



Minutes June 2023 Committee of Residents and Tenants (CORT)

27/06/2023

12-2pm

Foundation Housing, 297 Vincent Street Leederville and via Microsoft Teams

Committee: Claire Payne (CP) – Chair, Neil Buckley (NB) – Deputy Chair, Margaret Speed (MS), Douglas Tweed (DT), Elizabeth Draper (ED), Ted Lilley (TL), Colin Knuckey (CK), Marco Lehmann (ML)

Ex Officio: Jaynie Edwards (JE) – Minutes;

Invitees: Alison Paterson (AP); Paige Larsen (PL); Allan Wilkerson (AW)

Apologies: Rochelle Standen (RS); Maureen Maher (MM)

OPENING & PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Welcome & Apologies

The meeting commenced at 12.00pm, with apologies noted as above.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the Land on which the meeting was held.

1. Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2023 were endorsed as a true reflection of the meeting.

2. Review of Action Items

The Chair read the response from FHL CEO in response to the query regarding interstate housing transfers. Management clarified there is no avenue for FHL to engage in interstate transfers but Committee members could make individual representation to Shelter WA regarding this issue if they wished. This would have to be done separately to Foundation Housing, though, as this is not an issue in which FHL is seeking to be involved. As Shelter WA has no remit outside WA and is a membership body, they may not be the appropriate group for advocacy anyway.

ACTION – Where this is of interest, Individual Committee members may approach Shelter WA as Tenants not as CORT representatives to advocate for interstate community housing transfers.

3. Community Engagement Update

AP gave an overview of Community Engagement activities that took place over the past 12 months including specific details on several activities and website information. 2022/2023 Community Engagement Presentation is attached There have been 112 Community Engagement Activities held with over 1000 combined participants delivered in conjunction with 17 community services partners and service organisations.

A query was raised regarding the number of Community Activities available to Lodging Residents as opposed to mainstream Foundation Tenants. AP confirmed that there were around equal numbers of CE activities held in Lodges as there are across all the mainstream tenant portfolio areas over the 2022/2023 period. Some community-based activities are accessible by both Lodging residents and Tenants depending upon location and focus of the activity. AP confirmed that if required FHL can provide support to Tenants and Residents to access community-based CE activities.

The WACOSS Digital Inclusion Project was discussed, as this was an opportunity for all Tenants to access a free laptop, free internet for a year and IT support. FHL has access to another 100 places for this project and CORT members were all encouraged to apply.

However, it was noted by several people who had already put in an expression of interest that they thought that they would not be eligible because they had an existing Internet Provider. Given that FHL is represented on the WACOSS project Reference group, it was agreed that FHL would confirm eligibility conditions.

ACTION – AP to clarify whether there was an eligibility barrier if a Tenant did not want to change their Internet Provider to be able to access the Free Laptop and Support from the WACOSS project

4. Tenant and Resident Communication

PA gave an overview of the publications accessible to Tenants and Residents and highlighted changes to these publications that had come as a result of input from the CORT. PL advised that :

- there was a new online “How to Manage on a Low Income” resource the content for which was created by Tenants and residents during the focus groups held earlier this year. This online resource provides a range of money saving tips and is available via the FHL website.
- the next Tenant Newsletter is due out in July and will include reference to the next round of CORT elections of new members including the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson positions.

5. Current Business

5.1 CORT Processes

Chair gave an overview of feedback received that suggested there is not enough consultation in the agenda setting process. The Chair clarified the current process which the Committee agreed seemed sufficient. It was agreed Committee contact should continue to go through FHL.

Discussion continued around whether members could attend the agenda setting meeting and it was agreed these issues could be further discussed at the AGM. The Chair further noted challenges in finding agenda items so any input is welcomed.

The Committee discussed the option of having a set rotation of the three FHL Executives and CEO to attend meetings. This would then require alignment of topics of discussion to the portfolio areas of the FHL Executive. AP gave a brief overview of who the Executives are and their specific roles and responsibilities. The committee agreed to the preference in having a rotation of Executive Managers attending meetings and agreed to discuss at AGM and update the CORT Terms of Reference to reflect this.

ACTION – Chair send email reminder to call for agenda items one month before each CORT meeting.

