 years in January 2010  
**Registration status** Registered as Class 2 Housing Provider

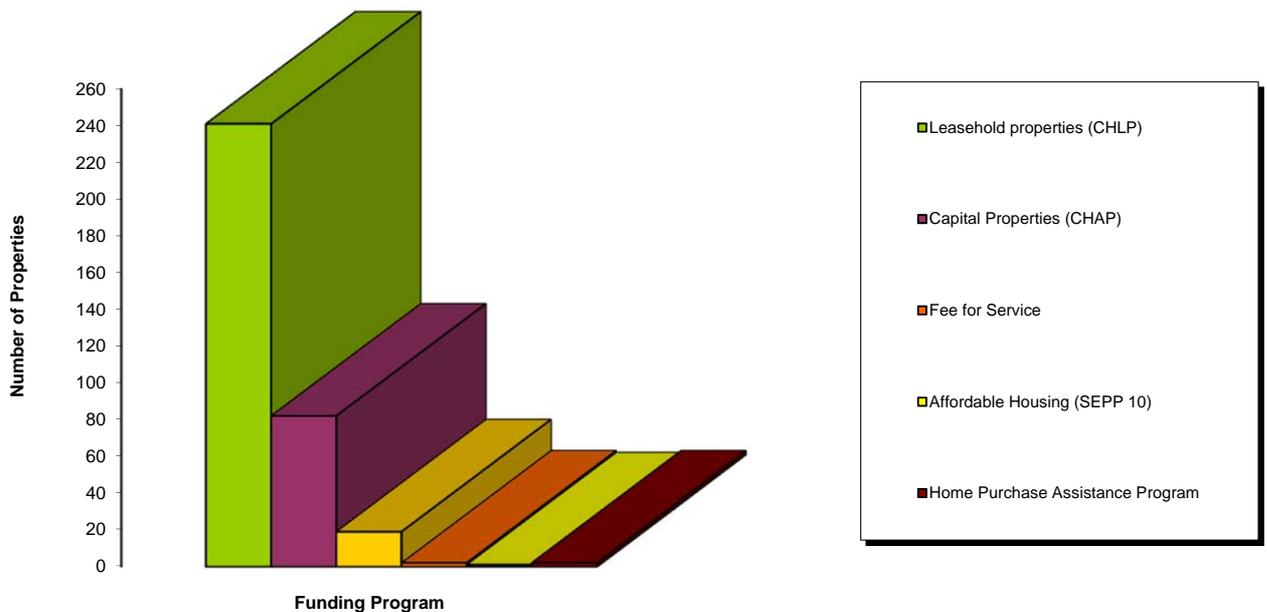
**Properties** 359 (as at 30 June 2011)

Leasehold: 260  
Capital: 90  
Fee for Service: 5  
Affordable SEPP: 2  
Non quota\* 1  
HPA: 1

