



APRIL | EDITION II 2023

IN THIS EDITION

Welcome to the second edition of Mia Mia for 2023!

Aboriginal Housing Victoria is so excited to be back and sharing stories with you.

In this edition you can look forward to reading about our NAIDOC plans, updates on new properties and our TV appearance with Kids Under Cover.

You'll get to know our housing officer Uncle Kevin Atkinson, enjoy gorgeous photography from the most recent Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum meeting, learn about a housing upgrade success story and enter some creative competitions!

Thanks for reading,
The AHV team.

CONTENT CALLOUT

TELL US YOUR STORIES

This year's NAIDOC theme is 'For Our Elders' and to celebrate, we want to feature the stories of our Elder renters.

If you are keen to tell your story, or know someone who is, please get in touch.

email: communications@ahvic.org.au

We'd love to hear what this year's NAIDOC theme, 'For Our Elders', means to you. If you aren't up to writing it down, feel free to send us a voice recording.

Submit your thoughts to:
communications@ahvic.org.au

NAIDOC FAMILY DAY ON THE FARM
IS BACK FOR 2023!



FOR OUR ELDERS

2-9 JULY 2023

Aboriginal Housing Victoria's NAIDOC Family Day on the Farm is back for 2023, happening Wednesday, July 5 at the Collingwood Children's Farm!

This year's NAIDOC theme is 'For Our Elders' - celebrating the pillars of our communities, the cultural knowledge holders, the leaders, the nurturers, the trailblazers and survivors. Elders are the glue connecting us to land, family and history.

We will pay tribute to this: as part of our NAIDOC festivities, we're hosting a special Elders Marquee for Elder renters to sit and relax, share stories and be pampered.

NAIDOC Family Day attendees can look forward to hip hop dancers, live music, fun craft stalls, an art exhibit and more!

And we need you! Are you an artist? Would you like to have your works featured and sold as part of Aboriginal Housing Victoria's NAIDOC art exhibit at the Farm? Or would you like to have or be a part of a stall? Get in touch!

If you have artworks you'd like to sell, this year we will be accepting works up to the value of \$300. This is due to the nature of the barn in which we are holding the exhibit. If you would like to have a stall promoting your business or artworks, we'd love to hear from you as well.

Reach out to communications@ahvic.org.au



HELPING OUR KIDS UNDER COVER

Did you catch us on the news? We were on NITV last month celebrating one of the dozens of modular homes built by our partnership with Kids Under Cover and the Victorian Government to house young Aboriginal Victorians!

Housing Minister Colin Brooks visited one of the studios in Boronia, which has been home to year 12 and TAFE student Jasmine Slattery since November last year. It sits in the backyard of the three bedroom home where her mother and three siblings reside.

"It gives me a bit of understanding of how to live on my own, but at the same time I still have that family right next to me, and community," Jasmine told NITV.

"It's giving me that little glimpse into what it's like as an adult which is really inspiring and good to know."

Mr Brooks said the Kids Under Cover program was one of the innovative ways the Government was addressing the "desperate needs" for more housing options for social and affordable housing.

Jasmine's mum, Samantha, said it's helped Jasmine find her independence.

"It's an amazing thing," Samantha said.



Jasmine and Samantha Slattery love their modular home. Credit: NITV

To find out more about applying for one of the studios, go to: kuc.org.au/get-support/how-to-apply-for-a-studio/

POWER SAVING BONUS

Did you know you're eligible for the latest round of the Victorian Government's \$250 Power Saving Bonus if you are the energy account holder for your home?

The \$250 payment is there to help you with the cost of living, encouraging you to check out different energy offers and save money. It's available to households who visit the Victorian Energy Compare website or who get in touch with an affordability service through one of our participating community outreach partners.

To find out more about eligibility, outreach partners, documentation and frequently asked questions, go to: <https://compare.energy.vic.gov.au/psb-faq>
Applications open until August 31, 2023.



Are you in arrears?

Being behind on rent is never easy.

We are here to help.

Just let us know you need a hand - we can help you figure it out.

As a not-for-profit, it's vital we help you get back on track, because it helps us keep doing what we do.

Get in touch with your housing officer - there's no shame in asking for help.

Getting help

Here are a few programs that can help with your arrears:

- **Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk (ATAR):** look online for your local ATAR
- **Tenancy Plus:** housing.vic.gov.au/tenancy-plus-support-program
- **VALS:** vals.org.au/civil-human-rights/



VICTORIA HOMEBUYER FUND



AHV has recently updated its website to include a new homeownership page. On the page you can find information about the Victorian Homebuyer Fund (VHF), including how to apply for the program, and access other homeownership resources. Download the simple and easy to use fortnightly budget tracker now!

New information and resources will be added to the homeownership page so make sure you keep up to date on what's there.

Visit: ahvic.org.au/advocacy/home-ownership-for-aboriginal-victorians

MORWELL AND BROWN HILL HOMES KICK OFF

Construction has begun on housing in Morwell and Brown Hill!

