



## **MINUTES OF CENTRAL EAST ACCOMMODATION & CARE ALLIANCE INC MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 10.00AM ON MONDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2025 AT THE MERREDIN REGIONAL COMMUNITY & LEISURE CENTRE, BATES STREET, MERREDIN**

### **1. MEETING OPENING**

The Chairperson opened the meeting at 10.05am and welcomed Councillors Jo Hayes and Becky Cowcill from the Shire of Quairading who were attending for the first time.

The Chairperson advised that this first meeting of 2025 is an important one, as CEACA submitted the final funding submission for additional houses in January, and this means that Member shires should ensure that they are ready to go should we be successful. Preparation includes a resolution to not only transfer the land to CEACA, but to contribute 10% of the cost of the units for their shire to the project. Although the signs are positive to date, funding is not guaranteed and if unsuccessful, CEACA will investigate other opportunities.

The Chairperson referred to the Umwelt report at Annexure D of the EO report and recommended that the Members read the report as it has useful information and positive feedback in relation to CEACA and the current project.

### **2. MEETING MATTERS**

#### **2.1 Record of Attendance and Apologies**

##### **Attendance**

Terry Waldron - Chairperson, Richard Marshall - CEACA Executive Officer, Jo Trachy - CEACA Operations Manager, Mark Furr & Stephen Strange - Shire of Bruce Rock, Raymond Griffiths - Shire of Kellerberrin, Tony Sachse - Shire of Mt Marshall, Craig Watts & Bradley Anderson – Shire of Merredin, Gary Shadbolt - Shire of Mukinbudin, Rebecca McCall & Holly Cusack - Shire of Narembreen, Natalie Ness, Becky Cowcill & Jo Hayes – Shire of Quairading, Bill Price & Ross Della-Bosca - Shire of Westonia, Mischa Stratford - Shire of Wyalkatchem, Nic Warren & Wayne Della-Bosca - Shire of Yilgarn.

##### **Apologies**

Monika Gardiner – Shire of Kellerberrin, Manisha Barthakur – Shire of Dowerin, Tanika McLennan – Shire of Mukinbudin, Sabine Taylor – Shire of Wyalkatchem, Ben Mckay – Shire of Mt Marshall.

#### **2.2 Declaration of Quorum**

The Chairperson advised that the quorum for the meeting was met.

#### **2.3 Conflicts of Interest**

There were no declarations of conflicts of interest.

#### **2.4 Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting – 4 November 2024**

##### **RESOLUTION**

It was resolved that the Minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 be accepted as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

#### **2.5 Action Items**

All action points apart from the sale of Kununoppin, will be covered in the Agenda. The Kununoppin units have been sold, and the new owner will be moving into one of the houses and will retain one of the existing tenants in the other house. CEACA has endeavoured to assist the tenant who is moving out to find alternative accommodation, including offer of a CEACA house, liaising with Merrittville Village and Milligan Units and speaking with Elders and other shires.

### **3. MATTERS FOR DECISION**

#### **3.1 Rent Setting Policy & Employment Policy**

##### **Rent Setting Policy**

When CEACA was registered as Community Housing Provider, it came with recommendations for improvements from the Department of Communities. The recommendations included updating our Rent Setting Policy to ensure compliance with social housing rent setting guidelines and adding Police and Bankruptcy checks to the Employment Policy.

The Rent Setting Policy has been re-written as the current version is no longer relevant for social housing. The new version incorporates the existing CEACA rent setting model and the policy specific to social and community housing. The policy for social and community housing differs from the CEACA model as it considers household income plus the amount of Commonwealth Rent Assistance, with the rent charged to be no more than 75% of market rent. Shelter WA has a Rent Setting Calculator that CEACA can use to calculate rents for social housing. The rent paid by existing tenants has been compared to what social housing tenants would be paying and the figures are close, but social housing rents are slightly lower.

The EO has advised that the rents in the Umwelt Report are significantly higher than CEACA is charging and recommends that they be increased. In accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987*, rents can only be increased once every 12 months.

If CEACA is successful with funding, there is an expectation that they follow the social housing policy guidelines. The EO's preference is for all houses to be managed as we currently do, as it will be much easier to administer, however the Department may not allow it. The Chairperson advised that CEACA has spoken to the Minister's office and their advice was that there may be an opportunity for flexibility, but this is not guaranteed.

Discussion ensued.

##### **ACTION ITEM**

- 1. EO/OM to arrange for an Officer from the Department of Communities or alternative to attend a meeting to provide information and guidance in relation to rent setting, rent assistance (CRA) and answer questions that Members may have so that they fully understand them and how it may impact the existing CEACA model and community members.**
- 2. If successful with funding, the Chairperson to meet with the Minister's office to discuss flexibility in relation to rent setting and the possibility of continuing with the existing CEACA model.**

##### **Employment Policy**

The current version was approved by the Management Committee in 2024, however the Department of Communities, as part of the Community Housing Provider registration, has recommended that we mandate police checks and bankruptcy checks for Members and employees. The Department conduct checks on their staff and expect CEACA to. CEACA has referred to their Constitution and incorporated the wording that covers eligibility for the Management Committee. All new employees would need to satisfy police clearance checks.

General discussion ensued.

##### **RESOLUTION**

It was resolved by the Management Committee that the Rent Setting Policy and Employment Policy tabled be adopted.

#### **3.2 Shire Funding of Expansion Project and Transfer of Land**

The EO reiterated his earlier advice that proposed funding for social housing consists of 90% Government and 10% LGA. CEACA set the contribution at 10% as this is in line with the first project contribution. CEACA is unable to advise in relation to the timing of this contribution, however it may be that it can be split over two financial years. CEACA should have more information for Members when they have received a response to the funding submissions.