ACTION – AP to propose the development of a calendar of CORT meetings over the next 12 months to the Executive which includes a rotation of Executive Managers and CEO's to be available at each meeting.

5.2 CORT Election Process

The Committee discussed tenure of Chair and clarified details noted in the Terms of Reference. It was noted that both the Chair and Deputy Chair must stand for re-election at the end of every two years and can only serve a maximum of 4 years. General CORT members must re-nominate for the CORT every two years but do not have a maximum term for participation.

It was also noted that both Claire Payne and Neil Buckley will need to re-nominate for their positions this year, and that there will be a call for nominations for both the Chair and Deputy Chair position in the next Tenant Newsletter.

The election of the new CORT will be announced at the next AGM which will be held in October 2023.

AP and PL confirmed notification of CORT AGM will be in the appropriate newsletters which are distributed both electronically and via hard copy.

5.3 FNIP

The Deputy-Chair gave an overview of the Chair and Deputy Chair's meeting with a First Nations Involvement Panel member and circulated three recommendations for the CORT to consider forwarding to the FHL Executive which included increasing the number of First Nations employees in key positions such as Allocations. AP advised that these recommendations align with the FHL innovate Reconciliation Action Plan which was recently launched. It was resolved the CORT recommendations as prepared by NB be presented to the FHL Executive.

ACTION – AP to present recommendations to FHL Executive, for consideration, regarding increasing First Nations employees at FHL with a focus upon the Allocations role.

5.4 Maintenance Communication between FHL and Residents and Tenants.

The Chair called for comment on Committee member experience with communication from FHL around maintenance in shared spaces. It was agreed the Committee would like more information around SHERP funding process.

ACTION – Stuart Duplock General Manager, Commercial Development to be invited to attend the next CORT meeting to discuss SHERP funding and other maintenance queries.

5.5 Customer Service Charter and Survey

AW provided an overview of the purpose and scope of the Service Charter noting 'Customer' had been dropped following feedback from CORT and other residents. There was discussion around specific response times and how this was summarised in the Charter.

AW provided an overview of the Tenant Survey which is conducted by an independent group every two years, giving the establishment of CORT and changes to the Service Charter as examples of outcomes of the survey. The questions asked on the survey have remained the same so responses can be fairly compared over time.

The Committee queried whether prize money would remain at \$200, Management could not confirm at this time. The Chair queried whether it was possible to break down responses regarding maintenance from those in over-55 complexes versus everyone else. AW established that is not possible in this instance.

5.6 Bedbugs

The Deputy-Chair queried whether anyone had personally had issues with eradicating bedbugs in their homes. The members of the Committee had not had to deal with this situation so could not comment. Management gave an overview of the process of dealing with bedbugs in lodging situations and clarified that while this is tenant responsibility in mainstream accommodation, FHL could provide support if requested by a tenant. There was discussion around the relevant information on the FHL website and it was agreed to add contact for mainstream tenants in addition to contacts for residents.

ACTION – PL to add Housing Co-ordinator contact in addition to Lodging Co-ordinator contact on the bedbug information sheet on the FHL website information.

6. Any other business

The committee queried the process of rent setting and reviews. with a particular reference to the “deeming” of income for eligible recipients and why FHL adopts this as a policy. AW advised the Committee that FHL follows the Department of Communities/Housing own policy in terms of setting rent based upon all of the sources of government income that a household would be eligible for. It was noted that for some households, where there was abusive and /or exploitative relationships, this can create challenges where adult children and/or partners do

not access government allowances such Youth Allowance and/or Job Seeker when they are eligible to do so – and there is then flow on financial stress impacts on the primary tenant, often a single parent. AP advised that impacted tenants can appeal decisions.

There was discussion around appeals versus complaints. Management provided information around the availability of advocacy support from external services and reiterated to process of contacting Housing Co-ordinators if support was needed.

The Chair called for any agenda items for the next meeting. No agenda items were noted.

ACTION – PL check if external advocacy services are listed on the website and/or comms that Tenants receive regarding. PL to discuss with Finance and confirm whether Deeming information needs to be added to Rents information on the website.

The meeting closed at 2.30pm