



Aboriginal Housing
Victoria's renter
newsletter

Edition 1, 2024

Welcome to the first edition of Mia Mia in 2024!

In this edition you'll find:

- A feature with AHV renter and kinship carer, Terri
- Fun competitions, including the chance to design this year's NAIDOC Family Day at the Farm poster and for the little ones, an opportunity to win a toy kitchen!
- Important notices including support for Stolen Generations and training scholarship opportunities
- A kids' games corner

NAIDOC 2023!



**KEEP THE FIRE
BURNING!
BLAK, LOUD
AND PROUD**

7-14 JULY 2024

Design a NAIDOC Family Day at the Farm poster for a chance to win a \$300 Coles voucher!

This year, our renters can design our NAIDOC Family Day at the Farm poster and go in the running to win a \$300 Coles Voucher!

Create an artwork in whatever poster-friendly medium (such as illustration/painting/photography) inspired by this year's NAIDOC theme Keep the fire burning! Blak, Loud and Proud! and submit a scan or high-quality image to communications@ahvic.org.au by 5pm, March 25.

We will announce winners in early April.



Meet an AHV housing officer: Uncle Neil



Tell us a bit about who you are

I am a proud Wuthathi man from up in Cape Yorke. We lived in Cairns and then the family moved across the Darwin. I spent majority of my life in Darwin and then in the 1990s I moved down to Melbourne for more job opportunities.

I'm a sports photographer - that's my biggest passion, that's my outlet. When things get tough, I usually put the cameras in the car and go for a drive and relax that way.

I'm a fully qualified boiler maker, a fully qualified draftsman, a fully qualified secondary school teacher and I'm a teacher's aide. It's shaped me into what I'm doing now. I've got this wide range of knowledge, where I can give someone some of it and help them. I am also a great cook, old school stuff - but I take it to the next level.

What do you love about the work you do?

I'm in a position where I can help somebody and I just love doing that, to get an outcome. It's very rewarding when renters call you up and say thank you, that's the good side of the job.

I can help people who are less fortunate than I am, because I was brought up that way to look after somebody who hasn't got what you have.

Why is being an Aboriginal person working in the Aboriginal housing sector important to you?

I think that I just want to give back, it's an old cliché. It's that same old thing too where I can give someone that hasn't got what I've got ... a little bit of knowledge, a bit of guidance. Guidance is probably the biggest key for me because of the age I'm at and the experiences I've gone through. I've got that experience where I can guide someone in the right direction and help them see where to go.

KIDS COMPETITION: WIN ONE OF THREE TOY KITCHENS!



Do you like bananas, apples or oranges? Maybe you love broccoli, capsicum or tomatoes? What about pumpkins, potatoes or pineapples?

Children aged seven and under living in AHV properties can go in the running to win one of three complete toy kitchen set prizes valued at \$130 just by drawing or painting their favourite fruit or vegetable! The kitchens come with toy cookware, play food and an apron.

All you need to do is email your name and address with a photo or scan of your drawing to communications@ahvic.org.au by **20 March 2024** to enter the competition. Entries will be posted on social media and will appear alongside an interview in the next edition of Mia Mia!

Winners will be announced in early April.

Rent review

IMPORTANT

AHV's annual rent review will begin shortly. Please start preparing your documents to avoid paying Market Rent.

If you have previously given AHV Centrelink consent, we will retrieve your information directly from Centrelink to save you time. If you wish to provide consent, please contact AHV so we can organise this for you.

If you require any assistance, the rent review team is always here to help.

Contact: rentreview@ahvic.org.au or 1800 248 842

TELLING RENTER STORIES: Growing 'beautiful, caring' kids with AHV



AHV renter and kinship carer Terri has brought up more than 25 children under her roof. She tells us a bit about herself and why she believes stable, safe and secure housing teaches kids "that they can survive, and they can make something of their life".

Tell us about you

I moved into an AHV home on the [south-western coast of Victoria] 21 years ago. I was born in Tumut in NSW and was adopted. I had an unknown father, because he worked on the Snowy Mountain Scheme. I was 21 when I met him for the first time.

I started kinship caring about 16 years ago, looking after children from Ngunnawal Country. My own 10 children are Ngunnawal too. At one stage, I had 11 children living with me at the one time. They've all grown up, the youngest one of that group is 16 and she was just 10 months old when she came to live with me.

How many children have you had living with you through the years?

Probably 25 or 26 children. It means the world to me - I'd rather have a house filled with children than a house full of adults. [I want] them to grow up to be outstanding citizens, and beautiful, caring people. For them to have a sense of belonging.

The children in my care are from NSW, so every four months I take them back to Country, I did through their whole lives.

Stable housing is very important. Before AHV moved me, I was living in an area that wasn't safe. Children shouldn't be overcrowded; they need houses that are spread out. Housing teaches children they can survive, and they can make something of their lives.

Why is it important to you that kids stay with family, or in kinship care?

Being adopted and not knowing my background, I think it's very important for a child to know their background. Especially Aboriginal children.

Tell us about your home

My home is just a simple home with a lot of love. It's not a museum, it's just a comfortable home that is lived in. As soon as you open the front door, you're welcome. My door won't ever be shut to anyone.

I love my garden. I love the feel of my home. I am content, this is my little domain. I look at the photos of the children I've looked after, and you can almost hear them running up the hallway. It's the little things.