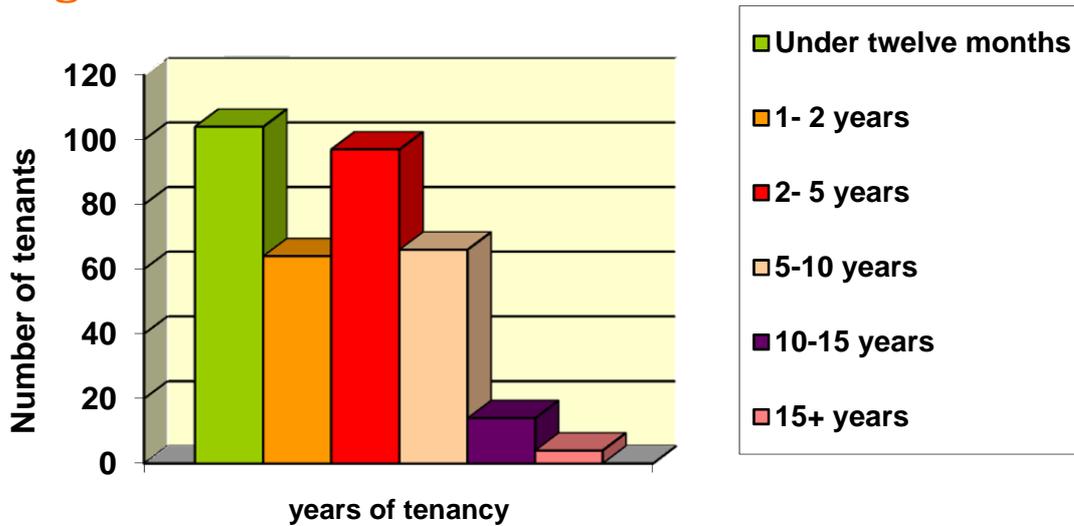
**Tenancies** 387

**Total housed** 781

## Breakdown of properties by funding programs

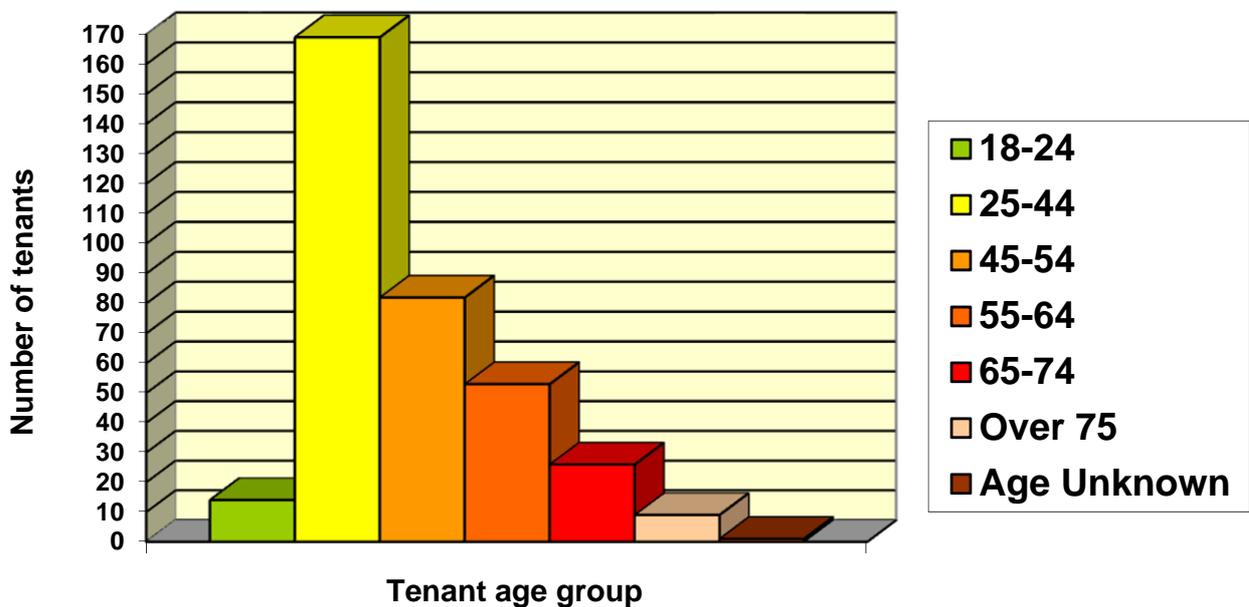


## Length of tenancies

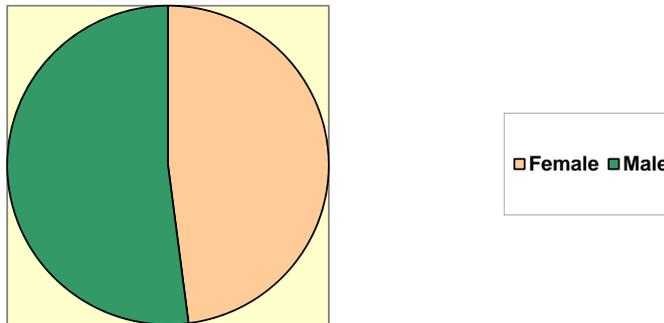


**Note:** the relatively large no of tenants in the “under twelve months category” reflects tenants housed for short periods through transitional housing programs.