The Shire of Quairading Councillor, Becky Cowcill asked if the contribution could be a mix of cash and site works. General discussion ensued and it was suggested that a cash contribution is the safest option for shires and to leave the site preparation to the Builder to ensure compliance and warranty on works. For Shire budgeting purposes, it would be preferable if the shires were advised if split payments can be made by May.

The Chairperson stressed the importance of all shires being ready with land and contributions as a funding response is imminent. If any shires have questions relating to the project, they should contact CEACA. The Chairperson addressed the Shire of Wyalkatchem Member and stressed the importance of the proposed land being available for construction.

Shire rates were discussed, and all Members agreed that CEACA, as a charitable organisation, is exempt from paying shire rates and this would be the same for any new houses. CEACA do pay for refuse collection and Emergency Services Levy.

General discussion ensued.

## **RESOLUTION**

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It was resolved that allocation of the proposed 54 houses be as scheduled in the EO Report- Annexure C, with Shire of Merredin to confirm exact number required. It was also resolved by the Management Committee that all shires agree to transfer suitable land to CEACA for the purposes of the proposed expansion project.

### **3.3 Number of New Houses by Shire**

See discussions and Resolution in Item 3.2. The Members also discussed the distribution of the 54 houses and agreed that should the Shire of Merredin approve less than the original 12 requested, other Members would be willing to take additional houses.

### **3.4 Sale of Koorda & Nungarin Land**

The Chairperson spoke with the Department regarding the possible sale of Koorda and Nungarin sites and spoke with the Members at today's meeting. CEACA has obtained a market appraisal from Elders and will obtain a second market appraisal in due course.

## **RESOLUTION**

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It was resolved to put this item on hold and to obtain a second market appraisal in due course.

## **4. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

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### **4.1 Executive Officer Report**

The EO summarised their report as follows:

Annexure A - there is a \$429k surplus and that includes the sale of the Kununoppin property. There were no costs associated with the surplus on sale of the land as it was gifted to CEACA. The funds will be transferred into a CEACA Expansion Reserve Fund at year-end.

Expenses on houses – Show prior year accruals not required of \$24k.

Insurance - Industrial Special Risks insurance rose by 25% for the 2024-25 year and we have been advised to expect a further rise of 25% in 2025-26. We have been advised that increases are across the board and are not due to our claims history. CEACA approached another insurer and the quote was higher. The OM has spoken to LGIS who normally only provide coverage for LGA's and asked if CEACA could be covered considering its Members are LGA's. They have considered and approved coverage and will meet with CEACA in May to discuss options.

Repairs and maintenance costs are low as we use the provision for defects \$380k project funds where appropriate. These costs often relate to poor workmanship and defective materials used by the builder.

The Deputy Chairperson suggested that we negotiate a Financial Services Agreement with the Government if successful with funding and include the right to sell 10% of the new houses if funds were required.

Balance Sheet, Annexure B – shows Cash at bank of \$1.5m at the end of December 2024. The land value is lower for houses because they are on one Title and would be higher if they were on individual Titles.

### **4.2 Operations Manager Report**

The OM added the following comments to their report:

- Additional tenancy applications received since the last meeting bring Bruce Rock waiting list to 7 and Westonia to 2.
- From an operations point of view, all is going well, and we continue to deal with home care providers, social workers, NDIS and other to ensure our tenants are accessing the best care possible. A conversation held with NDIS this month was helpful and has already resulted in one of our tenants getting much needed assistance with their application. NDIS would like to present at a future CEACA meeting.
- It is pleasing that the Shires of Wyalkatchem and Westonia are encouraging their community members to apply to be added to CEACA's waitlist. CEACA also encourage all shires to the Department of Communities to be added to their waiting list as it provides a clear indication of need in the shires.
- The OM has drafted a Building Tender in advance of funding results. It is a draft, and assistance will be required from a suitably qualified Project Manager or someone who has worked on similar tenders.
- The OM thanked all Members for their assistance with the funding application and other information requested.

- CEACA is struggling to find a contractor or business to maintain its solar systems and to provide a quotation for future solar installations if successful with funding. The OM has approached organisations in York, Northam, Midland and Merredin with no result. Evoke Living has advised that they will provide a contact who may be able to assist.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

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- 1. Members to provide CEACA with detail of any individual or organisation who could assist with Solar.**
- 2. The CEO, Shire of Kellerberrin, to provide the OM with details of a suitable contact for tender submissions.**

### **4.3 Management of Shire Owned Accommodation**

CEACA has an interest in managing shire owned accommodation, however, it is agreed that conducting a trial in one shire to begin with is the best course of action. CEACA has previously met with the Shire of Bruce Rock, however their volunteer group is now in a good position to manage their properties. CEACA will meet with representatives from the Shire of Merredin and Merrittville Village after this meeting to view the Merrittville site.

The Chairperson reminded the Members that if CEACA is successful with funding for additional houses, consideration will need to be given to employing additional staff, such as a Project Manager or assistance with management of the houses. A joint venture arrangement for management of shire owned units may also be considered. We may also need a full-time CEO in the future. The requirements for growth will depend on the funding results and future management of shire owned units.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

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There was no general business to discuss.

## **5. MEETING CLOSURE & NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held at the Kellerberrin & Districts Club, Lot 260 Connelly Street, Kellerberrin on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 10.00am.

There being no further business, the Management Committee meeting closed at 11.43am.

### **DECLARATION**

These Minutes were confirmed by the Central East Accommodation & Care Alliance Inc at the Management Committee Meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Person presiding at the meeting at which these minutes were confirmed).