



Edition 4 2023

Happy Holidays from AHV!



From Aboriginal Housing Victoria to you,
we wish you a very happy holiday season.

Notices



AHV OFFICE CLOSURES OVER CHRISTMAS

As in previous years, the AHV offices will be closed over the Christmas period. Offices will be closed from Friday, 22 December 2023 and will re-open on Tuesday, 2 January, 2024.

During this period, calls will be diverted to our after-hours maintenance service. If you require emergency repairs during the Christmas/New Year period, please call: **1800 248 842**, to be transferred to the after-hours service.

NEW AHV SMS NUMBER

AHV has a new SMS number to make it easier for you to get in touch. Please save **0439 500 176** in your phone. You can message us on this number and we will respond within one business day. Please note, this number does not accept calls. Using this number you can check the balance of your account by texting the word BAL. Keep an eye out for more deadly options coming soon!



IMPORTANT: NEW AHV RENT PAYMENT METHODS

AHV has changed payment methods for how you pay your rent, due to the closure of the NAB EasyRent system on 1 December. A new Payment Options form was mailed out to all AHV renters on Thursday, 16 November. Please contact us on 1800 248 842 if you have not received your form.

Note: if you currently use Centrepay to pay your rent, then there will be no changes required.

The four ways you can pay your rent are:

1. BPAY

- The new BPAY Biller Code is 116525, plus a new reference number you should have received on a Payment Options form via post.

2. Via the Renter Portal www.myahv.org.au

- The new AHV renter portal will redirect you to the NAB secure payment page, where you can pay using your Renter Number, located on the Payment Options form you should have received in the post. More exciting news about the new Renter Portal coming soon!

3. Centrepay

- If you currently use Centrepay to pay your rent, then there will be no changes required.

4. In person at Australia Post

- There is a new QR code/reference number for all renters. Your previous barcodes will not work. This was included in the Payment Options Form you should have received in the post.

\$50 COLES VOUCHER FOR HOME OWNERSHIP INTERVIEW

AHV is putting together a proposal for a new Rent-to-Buy program.

To help get the program right, we want to speak with you about your aspirations for home ownership and the challenges you may face.

We have capacity for 20 renters to do a confidential, one-on-one, 45-min video call. For your time, you will receive a \$50 Coles Gift Voucher.

To register your interest, email communications@ahvic.org.au or text Noah on 0400 398 799.





Watch this space



HAVE YOUR SAY!

AHV wants to ensure we are listening to your feedback and finding ways to improve our services. Our first priority is to start working on our Community Engagement Framework and review our approach to the ways we engage, listen and respond to you.

For the first time, AHV wants to hear your thoughts on our brand-new tenancy policies that help our staff deliver excellent tenancy management. While some things we cannot change there are many areas being improved that you can provide comment on such as a permanent debt waiver program to help renters reduce arrears, giving more attention to culturally safe practice and the pathways of referral to support when tenancies are at risk.

To make comments on the housing policies or find out more about AHV community engagement, head to our website by visiting ahvic.org.au/tenants/have-your-say or email community@ahvic.org.au



In 2024, the truth-telling Yoorrook Justice Commission will be looking into First Nations experiences of housing in Victoria since colonisation. This will help the commission make recommendations for healing, system reform and practical changes to laws, policy, and education, as well as to matters to be included in future treaties.

You can make a submission in whatever form you prefer. For example submissions can be written documents, videos, audio recordings, artworks, cultural artefacts or photos.

AHV encourages our renters to participate in the submission process and share their experiences with Yoorrook. Go to: yoorrookjusticecommission.org.au/issues-papers/

The Indigenous Wellbeing Conference in Darwin



Image: Trudi and conference speaker Suli

In October, the Wellbeing Team made their way up north to Darwin to take part in an Indigenous Wellbeing Conference and showcase the important work of the Life Coaching team.

AHV's acting manager of Wellbeing Teams, Trudi, said the event was inspiring.

"We gained perspectives on Indigenous wellbeing from all over the world. There were amazing presenters, and it was great to make some fabulous networks while we were there," she said.

ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE



The 2022-23 Annual Report is now available to download from the AHV website!

Read about all the year's news, from major events to new builds, housing and homelessness advocacy and more.

The report was beautifully designed by Wiradjuri and Wemba Wemba artist Reanna Bono of Yakuwa Designs.

Find it here: ahvic.org.au/commsnews/documents-and-resources



KEEPING UP TO DATE WITH AHV

Reading our monthly Board Communiques is a great way to keep up to date with what's being discussed by the AHV Board at their monthly meetings. These Communiques highlight decisions made by the Board, as well as updates on advocacy, new housing builds and other important activities.

To find them, go to: <http://ahvic.org.au/comms-news/documents-and-resources/reports-and-communicue>



Work and Training Scholarships

Are you wanting to get into work or training, but short of funds for the work clothes, tools, equipment or training?