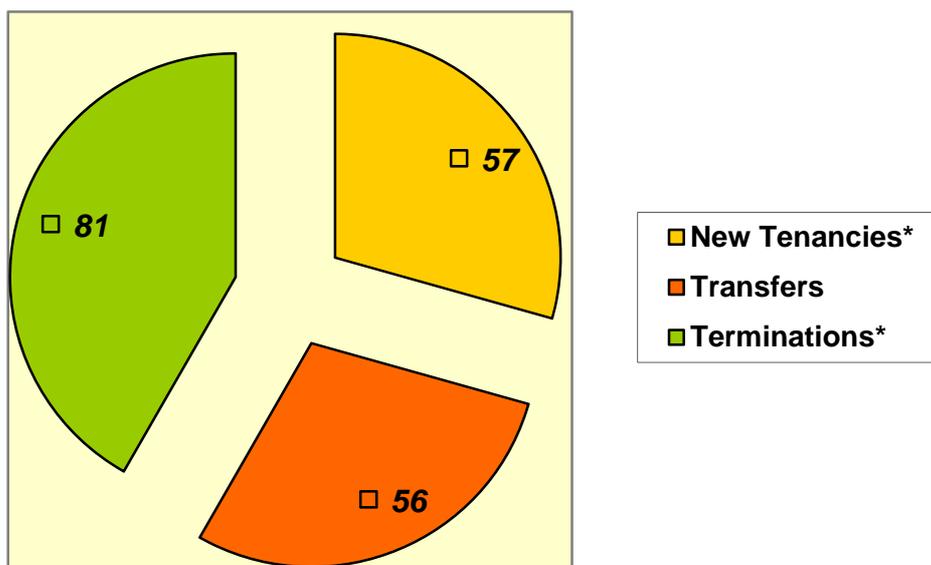
## Ages of head tenants



## Gender of tenants

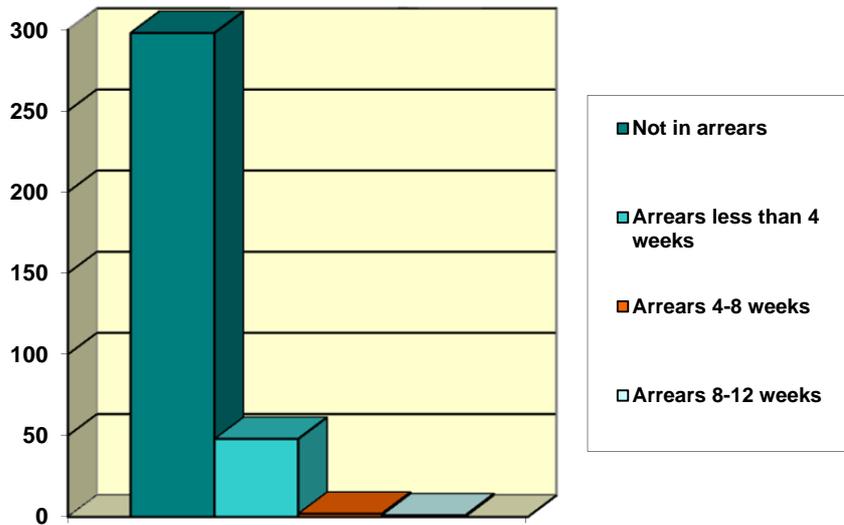


## Tenancy Movements 10/11



**Note:** **\*New Tenancies:** Excludes tenants transferring between Metro properties  
**Terminations:** Includes all tenants exiting Metro social housing.  
Relatively high number reflects high % of transitional tenants  
Housed for periods up to maximum 2 years.

## Rent Arrears as at 30/06/2011



## Cultural Mix (as identified by tenants)

Cultural Identity	%of tenants
Australian	40.6
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander	11.9
Arabic	5.0
SE Asian - Vietnamese/Cambodian/Burmese	6.0
South American (Argentinean, Chilean, Paraguayan, Uruguayan)	4.2
English/Irish/Other Northern European	3.6
Turkish	2.2
Sierra Leone/Egyptian/other African	3.3
Chinese	2.2
Greek	2.5
Lebanese	1.6
Indian	2.1
Indonesian	2.0
Italian	1.1
Maori New Zealander	1.5
Filippino	1.0
Russian	1.1
Central European (Hungaria, Serbia, Croatia)	1.8
South Pacific Islander (Tonga, Cook Islands, Fiji)	2.0
German, Korean, Kurdish, Eritrean, Iranian, Iraqi, Palestinian, Spanish, Slovakian, Syrian (less than 0.5%)	4.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Our Partners

As at 30 June 2011 approximately 25% of our properties were allocated to clients referred through support partnerships with 19 separate service providers.

A support partnership is one where the service provider has nomination rights – that is, they refer a client who is in urgent need of housing and provide support to help that person establish and maintain a successful tenancy.

