

**Communique**  
**Aboriginal Housing Victoria Board Meeting**  
**Melbourne**  
**Thursday 26 November 2015**

The Board of Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) held their tenth Board meeting for the calendar year today, 26 November 2015 in Melbourne.

The Board would like to convey their best wishes to tenants over the holiday season, and wish tenants and families a happy and safe Christmas and new year.

**Induction of Aunty Patricia Ockwell to the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll**

The Board formally congratulated Aunty Pat Ockwell who was inducted onto the Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll. The Board acknowledged Aunty Pat's outstanding service to community as a champion for justice and fairness, in particular her work and contribution to the Aboriginal Housing Board for over 30 years along with her involvement with Aboriginal Hostels.

The Board also congratulated two AHV tenants, Aunty Cath Solomon and Aunty Georgina Lovett-Williams, who were also inducted onto the Honour Roll along with Aunty Pat and acknowledged their significant contribution to the Aboriginal community.

**Community Consultation Meetings**

The Board welcomed the commencement of regional community engagement meetings as part of our Community Engagement Strategy. So far meetings have been held in Ringwood, Werribee, Horsham, Wodonga, Robinvale, Bendigo and Dandenong. Meetings to date have been well attended and the Board acknowledged the contribution of tenants and community members who have taken the time to participate.

The Board encouraged tenants to come along to the meetings to be held before Christmas in Warrnambool, Shepparton, Thornbury, Lakes Entrance and Sale.

**Tenancy Review**

The Board approved a review of tenancy services as part of AHV's ongoing commitment to improving delivery of housing services. The review seeks to build on existing good practice and identify how the design and delivery of tenancy services can be improved to achieve best practice. The review will consider best practice relating to culturally engaged and appropriate tenancy management services, sustaining tenancies and supporting vulnerable tenants, local engagement with tenants and supporting tenant participation, and, enforcement of tenancy obligations through VCAT. The review will also consider whether tenancy and client services staff have the relevant skills to undertake redefined roles.

**Tendering of responsive maintenance services**

The Board approved competitive tendering of responsive maintenance services in early 2016 to maximise value for money and contractor performance to achieve timely and high quality

maintenance works. The Board support pursuit of opportunities to leverage maintenance works to improve Aboriginal employment.

### **AFL Sportsready Partnership**

The Board welcomed a report on progress in developing a partnership with AFL Sportsready. A high degree of interest was shown in the partnership with AFL Sportsready by tenants and community at the Werribee, Robinvale and Dandenong community engagement meetings following the successful appointment of two tenants at the new Bunnings store in Epping. AFL Sportsready provide opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers to gain opportunities for employment, skills development, training, work ready preparations, workplace support and mentoring. AFL Sportsready have already provided support for over 1500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Board were excited at the potential of this great initiative.

### **Teleyarn**

The Board endorsed strengthening Aboriginal Housing Victoria's partnership with Australian Red Cross to provide a service for socially isolated Aboriginal clients. It is proposed that the volunteer service could build social and cultural connectedness between volunteers and AHV tenants, particularly the 191 residents over the age of 65. The service could act as a well-being and safety check, which is particularly important for frail Elders living alone.