

Note: Oxfam Australia Board Meeting February 2017

The Oxfam Australia (OAU) Board convened in Melbourne for its first meeting of 2017 on 24 February.

The Chief Executive briefed the meeting on the external environment and fundraising and income outlook and provided an update on management's budgetary process for Financial Year 2018, which commences on 1 April. Budget parameters were presented and agreed to. It is a challenging and somewhat turbulent environment which calls for careful and realistic planning but simultaneously, continuing ambition for Oxfam to pursue its programming and campaigning objectives.

Campaigning has been active, with high activity in the themes of inequality, seeking a restoration of responsible investment in aid and development by Australia, and creating an economy in which the 'Human Economy' and gender are put at the forefront.

The CE discussed with the Board the Australian Humanitarian Partnership Agreement, OAU's indigenous programs, staff matters and partnerships and donors.

Progress on the Operational Plan was tabled in the new format which is easier to overview and highlights areas where progress is on plan and several areas for attention which management is addressing. The Financial Report was received and a number of procedural matters were canvassed and approved including in relation to insurances and a deed of access and indemnity. OAU's risk management report was tabled and discussed and the results of internal audit work in the countries for which the agency has responsibility.

Matters relating to Oxfam International (OI) and the One Oxfam project were dealt with including a discussion on putting more rigour to affiliate financial contributions to enable OI to conduct its work with more certainty. OAU reaffirmed its strong commitment and leadership role in realising One Oxfam.

The governance report was presented. This resulted in a decision to throw open all external positions on our Board Nominations Committee (BNC) to ensure the Board is linked to external influences and there is a process now occurring to identify the future needs of our Board including composition, skills and size, which the BNC will be asked to address.

The Board discussed the future role of its Public Engagement Committee now that the community network model has been bedded down.

The meeting finished with a presentation on Oxfam's new brand narrative. This is an exciting development which drives clear messaging about Oxfam's purpose and functions and will be critical in our external facing work. There was also a chance to debrief on a just completed key supporter field visit to Sri Lanka to see Oxfam's work. This was a great opportunity to showcase our work and to be reminded of the importance of our work, and the need to ensure that we keep our supporters connected to our work in the field.

Dennis Goldner

Board Chair

February 2017