What do you hope for in the future?

That the kids have stronger voices. That [people realise] they're not just numbers, that they have got a voice.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

Rent Assistance

If you are not a recipient of Rent Assistance, please contact Centrelink to confirm your eligibility.

Remember to let Centrelink know that Aboriginal Housing Victoria is classified as 'Other Housing Organisation'.



Utility relief grant scheme

This grant provides help to pay a mains electricity, gas or water bill that is overdue due to a temporary financial crisis. The amount of the grant is based on the amount you owe at the time of our application. It is also based on the reasons you have given for applying on your application form. You can receive a maximum of \$650 on each utility type in a two-year period. You can apply for separate grants for each utility (electricity, gas and water). Learn more: <https://energyinfohub.org.au/energy-concessions/utility-relief-grant-urgs/>



Scan the QR code to learn more about the Utility Relief grant scheme

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>



Support for Stolen Generations Living in Victoria

Link-Up Victoria is a program of the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) and provides support to the Stolen Generations, that is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are 18 years and over, a resident in Victoria or Tasmania who were removed from family which includes adoption, fostering or placed in a Childrens Home. They can also assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people searching for family who were removed. They provide family research, confirm connections, and conduct reunions for our clients who come from all over Australia. They also run a range of healing events and activities throughout the year for the Stolen Generations and welcome enquiries about our services. Contact them via their website www.linkupvictoria.org.au or by email linkup@vacca.org

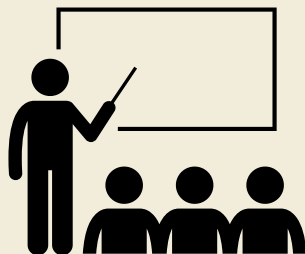


Request a Homebuyer workshop near you.

This year AHV will be continuing to hold homebuyer workshops across the state. These workshops are a free, in-person opportunity for you to discuss pathways to homeownership and include an information on the Victorian Homebuyer Fund (VHF). To find out more about the VHF visit AHV's website page: <https://ahvic.org.au/programs/homeownership-for-aboriginal-victorians>

If you are interested in attending a workshop near you, please contact AHV communications (communications@ahvic.org.au) to request a workshop be held in your area. If you have other questions about homeownership you'd like to discuss now, reach out to Noah Wright, Homebuyer Program Coordinator, on noah.wright@ahvic.org.au or 0400 398 799.

Getting into work & 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 renters 'Getting into work & Training scholarships' of up to \$500 to assist with some of the costs – for example getting safety boots or tools or paying for certificates and courses.

For further information and assistance in completing this form, please call 1800 248 842 or email community@ahvic.org.au

Yoorrook Justice Commission housing investigation

The truth-telling Yoorrook Justice Commission is looking into First Nations experiences of housing and homelessness in Victoria since colonisation.

This will help the commission make recommendations for healing, system reform and practical changes to laws, policy, and education, and to matters to be included in future treaties.

AHV encourages our renters to participate in the submission process and share their experiences with Yoorrook.

Go to:
<https://yoorrookjusticecommission.org.au/>

Thanks to
Indigenous-owned
waste
management
company Djurwa
for their
incredible
support!



DJURWA
www.djurwa.com.au



Did you catch our submission to Yoorrook on land injustice?

In January, AHV made a video submission to the Yoorrook Justice Commission on land injustice. Watch AHV CEO Darren Smith and AHV board member Damein Bell speak about how housing stress, homelessness and Aboriginal land injustice are all linked.



AHV Portal



Remember, AHV has a new SMS number: 0439 500 176.

Text the word BAL or Balance at any time and you will receive an automated response with your account balance.

You will have two choices: A = Make an online payment and B = Request Renter Statement.
















You need to select one of these options within 20 minutes of receiving the message otherwise the automated system will 'time-out'. After this time, you will need to text the word BAL or Balance to start the process again.

Please ensure we have your email address on file if you would like to receive your renter statement via email.

NOTE: Rent debits are changed on Mondays. Please allow 2 business days for your payments to appear on your account.

ANIMALS WORD SEARCH

Words can be found horizontally, vertically, and diagonally in all directions

- | | | | | | |
|---|------|---|----------|--|-------|
|  | Cat |  | Fish |  | Frog |
|  | Dog |  | Lion |  | Crow |
|  | Cow |  | Bunnil |  | Bilby |
|  | Ant |  | Kangaroo |  | Tiger |
|  | Bear |  | Duck |  | Koala |

C	A	T	A	Q	E	N	D	P	D	R	A	B
B	Y	A	F	A	H	O	R	F	R	V	U	S
G	T	H	D	I	U	I	B	F	I	N	H	D
B	E	I	K	O	A	L	A	G	J	E	Y	K
U	I	H	G	R	G	E	L	I	D	G	X	A
N	Z	F	P	E	O	L	C	R	O	W	I	N
J	F	I	W	G	R	B	K	O	E	S	J	G
I	F	S	C	K	I	X	K	E	H	B	R	A
L	H	H	Q	L	B	R	L	F	A	B	N	R
U	V	J	B	C	A	A	N	T	R	W	D	O
M	K	Y	R	E	S	R	A	D	F	O	A	O
F	B	T	B	Y	W	O	C	O	B	M	G	N

Colour me in!

