

NHT Independent Review

Findings and Recommendations

Questions and Answers

This fact sheet lists questions from the Neighbourhood House Network about the NHT Independent Review findings and recommendations and provides Departmental responses. The fact sheet will be updated as more questions are submitted and further details about answers are available.

To submit questions, please email NHTReview@dpac.tas.gov.au.

This fact sheet was last updated on 29 March 2023.

Questions from Q & A Session 10 March 2023

Q. Should Regional Network meetings continue during the transition phase?

A. The Department recommends that Regional Network meetings are postponed until a Change Manager is in place to move forward with review recommendations relating to the Regional Networks. In the meantime, the Department encourages Houses to continue to meet outside of the Regional Network meeting format to share ideas, information and support.

Q. Can we appoint the review report consultant as the Change Manager?

A. Writing an independent review and leading a change management process have some overlap but are different roles. In addition, the Department is keen to test the market for a Change Manager to ensure a transparent process that identifies someone with both the appropriate skills and availability to undertake the role.

Q. How will NHT staff be impacted by the implementation of the review recommendations?

A. The proposed reforms are focussed on NHT governance, structure and culture at the board level. The changes are not focussed on NHT staff structures, roles or operations. NHT staff are likely to be involved in supporting the Change Manager to undertake the implementation of recommendations, including logistical support and reviews of policies and procedures.

Questions from Review Findings and Recommendations Presentation and Q & A Session 16-17 February 2023

Q. Will the current NHT Board and NHT CEO stay in place for the 6 months that the Change Manager is in place?

How will the Change Manager work with the NHT Board and CEO?

Has the Department confirmed that the current NHT Board are willing to stay on until the constitutional changes have been implemented?

A. The Change Manager will be engaged by the Department for 6 months. This role will objectively and independently achieve the implementation of key recommendations of the review. The Change Manager will report to the Department.

One of the first tasks for the Change Manager is to recruit a permanent CEO.

To ensure that the organisation continues to operate and to meet constitutional requirements, the current NHT Board will remain in place to govern NHT and to provide direction and support the Acting CEO in the day-to-day business of the organisation until the proposed changes to the constitution are ratified and a new NHT Board is elected.

Q. Does the structure of the proposed NHT Board (3 skills-based members, 3 members from Houses and an independent Chair) provide adequate representation for Houses?

A. This is an area for the Change Manager to explore as part of the listening tour they will undertake.

As outlined in the Review Report, there will be an annual program of NHT Regional Network consultations. The Regional Networks will be renewed with a robust Terms of Reference which will include capturing input into the advocacy, sector development and information sharing needs of the regional networks.

Reducing the number of House-based members while increasing opportunities for consultation provides for continued strong representation as well as an appropriate mix of skills and experience on the NHT Board. It also better protects House-based members from

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actual or perceived conflicts of interest between their roles as NHT Board members and as representatives of individual Houses.

As the Review Report recommends, skill-based members will align with the values and focus of community development as well as have the range of governance skills required. In the transition phase, independent skills-based members will help to rebuild trust through transparency and independent accountability.

Q. How will skill-based NHT Board members be identified and elected?

Can the skills-based NHT Board members come from within the Network?

- A. The process for electing skill-based members will need to be included in the changes to the NHT constitution around the composition of the NHT Board. The Change Manager will be responsible for consulting with Houses (including through the listening tour) and developing proposed changes that reflect an appropriate NHT Board composition, including roles, criteria, and appointment processes.

As these are developed, it should be considered that there are likely to be people within the Network that meet the skills and experience requirements. This should be considered in conjunction with the purpose of having independent skills-based members and how potential conflicts of interest would be managed.

Q. Will there be structures to address people that are not meeting their responsibilities as NHT Board members?

- A. The Review Report recommends an annual assessment of the NHT Board's performance against the AICD Principles of Good Governance is undertaken. This includes surveying the Network and the existing board members and is intended to identify areas where the NHT Board can improve.

The Change Manager will consult with the Network to develop a Code of Conduct. NHT Board members will be subject to the Code of Conduct and over the transitional period, the option to escalate any grievances raised through the Code of Conduct process to an external independent panel will be provided to ensure transparency, accountability, and trust in the process.

Q. Can current NHT Board members nominate for the House Member positions on the new NHT Board? Can the current Acting CEO apply for permanent CEO position?

- A. Yes, current NHT Board members may consider nominating for appropriate positions on a new NHT Board and the current Acting CEO may consider applying for the permanent CEO role.

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Q. Will the Code of Conduct replace the existing Code of Conduct?

Who does the Code of Conduct apply to?

A. The Change Manager's role will include developing an effective Code of Conduct. The task will include reviewing current documents, including the existing Code of Conduct, and consulting with the Network. The current Code of Conduct will apply until the new one is in place.

The Code of Conduct will apply to:

- the NHT Board
- NHT employees
- House Boards
- House Managers/Coordinators
- House employees
- House volunteers.

It will not apply to Boards, managers/coordinators, employees or volunteers of Houses that choose to not retain NHT membership.

Q. Has the Department considered developing a corresponding charter of members rights alongside the Code of Conduct?

A. The Change Manager's may consider the demand and suitability of a charter of members rights through the listening tour.

Q. Is the Community Care Advisor Pilot an example of the type of activity that the Department would not ask NHT to take on a peak in the future?

A. Consulting with the Network and reaching a shared view of the role and responsibilities of NHT as a peak is one of the Change Manager's key tasks.

Q. Would it be a good idea to have a new CEO work with the Board now rather than waiting until the Change Manager is appointed?