In exciting news, site cuts have been completed on the properties, which have been funded through the State Government's Social Housing Growth Fund first Rapid Grants Round (SHGF RGR).

Aboriginal Housing Victoria assets and development team project manager Sharon Clavero said they aimed to have the Morwell and Brown Hill developments completed by October.

"It's exciting ... They're going to be brand new, with two bedrooms," she said.

Sharon said there are two more sites in Portland are on the way, also funded through the SHGF RGR1.

"All these others will be following on in a couple of weeks. Portland will be one block with two units on it," she explained.

"We had housing [on these sites], we demolished the homes to clear the blocks and we're building new properties so we can house more people."

For housing application information, go to: <https://ahvic.org.au/applicants/apply-for-housing-form>



Gardening Photo Comp!

Do you love your garden? Are you proud of your patch?

Send us a photo and you could be in the running to win a Bunnings voucher! The first prize winner will receive a \$50 Bunnings voucher, with second and third runners up to receive a \$30 and \$20 Bunnings voucher respectively.

Send your submission to: communications@ahvic.org.au

Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum meeting

In February, the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) gathered its 37 member organisations from across Victoria at the Rumbalara Activity Centre on beautiful Yorta Yorta Country (Shepparton).

AHHF member organisations were Welcomed to Country by Aunty Cheryl Bourke, before the Wulumbarra Dance Group performed.

The breathtaking performance is part of the Goulburn Valley-based group's efforts to help the next generation of First Nations people reconnect with Yorta Yorta culture.

One of Wulumbarra's co-founders, Michael Bourke, told Triple J the group gathered with the collective goal of sharing cultural knowledge.

"Due to colonisation and the bad treatment of Indigenous people a lot of it was tucked away and hidden; they'd speak language and were punished. Bringing all that back to life is core to what we do," he said.

Mr Bourke, speaking with Shepparton News, said the name Wulumbarra means large communal fire, "bringing everyone to the fire, talking and yarning and managing different issues".

Photographer Bernie Wright was there to capture some of the day.



top l-r: Fire smoking as part of Welcome to Country; Aunty Cheryl Bourke doing Welcome to Country.
Bottom: Wulumbarra dancers

WELL DONE UNCLE NEIL!



AHV is incredibly proud of our housing officer Uncle Neil for having his photos published in *Les*, the autobiography of pro runner Leslie Williams.

Here he is pictured Leslie and the book's author, Kerry Cross.

"[I am] very happy and honoured ... thank you to Les and Kerry for asking [me] to contribute to the book," Uncle Neil says.



BURNLEY CIRCUS PARK • 3 JUNE 2023
WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG COUNTRY

TREATY DAY OUT N A A R M

JESSICA MAUBOY • THELMA PLUM
DAN SULTAN • ELECTRIC FIELDS
ALICE SKYE • MARLON X RULLA
NOOKY • SCOTT DARLOW
MADI COLVILLE-WALKER
TRIPLE J UNEARTHED WINNER
AND YOTHU YINDI
TICKETS → [TREATYDAYOUT.COM](https://www.treatydayout.com)

TREATY ASSOCIATION
VICORIA
VIRIA
M
UNEARTHED
PLAKKIT

Treaty Day Out

The Treaty Day Out lineup is here, and it features a massive lineup of deadly artists.

Happening on Saturday, June 3, at the Burnley Circus Park, you can catch First Nations music royalty including Jessica Mauboy, Thelma Plum, Dan Sultan, Electric Fields, Alice Skye, Marlon X Rulla, Nooky, Scott Darlow, Madi Colville-Walker, a Triple J Unearthed winner and even the legendary Yothu Yindi.

Tickets are free for mob enrolled with the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.
Head to: <https://www.treatydayout.com/>



MEET HOUSING OFFICER UNCLE KEVIN ATKINSON

Uncle Kevin says as a First Nations person working in housing, it's important to be a voice and advocate for the people he works with every day.

"I feel as an Indigenous person that's my duty, that's my role - if renters are happy, it makes me happy," he says.

In his time working for Aboriginal Housing Victoria as a housing officer, and in a previous role working in a cultural heritage program, he's tried to remind people of the history of the land they are standing on.

And he's starting to see change - in perceptions and in leadership - for the better.

"The world is turning, but slowly ... I've got a son, I've got nephews and nieces, I've got grandkids. For all of them, culture's been passed on for teaching," Uncle Kevin says.

For him, this year's NAIDOC theme, 'For Our Elders', is all about the messages Elders pass on to the next generation, no matter how loud or quiet.

"All the culture that I learnt was through my grandfather, through my whole family," he says.

"My grandfather used to tell me stories, once about a beautiful bird that made beautiful music, but one day someone killed that bird and there was no more music.

"I wondered what he was talking about, but he was saying was you don't go around killing animals for nothing - only for good reason, for food, for survival.

"Little things like that ... He helped me know to respect not only culture, but nature and the environment as well.

"That's what Elders mean to me. Today, that's my job. Any Elders that need support, I will go outside my duty to make sure they get help or people take notice of them."