AHV is offering nine Work and Training Scholarships of up to \$500 to assist with some of the upfront costs, such as purchasing safety boots or tools, or paying for certificates and courses.

Please call **1800 248 842** or email community@ahvic.org.au to have a yarn and find out more.



AHV Christmas Toy Appeal

At the end of November, AHV staff and volunteers from Barpa Construction, North Melbourne Football Club and White Lion worked like elves packing up goodies for our renters this Christmas.

Here are some photos of the action!



Congratulations to garden comp winners!

Congratulations to Jason from Wodonga for winning first place in the Mia Mia Gardening Photo Competition for his amazing cactus garden!

Well done to runners up, Purple and Alice, for sharing pictures of their great gardens with us too.



Jason



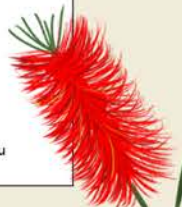
Purple



Alice

Find your local regional housing office

<p>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</p>	<p>Bairnsdale 306 Main Road, Bairnsdale VIC 3875 Tel: (03) 5152 8020 Fax: (03) 5152 8080</p>	<p>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</p>
<p>Mildura The Deakin Business Centre Corner Eighth Street & Lemon Avenue, Mildura VIC 3502 Tel: via head office: 1800 248 842</p>	<p>Morwell 227 Princes Drive, Morwell VIC 3840 Mailing address: PO Box 15 Morwell VIC 3840 Tel: (03) 5128 0774 Fax: (03) 5120 2020</p>	<p>Shepparton 32 Roe Street, Shepparton VIC 3630 Mailing address: PO Box 1386, Shepparton VIC 3630 Tel: (03) 5821 8720 Fax: (03) 5821 8718</p>
<p>Main Office Narrandjeri House 125-127 Scotchmer Street, Fitzroy North VIC 3068</p> <p>Free Call: 1800 248 842 Telephone: (03) 9403 2100 Email: clientservices@ahvic.org.au</p> <p>Hours 8:30am - 4:30pm, Monday to Friday</p> <p>For all housing/client enquiries: clientservices@ahvic.org.au For maintenance requests: maintenance@ahvic.org.au</p>		





Feature with renter Uncle Mick Wilson: Playing for Gough



Image: The Orana Roos with Gough Whitlam in 1975

On the door of Uncle Mick Wilson's Aboriginal Housing Victoria home in Shepparton, there is a sign that reads: "No room for racism, pride lives here".

The Barkandji man, who has lived in an AHV property since the late 1980s, says he walks with purpose and strength in knowing he worked hard all his life, giving "one hundred per cent" to everything.

He believes that's why his old band, the Orana Roos, were invited to perform in Canberra for former prime minister Gough Whitlam at the Lodge in 1975 after they'd shot to local fame in Dubbo, NSW.

"He was dying to meet us because everybody was talking about this Aboriginal family group," Wilson explains.

The Lodge was a far cry from where he was born and grew up on a cattle station out the back of Bourke, a town in north-west NSW. After he met his first wife in Swan Hill and was married in 1970, they moved up to Dubbo to raise their family. He explains he was the first Aboriginal bricklayer in the town, and later in Shepparton, too.

Music was always in him, and while he's only just retired from bricklaying, he continues to perform music for charity at the weekends when he can.

Wilson was the frontman of the Orana Roos, a band of brothers who played a 50-50 mix of country and western and classic dance tunes. He loved to entertain, to give the audience an experience. Not long after the band started in the 1970s, they'd made a name for themselves, touring across NSW.

"Before the dance started [at our shows], my brothers would play an instrumental and I would come down from the stage onto the dance floor, I'd dance to the music while everyone was still sitting. I'd throw moves like Elvis or Chuck Berry," he laughs, remembering.



Image: Uncle Mick Wilson in his home

They played many shows during the five or so years they were together. In 1975, all the clubs they performed at throughout the year crowned Wilson the best performer, he says.

But it was his performance for Gough Whitlam in May 1975 – mere months before the then-prime minister poured sand through Vincent Lingiari's hands at Kalkarindji (Wave Hill Station) to grant the Gurindji people their land rights, and then the infamous dismissal in November that year – that was one he'll never forget.

"He just said that we are one magnificent bunch of guys," Wilson says.

"We didn't know what to do, we didn't know what to say. We were dumbfounded."

He says despite the times, and despite the grandeur, they were proud of themselves and who they represented, "rubbing shoulders" with the prime minister and his wife, Marg.

"It didn't matter who we spoke to, we looked them straight in the eye, we didn't look down at the ground," Wilson says.

"We looked face-to-face. [Whitlam] was a big, tall man, too."

What he loved most about performing back then was to "see the expression on peoples' faces".

"A lot of them never saw Aboriginal boys performing, only ones they'd seen on TV. They used to get the shock of their lives," he says.

"We had these special uniforms made up ... people couldn't believe it. I've been a proud person all my life."