A. The highest priority is to appoint the Change Manager to independently lead the implementation of recommendations.

The length of time it would take for the recruitment of a new CEO would result in a significant delay of the work required for the implementation of key recommendations. As per the Review Report importantly the Change Manager role allows for "clear air" which means a new CEO can then step into the role with a range of practical elements of the recommendations implemented and/or under implementation.

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A key early task for the Change Manager is to recruit a permanent CEO. The CEO will then support the Change Manager and the NHT staff to implement the recommendations that the Change Manager is responsible for.

At the end of the Change Manager's role, the CEO and NHT Board will agree on responsibilities around remaining transition tasks.

Q. Will the permanent CEO work for the Department or for NHT?

Will the packaging for the CEO be reviewed as part of appointing a new CEO?

A. The permanent CEO will work for NHT and be responsible to the NHT Board.

Packaging for the CEO is the responsibility of the NHT Board.

Q. Will NHT get additional resources to undertake the recommendations implementation as well as their usual work?

A. The majority of the implementation will be the responsibility of the Change Manager who will be funded by the Department. The Change Manager will work with the NHT Board and CEO. Part of the work is to consult with the Network to form a shared view of the role of NHT as a peak. Once the role of the peak is agreed the work of NHT will transition to meet the role of the peak.

Q. Will the current NHT staff be supported through this process?

A. The Department met with NHT staff on 20 February 2023 and will continue to meet with them during the initial phase of the implementation of recommendations.

The proposed reforms are focussed on NHT governance at the board level and are not around changes to NHT staff structures, roles or operations.

Q. Has the Department considered how to resource activities that will no longer be a NHT role but cannot be picked by individual Houses?

A. As part of the process of forming a shared view of the role of NHT as a peak, the Change Manager will consult with the Network around what they think should be within and outside NHT's responsibility. As part of forming that shared view, resourcing for activities which may sit outside NHT's responsibility can be considered.

Q. Will past history be examined to make sure that things aren't lost?

A. The Change Manager will consult with the Network around the role of NHT as a peak, including things that have worked well and should be retained.

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Q. How does the development of a new Strategic Framework fit into this process?

A. Given the work to be undertaken in defining the role of NHT as a peak, the development of the new Strategic Framework will pause while initial work is undertaken. The existing Strategic Framework will continue to apply, and the new Strategic Framework will be developed when more clarity around roles and responsibilities is available with the aim of finalising a new document prior to funding agreements expiring in June 2024.

Q. Given the scope of work to be done by the Change Manager, does the Department have some flexibility around extending the role if more time is needed?

A. Yes. The Department is committed to getting these changes right, so if there are still key tasks to complete after six months there is scope to extend the Change Manager.

Q. Does the Department have any indicative timelines around when the major pieces of work will be done?

A. Timelines will need to consider Departmental approval processes but the Department would like to have the Request for Proposal for a Change Manager out in March 2023 and the Change Manager on board by late March/early April 2023. The Department will continue to update the Network around progress and is happy for feedback about the best way to communicate news.

Q. Are these Q&A sessions with House Presidents and Managers for communication only or for feedback?

A. The Department has fully, partially or in-principle accepted all the recommendations of the Review Report, so conversations around the findings and recommendations are for communication. However, the way that recommendations are implemented is open to consultation with the Network through the listening tour, Regional Networks, and other pathways.

Q. Has the Department considered how NHT membership might work? Is there scope for individual memberships as well as House memberships?

Is there scope for non-Houses to become members?

If non-Houses are allowed to join NHT, will there be measures to ensure that Houses remain the majority of NHT members?

A. The Change Manager will consult with the Network around how membership of NHT might work, including options around individual person membership.

Some other peaks see benefits from having a diverse range of aligned organisations join their membership or seek membership through a specific category (e.g. associate membership).

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The Change Manager and the Network may explore this through the listening tour and further consultation.

The Department sees the main purpose of NHT as being a peak for Neighbourhood Houses. While the detailed work around forming a shared view of the role of NHT as a peak is still to be done, the Department funds NHT as a peak and would want to continue to do so.

Q. What is in place to stop Houses from going rogue if they are not members of NHT?

Will there need to be a different structure for the Department to work with Houses that choose not to be members of NHT?

A. As Houses are individually funded by the Department, they will need to meet their funding agreement requirements, including service delivery and reporting.

Based on consultation, the Change Manager will work with the Department to determine how best for the Department to work with non-member Houses on matters they would usually ask NHT to engage the whole network on.

Across the community sector, it is not unusual for some organisations to not be members of their peak body. The Department and peaks work through this in a range of ways. For example, the Department may ask for peaks to canvass their members on some issues but to offer opportunities for participation or feedback across the sector for others.

Q. Does the Department have a vision or measures for what a successful outcome of this process looks like?

A. The Department will have key indicators that the Change Manager is to achieve and will monitor these on a monthly basis. Across the two-year transition phase, the Department 6 monthly reviews will occur to verify that the project is on track. The format for these reviews is to be developed

Q. Is there scope for further Q & A sessions in a few weeks once everyone has had a chance to read and think about the report?

A. Yes, the Department will look at holding another Q&A session in March 2023. In the meantime, the Department invites the Network to submit questions through the NHTReview@dpac.tas.gov.au email address. Questions and answers will be collated and provided to the Network for reference.

Q. Where will the Change Manager be physically located?

A. While not yet confirmed, the Change Manager is likely to work out of the NHT office.

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Q. What is happening with the vacant North West position on the current NHT Board?

A. The Department understands from the review that the current board is constitutional.

The Department supports the review recommendation that the existing board members remain in place with the Change Manager role as independent Chair.

It will be up to the independent Chair and NHT board to ensure the organisation is operating within the legal requirements of an Incorporated Association, including ensuring NHT Board membership meets the requirements of the existing constitution.

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