He says one day, he wants to see a First Nations prime minister and the path towards this is education.



Uncle Kevin Atkinson is a Moiradu man from Bangarang Country and grew up on Cummerangunja. He works in Shepparton, and is one of AHV's many housing officers working in all corners of the state. He told Mia Mia a bit about who he is, the significance of this year's NAIDOC theme 'For Our Elders', and what drives him to help people through housing.

"Education is the way forward for Aboriginal people," Uncle Kevin says.

"The way the Indigenous community is moving forward across Australia is exciting, it makes you proud. A lot of the old people weren't educated, but they were street smart. They also knew how to get their point across.

"With the young people, they get educated and they have all the skills for how to communicate not only through words and literacy, but the internet too, because they can get a lot of knowledge that way.

"But they also have to listen to their Elders, so no matter their education, they still have culture."

HOME UPGRADE PROGRAM DELIVERS SUCCESS



Before Heather had solar panels installed on her roof, the hot water wouldn't last five minutes.

Now, she struggles to get her grandson out of a warm shower, all thanks to upgrades by Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) through the Aboriginal Rapid Housing Response Program (ARHRP).

Heather is an AHV renter and her home is one of hundreds across the state to receive a facelift in the form of solar power, upgraded hot water systems, air conditioning and ceiling fans.

"You know in winter, when [the kids] are sick and they want hot water for their chest and the water goes cold? I noticed the other night, [the hot water] was good for them," she says.

AHV was part of a successful bid by 19 Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Traditional Owner groups and Aboriginal Trusts for \$35 million of Victorian Government ARHRP funding in 2020.

Companies helping AHV to deliver these upgrades are FC Advisory, Prana Energy and Ontoit, so remember to keep a look out for these names because we are working side by side.

Heather is looking forward to seeing how the solar panels will reduce her energy bills too.

"Fingers crossed, the way I use it with my grandkids. The heater, the water. It does boost up – so I'm waiting for the next bill to be dropped down," she says.

Heather's daughter, Breanna, lives there too. She says the solar panels help them to feel "like everyone else" on their street.

"Our neighbours, everyone, has them. It kind of feels like we are included," she says.

While not all homes will receive an upgrade – with properties chosen on a priority basis based on property condition assessments and highlighted as most in need of works – Heather says programs like the ARHRP "help everyone out".

For more information, give us a call on 1800 248 842 or speak to your Housing Officer.

TREATY ELECTIONS

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria is asking all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in or from Victoria to help choose the people who will negotiate Treaty in Victoria.

The Assembly's Elections will take place from May 13 to June 3, 2023. People can vote online, in person, or by post.

If you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, head to treatyelections.org for more information.

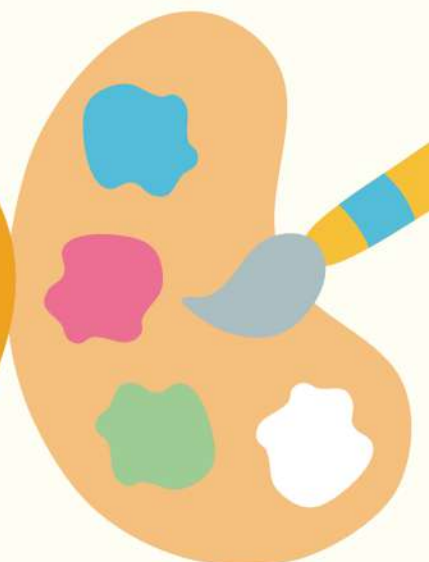
Your vote matters.

Young Ones, show us your art!

If you are a young artist or you know someone who is, we'd love to see what you've been working on.

Painters, drawers, knitters, sewers – all creatives who are 15 years old and under are invited to send in a photo of their work to go in the running to win a \$40 Eckersley's Art and Craft voucher, with second and third runners up to receive a \$30 and \$20 Eckersley's voucher respectively. These vouchers can be redeemed online if there isn't a store near you.

Email us an image of your best stuff to: communications@ahvic.org.au



FIND YOUR LOCAL REGIONAL HOUSING OFFICE

Ballarat

706 Sturt Street
Ballarat Central VIC 3350
Mailing address:
PO Box 1186
Bakery Hill VIC 3354
Tel: (03) 5331 6518
Fax: (03) 5338 8829

Bairnsdale

306 Main Road,
Bairnsdale VIC 3875
Tel: (03) 5152 8020
Fax: (03) 5152 8080

Bendigo

Synergize Hub
43 Williamson Street,
Bendigo VIC 3550
Mailing address:
PO Box 248
Bendigo VIC 3552
Tel: via head office:
1800 248 842
Fax: via head office
(03) 9403 2122

Mildura

The Deakin Business
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Corner Eighth Street &
Lemon Avenue,
Mildura VIC 3502
Tel: via head office:
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Morwell

227 Princes Drive,
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Shepparton

32 Roe Street,
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HEAD OFFICE



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For maintenance requests: maintenance@ahvic.org.au

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