

Oxfam Australia Board Meeting 13-14 December 2019

The Oxfam Australia (OAU) board met in Melbourne on Friday 13 and Saturday 14 December 2019. The meeting was attended by a full complement of members (with the apology of Alan Wu who is on an Obama Foundation scholarship program) and took place in two broad parts – board business and then presentations and discussions on OAU's strategy for 2020 and beyond.

After the customary formalities, the Chief Executive (CE) provided her report covering the external and internal environment that OAU works within, organizational development, and programs and operations. While we have reported on many occasions that we are in times of change, the CE's report underscored that the need for change, adaptation, and transformation has never been greater in our organisation's life. Following on was a comprehensive discussion about Oxfam in the Pacific and the role of OAU in making our important and diverse operations in our region the most effective and well governed they can be.

There are proposals in our sector, supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for a joint appeals mechanism to address humanitarian crises in a coordinated way. The board discussed Oxfam's proposed initial response to this initiative.

The meeting reviewed our much-bolstered system for ensuring safeguarding breaches do not occur, then went on to receive reports and discuss operational matters concerning finance performance and risk, and progress on implementation of our new CRM system.

OAU board committees have been busy and the meeting received reports from the First People's Advisory Committee, and Governance, Finance Risk and Audit, and Public Engagement Committee chairs.

The strategy meeting started up on the Friday afternoon and continued into the next day. We are developing OAU's 10 year strategy, influenced by the theory of change and change goals that Oxfam International has drafted in a massive consultation process involving around 1,000 people around the world, adapted for the circumstances of our Australian affiliate, our region and the needs of the people we seek to serve through elimination of poverty and inequality. This is after all why we exist.

We have a cohesive and hard-working board and a wonderful team led by our relatively new CE Lyn Morgain. I would like to thank all of them for their dedication and look forward to being part of our effort to build a better world.

Dennis Goldner
Chair

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