The Metro Strategic Plan 2011/2015 sets a goal of increasing partnerships by 3-5% each year until we reach our target of 40% of all tenancies offered through support partnerships by 2014. Current priority groups for support partnerships include:

- ✓ Women and their children exiting crisis accommodation
- ✓ Young people (16-25) who are homeless or exiting crisis accommodation
- ✓ People exiting residential drug and alcohol programs
- ✓ People exiting the criminal justice system
- ✓ People with a psychiatric disability
- ✓ People with an intellectual disability

## Our current partners include:

★ Biala (Aftercare) Ashfield Support Program	★ Stepping Stone House
★ Jewish Care	★ Rendu Youth Service
★ Erskinevilla Youth Housing	★ St Louise Lodge
★ The Marian Centre	★ Stepping Out
★ Jean's Place Women's Refuge	★ Department of Housing
★ Mercy Arms	★ Uniting Care - Supported Living Program
★ Mathew Talbot Home Reach Service	★ NEAMI – Way2Home
★ Oasis Youth Service	★ We Help Ourselves Gateway Program
★ Central Sydney Area Health & Community Mental Health Services	★ Vincentian
★ Mudgin-gal Aboriginal Corporation	★ YWCA Young Women's Support



The Metro Board would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partner agencies for their contributions over this last year. We want to also acknowledge the work of our local government partners – City of Sydney and Canterbury for their commitment to assisting our tenants through the Sustainability on a Shoestring program.

The Community Housing Division is our major funding body and we also thank them for their contribution and assistance.



# Chairperson's Report

At the 2010 Annual General Meeting, I was pleased to announce that Metro Community Housing had achieved registration as a Class 2 Provider. We also noted that Metro had not been included for tender on the State title transfer scheme as a result of NSW Treasury imposing a requirement that housing associations must have a minimum of 100 'capital' properties to submit a tender application.

In response, the Board members and Management began 2011 by undertaking a comprehensive review of the organisation, its competencies and our future strategic direction.

As Metro is a well-run, financially sound organisation, the board resolved to improve Metro's future prospects by embarking on a path to growth, exploring all options open to a medium-sized organisation like ours. The outcome of that review helped the board to clarify its vision, identify achievable targets and put in place a strategy to achieve the objectives we set itself.

Our vision is to house more people in need and this vision is aligned to our targets:

- to house 3 times more people than present (3 X 700 = 2,100);
- generating 3 times the surplus funds for re-investment (3 X \$250,000 = \$750,000); over a 5-year period (2011-2016).

An analysis of the organisation's operations by ACRE (formerly NFP) Consulting identified several areas in which Metro demonstrated considerable expertise. Focusing on Metro's core competencies, plans have been implemented to grow these areas of our operations.

Approximately 25% of all tenancies managed by Metro are allocated to clients nominated by support partnerships. During the last two quarters of 2010/11 Metro has streamlined its procedures for collaboration with partner agencies and in accordance with our Strategic Plan we aim to increase the proportion of supported tenancies by an average of 5% per annum. Metro is on target to meet this objective and we look forward to working more effectively with partner agencies to house those in greatest need.

Metro Community Housing has also increased the number of capital properties under management by almost 10% since commencement of the strategy for growth. This increase came largely through the Lease Transfer program where smaller community support providers with Housing NSW properties opted not to undergo formal registration, and indicated their willingness to form a partnership with Metro and have their properties transferred to us by Housing NSW.

Metro is currently examining opportunities to purchase a small number of properties on an annual basis, with the purchase costs being met out of existing cash reserves and through bank financing. We have developed an acquisition brief and are currently reviewing acquisition strategies. We will engage consultants to identify and conduct the initial negotiations in relation to the purchase of suitable properties.

Metro has a clear vision, an identified set of targets and a strategy to achieve these targets. We are a financially sound organisation, focused on moderate achievable growth and high quality tenancy management, and I am confident we will continue to make a positive contribution to the social housing sector.

# Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present this report on the Board's financial governance for the year 2010/11. Highlights of our performance include:

- An increase in income of 5.5% from the previous year to over \$7.1 million. The major contributor to the increase was rental income.
- An increase in grant income of 1.2% to \$4.2 million.
- Cash reserves at the end of 2009/10 of \$1,295,080, (\$980,208 in 2010).
- An operating surplus of \$300,480.00 – an increase of 1.3% on 2009/10.

Total expenses for the year increased by 5.7% to \$6.9 million stemming primarily from property maintenance expenses to bring recently transferred properties up to an appropriate asset standard, the impact of additional Housing Pathways staffing costs and irregular administration costs. The higher administration costs were the result of relocation expenses, including additional security measures; enhancements to our IT systems requiring upgrades to software and purchase of additional hardware; and consultancy fees to assist the board in their planning functions.

