



Media release

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A great start in finding a home for more Aboriginal Victorians

The largest Aboriginal community housing agency in Australia, Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV), today welcomed **funding announcements from the Victorian Government to upgrade and build more social housing for Aboriginal Victorians.**

AHV CEO Darren Smith says, “This funding will enable AHV and other Aboriginal controlled organisations in our state to renovate hundreds of properties and build a dozen or so new homes. We expect Aboriginal Victorians to share in the new jobs to be immediately created in the construction sector while also providing more Aboriginal families with a safe place to live.

“Every Victorian deserves a home and no sector of the community is denied this human right more often than First Australians. The commitment the Government announced yesterday to renovate thousands of existing properties (including those providing shelter for our people) is urgently needed, will boost morale and give a welcome charge to a flagging economy.

“AHV and other Aboriginal organisations around our state manage many unliveable properties which can be renovated, upgraded and made ready for new families in urgent need. Secure, affordable housing, given the world health crisis we are living through, has never been more critical.

“The economic tail of this pandemic will play out for a long time and compound the existing shortfall in social housing in our state. That is why the Premier’s framing of this investment as a first stage of stimulus funding is both welcome and apposite. The package has been carefully constructed to allow new housing to come online fast and with more investment to follow. As unemployment grows and the cushion provided by Commonwealth support retracts, demand for social housing in Australia will be at its highest level for generations.

“Work commissioned by AHV to inform Victoria’s first Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework revealed we need to build 300 additional social housing units each year for decades simply to contain existing levels of homelessness. In the light of economic predictions that projection now looks conservative.

“There are over 4,000 Aboriginal families on social housing waitlists, one third of whom are already homeless.

“This funding boost is strategic and sensible and we expect it to be a down payment on further social housing investment from a Victorian Government doing a solid job in an unprecedented crisis” said Mr Smith.

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