



## **AHV Board Communique Aboriginal Housing Victoria Board Meeting Wednesday 27 March 2024**

The Board of Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) held their second Board meeting for the calendar year on Wednesday 27 March 2024.

### **Completion of the Aboriginal Rapid Housing Response program**

The Aboriginal Rapid Housing Response Program (ARHRP) has achieved the delivery of \$34M of works to AHV and 15 other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCOs) properties. The AHV Board acknowledged the efforts of AHV staff and our ACCO partners in working collaboratively to successfully complete the complex program.

Under the ARHRP, a three-stage implementation plan has delivered 12 works programs incorporating over 7,000 work orders across more than 2,000 properties.

The project, funded by the Victorian Government's housing stimulus package, represents the most ambitious maintenance and upgrade project that AHV has undertaken, and the first time that AHV has led a large capital project on behalf of the ACCO sector.

ARHRP funding is now fully committed by way of work orders and management commitments, including the planned conduct of a comprehensive evaluation of the program.

### **AHV engagement with the State and Federal Government on housing policy**

AHV is actively lobbying governments at State and Federal levels for policy (and/or legislative) change that achieves increased supply of housing for Aboriginal Victorians. In engaging with government, AHV is seeking to influence policy change to include:

- Guaranteed capital funding to develop the Aboriginal community controlled housing sector (AHV and other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) with housing portfolios);
- A minimum percentage of housing developed on all Government land divested or acquired for housing development, to be earmarked for Aboriginal housing;
- A minimum percentage of all social and affordable housing developed on all Government land acquired for housing, to be earmarked for Aboriginal housing;
- A minimum percentage of the income generated by the Victorian Government's Short-term Stay levy to be available for development of homes on ACCO or Traditional Owner land.
- A minimum percentage of the social and affordable housing to be constructed, as part of developers access to a planning benefit as noted in 'Victoria's Housing Statement 2024-2034', to be allocated for Aboriginal housing.

In advocating for policy change, AHV's key overarching principles are:

- **Self-determination** – providing opportunities for developing the capability and capacity of the broader Aboriginal housing sector; and
- **Collaboration** – partnerships between government and the Aboriginal housing sector to co-design a revised approach to housing Aboriginal Victorians.

### **Yoorook Justice Commission**

On 19 March, Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) members were invited to a formal roundtable by the Commissioners of the Yoorook Justice Commission. The testimony provided by AHHF members will form part of the evidence collected by the Commission and inform the line of questioning to the State Government within the formal hearings.

The AHHF Secretariat is currently preparing a submission on behalf of members to the Yoorook Justice Commission's Housing and Homelessness Inquiry. The deadline for submissions is 30 March and will be approved by the AHHF at the forthcoming meeting.

### **Victorian Homebuyer Fund (VHF)**

AHV successfully completed 2 homeownership VHF workshops in Mildura in early March. The workshops were held in partnership with Mallee District Aboriginal Service (MDAS) and The First Peoples of the Millewa Mallee, respectively. Attendance and engagement were strong. Questions mainly focused on savings methods and improving lending criteria (especially to suit Elder needs or workers with high levels of Super). Requests were made for a similar follow up workshop to be held with both organisations again, as well as new workshops with senior level students and TAFE entrants.

Workshops are scheduled with Gippsland organisations (VACCA, Ramahyuck and GEGAC) for the end of March.

It is intended that the Aboriginal Home Ownership Hub once launched, will contribute to improved engagement activities being conducted around the VHF.

### **Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP)**

The 2nd APRAP Forum was held on 28 February 2024 at the Koorie Heritage Trust, Melbourne. Twenty APRAP providers attended the Forum. The objective of the Forum was for APRAP workers, APRAP brokers and Managers to come together to renew friendships and extend networks. The forum also provided an opportunity to build capacity, facilitate information sharing, and discuss best practice of APRAP workers and APRAP brokers. The Forum included presentations from Kylie Smith, Head of Education and Consultancy, Victorian Equal Opportunity, and Human Rights Commission; Dr Heather Holst, Commissioner for Residential Tenancies and Jess Barr a real estate agent who has worked positively with APRAP. The 3rd APRAP Forum will be held in a regional location on the 29 August 2024.