

Communique
Aboriginal Housing Victoria Board Meeting
Melbourne
Thursday 28 July 2016

The Board of Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) held their fourth Board meeting for the calendar year today, Thursday 28 July, 2016 in Melbourne.

Life Skills Program

The Board noted the one year preliminary report of the Life Skills Program. The program aims to provide tenants, particularly those most disadvantaged with the skills to sustain their tenancies and effectively manage their households. The introduction of the program has also incorporated new relationships with allied community service organisations which on some occasions culminated in financial contributions for client support and issue resolution; it was acknowledged that there had been many instances of positive tenant support and outcomes that have attributed to sustained tenancies.

Directors gratefully acknowledged and thanked the National Australia Bank for grant funding of \$40k under its Impact Grant Program for AHV to undertake a formative program evaluation of AHV's Life Skills Program in 2016-17.

Budget and Business Planning

The Board undertook its annual business planning which included consideration of the proposed 2016-17 annual budget. The Board considered and affirmed the Business Plan and approved the budget presented by the Executive Management Group for 2016-17.

Human Resources Policy update

The Board approved minor changes to AHV's Human Resources Policy to enhance its grievance and appeals processes and to incorporate new elements required under AHV's commitment to addressing family violence.

NAIDOC celebrations

The Board acknowledged the contributions from all AHV Staff and volunteers in making the annual NAIDOC Family Day at Collingwood Children's Farm a great community celebration of culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. It was a great day of music, culture, craft, food and footy and was well attended with over 1,000 people participating in this event. The Board also acknowledged the generous support from over 40 supporters and sponsors who helped to make this event such a success and enabled AHV to continue to provide a free fun filled family day out during NAIDOC week.

Aboriginal design principles

The Board endorsed the housing design principles developed by Jefa Greenaway in consultation with Aboriginal tenants and community members through a recent round of metropolitan and regional community forums. The key principles, as outlined further in the attached summary on our website, are;

- Principle 1: Cultural Responsiveness
- Principle 2: Connection to Country
- Principle 3: Indigenous 'Homes'
- Principle 4: Quality Informing Selections
- Principle 5: Building Community/addressing needs
- Principle 6: Size Matters
- Principle 7: Energy Efficiency

Recovery of costs of tenant damage to property

The Board acknowledged the financial impact of property damage caused by some tenants and noted AHV's recovery efforts to date. The Board also noted that an action plan will be developed to focus efforts on minimising the costs to AHV of tenant damage to properties.

Don Dale Statement

The Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria feel that they must speak out and express their condemnation of the inhumane and degrading treatment of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders at the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in the Northern Territory. Directors unanimously affirmed their strong belief, derived from Aboriginal Housing Victoria's values, that all people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Directors stated that the primary purpose of Youth Detention facilities should be the rehabilitation of young and vulnerable members of the community to give them the opportunity to go on to live worthwhile and valuable lives. It is fundamental to this goal that all young people in juvenile detention facilities are treated with dignity and respect at all times. That the treatment of young people in Don Dale has fallen far short of this standard requires immediate rectification by the responsible Northern Territory agencies.

Australia's history is littered with gross violations of rights and abuses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In many instances the perpetrators of these abuses and violations have escaped responsibility. In the twenty-first century this is unacceptable. Those that are responsible, the staff that perpetrated acts of abuse and those in positions of authority that failed to act to protect young people must be held to account and made responsible.