

Note of the Oxfam Australia Board Meeting – 26 March 2021

Our first business meeting of the year was hybrid, with a number of directors able to travel into the office for the first time since the beginning of COVID, and the rest joining via Zoom. It was wonderful to see those members able to travel in person, and we are looking forward to all meeting in one place together later in the year.

Once again, we had a full meeting agenda with an emphasis on matters from FRAC and Governance Committee.

As always, we commenced with an acknowledgement of country, declaration of interests and adoption of minutes and discussion of action items.

The Board was pleased to receive an update from CE Lyn Morgain on key activities since the last meeting. While the gap between meetings was shorter than usual to accommodate budget approval, the organisation has certainly hit the ground running in 2021. The Board received updates on the campaign for a people's vaccine, noting that globally Oxfam's COVID-19 work has reached nearly 42 million people, and our communications on the risks of COVID19 have reached 42 million people. Oxfam has also worked with 694 partners, providing WASH support to nearly 10 million people and providing more than 1.6 million people with emergency food security and livelihood support. The Board noted the annual Close the Gap report and the agency's submission on a Voice to Parliament.

The Board noted the success of the inspiring Innovation Showcase webinar held in February, with three presentations on Weather Index Insurance in Sri Lanka, the Micro-Desalination project for First Peoples in Western Victoria and the Unblocked Cash Transfer project in Vanuatu.

In this section of the agenda the Board was also updated on the many initiatives the Oxfam International Confederation is taking to streamline its operations and deliver great impact for the communities with whom we work.

The Board approved the FY21-22 Budget and considered managements' plans for building on the consolidation of the organisations' finances over the past 12 months. In a very challenging financial context, it is good to see OAU standing on firmer ground and the Board thanked the ELT, finance and fundraising teams for their efforts. In this finance, audit and risk section of the agenda the Board also discussed a refreshed reserves management policy, internal audit plans, and the regular legal, risk, compliance and safeguarding report.

Next up the Board heard from Governance Committee and took a number of key decisions to implement the Board's decisions on diversity quotas, ways of working and size. A revised competency framework for Directors was endorsed, and the Board agreed on next steps in a transition and recruitment process.

The Board also received an update from the Public Engagement Committee and discussed a draft stakeholder accountability policy. One of the key elements of the policy are the 5 principles underpinning OAU' stakeholder accountability: Transparency, Honesty, Balance, Timeliness and Accessibility. It is hoped this policy will be finalised at our next meeting.

This Board meeting had a very full agenda dealing with substantive issues and my thanks to the executive team for the excellent papers presented to the Board and to my fellow directors for their time and hard work to ensure major discussions, in particular regarding FY21-22 Budget, resulted in decisions that will guide and support our wonderful staff to undertake their important work in supporting the world's most vulnerable people.