



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**22 February 2022**

### **Funding reforms to provide a boost for social housing sector**

Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) welcomes the Victorian Government's announcement of the new Social and Affordable Housing Contribution (SAHC) and rates exemptions for social housing.

The rates exemption recognises social housing as essential infrastructure the same as other public assets, including public schools and hospitals.

Rates are a significant operational cost for social housing - every dollar saved will be invested back into growing and renewing social housing.

The measures significantly strengthen the ability of public and community housing to deliver more and better social housing for Victorians who rely on social housing.

Investments of hundreds of millions of dollars in new social housing under the SAHC provides an opportunity to substantially reverse the escalating Aboriginal homelessness crisis in Victoria. One in ten Aboriginal Victorians are seeking social housing on the Victorian Housing Register.

Aboriginal people in Victoria access homelessness services at over ten times the rate of other Victorians.

It is important that consistent with Aboriginal self-determination the Victorian Government commits 10% of the hundreds of millions of dollars of future funding under the SAHC to house Aboriginal Victorians, as it did for the Big Housing Build.

It will be an important step to reduce Aboriginal homelessness and to achieving the vision that every Aboriginal person has a home in *Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort*, The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework.

#### **Quotes attributable to Aboriginal Housing Victoria Chairperson, Tim Chatfield**

*"The measures will have a multitude of positive impacts for Victoria, providing hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of much-needed investment into secure, stable housing for our community. Whilst this is an important step we still have a long way to go to reach the aspirations for our community and sector."*

*"We believe allocation of at least 10% of the funds sourced from the SAHC should be set aside for Aboriginal social housing developments; this would be consistent with the commitment made in the Big Housing Build."*

*"Aboriginal communities in Victoria are experiencing a homelessness crisis. The rate of Aboriginal homelessness is the highest and fastest growing in Australia and one-in-six Aboriginal people are seeking help from a housing support service every year."*

*"Council rates alone cost AHV over \$2.4 million each financial year. The announcement of the rates reform will relieve this pressure on our organisation and allow us to refocus these funds on projects that will see a direct benefit for the Aboriginal community and our renters such as building new homes and property and energy efficiency upgrades."*

*"The reforms are a testament to a successful partnership and collaboration of both local and state levels of government with housing providers, community groups and industry associations across the state."*

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