METRO's balance sheet position at the end of the year improved and remains strong. Total assets at the 2011 balance date were \$2,523,367 (an increase of 22%) while liabilities were \$560,053 (an increase of 35.8%). This has resulted in a ratio of assets to liabilities similar to last year of 4.5 to 1, which represents a strong financial position. The largest component of METRO's strong asset to liabilities position is its cash reserves, which enhances the potential, and possibility for METRO to grow in the future.

METRO's financial position allowed it to manage its operations and discharge its responsibilities including the effective management of assets, provision of high quality services to our tenants, and assisting applicants for social housing.

The strong financial position of METRO allows it the opportunity of developing and implementing strategies to grow the organisation in a conservative fashion. In line with METRO's strategic planning process, developed in February 2011, our capital property portfolio increased from 81 to 92 properties. METRO has the financial resources and flexibility to purchase capital properties to add to its stock, one of the options identified in the strategic planning process.

In summary METRO remains in a strong financial position. This is the result of prudent operational and financial management processes overseen by the management team. As a result, the organisation is well positioned to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. I commend our manager, Julie Harrison and the team in producing these results and I look forward to working with them in 2012.

I would like to acknowledge in particular the work of our accountant Alan Mathew who has worked for Metro for over 20 years. This will be Alan's last AGM as our accountant but I hope that he will continue to share his knowledge and expertise in some way into the future.

# Manager's Report

I am very pleased to be able to report on a number of initiatives we have introduced to provide improved services to our tenants over the past year.

We introduced a tenant scholarship program allowing tenants to obtain financial assistance to enrol or continue in vocational training programs. Two tenants have utilised this scheme to meet course fees and the cost of textbooks/other course materials. The take up rate for this program has been relatively low so we will be reviewing the effectiveness of our communication and structure of the program to assess whether changes are required.

Metro was successful in our submission for a community development grant offered by Housing NSW and these funds are being used for a collaborative project with Fair Repairs, a subsidiary of Fair Business Australia. Fair Repairs is a social business enterprise that provides training, support and employment opportunities for individuals who have been long term unemployed. This partnership seeks to deliver two major outcomes; the provision of an early intervention program to tenants in at risk tenancies including a mentor and support model to enable tenants to develop better property care, as well as a targeted tenant employment scheme to help meet the maintenance/cleaning and gardening needs of Metro Community Housing

Fair Repairs will provide the mentoring, training and support to encourage a successful transition back into employment and Metro will provide work opportunities for Fair Repairs and further training options through our pre-existing scholarship program. We recently held a successful information session with tenants interested in employment, and are in the process of developing an MOU with Fair Repairs.

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Over the last twelve months, we have been working in partnership with Sustainable Action Values Everyone (SAVE), and our local government partners – Marrickville Council and the City of Canterbury on a pilot project called Sustainability on a Shoestring. Targeting low income and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, the program has provided information, education, support and mentorship in order to reduce participants' energy usage. The project has been very tenant driven, enabling both maximum engagement and the provision of relevant accessible information.

Important elements of the program have included:

- Group workshops with professionals facilitating interactive, educational based information;
- Use of the NSW Department of Environment Climate Change and Water's "Home Power Saving Program" initiative to support learning and progress within the workshops; and
- Monthly newsletters

The project has been exceptionally successful. A recent evaluation of the project to date has shown that not only are tenants engaging with the information at a high level, but they are also becoming peer educators in their communities. The tenants have created strong connections within the group, supporting and modelling other skills and knowledge outside of group workshops and making substantial energy savings.

With the last of the tenant workshops being completed the project is entering its' final stages which includes documentation and evaluation, development of the tool kit to enable other housing providers to facilitate the program and promotion in the wider Community Housing sector.

The program was initially co-ordinated by Madeleine Russell with support from Amy McMurtrie. Amy assumed responsibility for co-ordination after Maddy left us to take up a position with Department of Family and Community Services. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the program has been invaluable.

Amy had previously job-shared the Administrative Officer position but is now responsible for developing and resourcing our partnerships. Amy co-ordinates referrals and undertakes the pre-tenancy functions for support partnership nominations.

In February 2011 Leigh Batterham joined Metro on a permanent part-time basis as our Administrative Officer and Receptionist.

My thanks to all the Metro staff for their continued commitment and dedication to their jobs.

**Metro Housing Co-operative Ltd**  
**Audited Financial Statements**  
**2010/11**