



## **Communique**

### **Aboriginal Housing Victoria Board Meeting**

### **Thursday 1 April 2021**

The Board of Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) held their sixth Board meeting for the calendar year on Thursday 1 April 2021, via videoconference.

#### **Out of session meeting**

The Board held an out of session meeting on 15 March 2021, in relation to the Victorian Government's Social Housing Growth Fund (SHGF) Rapid Housing Grants round.

At the meeting, the Board approved AHV's submissions for the SHGF Round 1. The funding round is available for new social housing dwellings in Victoria, which can be rapidly delivered to provide economic stimulus, to support recovery from the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

AHV lodged the submissions by the due date of 18 March 2021. One of the proposals will see the development of 7 AHV-owned vacant properties from single dwellings to 2 X 2 bedroom properties on the sites, with the intent of doubling property numbers. The second submission involves the purchase of 18 X 2-bedroom Turnkey properties in partnership with a leading developer.

If the AHV submission is successful, the funding will enable the addition of 25 new properties for Aboriginal Victorians.

#### **Development in south-east Melbourne**

The Board approved the engagement of a builder to develop 10 units on an AHV site in south-east Melbourne. Funding for the project has been provided through the Social Housing Growth Fund.

#### **Community Engagement and Communications Strategies**

AHV's revised Community Engagement Strategy and Communications Strategy were approved by the Board.

Both Strategies were reviewed to more appropriately reflect the breadth of AHV's expanded role since the documents were first developed. This includes:

- achieving housing association with a growing property portfolio, and
- becoming a lead community agency for Aboriginal housing and homelessness advocacy and policy development in Victoria.

Victoria's Aboriginal housing and homelessness framework, *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* (Every Aboriginal Person has a Home) is referenced as an overarching framework for AHV's community engagement and communications priorities and activities.

### Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness update

The Board received an updated on some of the policy work that AHV is currently undertaking, including:

- Completion of the first *Mana-Na Woorn-Tyeen Maar-Takoort* Annual Report Card. The Report Card includes 20 measures of housing security, comparing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians with all Victorians, and Aboriginal Australians. The Report Card is expected to be available for release in early April 2021, and will then be produced annually.
- AHV's response to the Government regarding the findings and recommendations of the Royal Commission Report into Victoria's Mental Health System (RCRVMHS). In our response, we note that without a large scale investment in social and affordable housing, the report's recommendations, while welcome, will do little to improve access to secure and affordable housing for Aboriginal people living with mental illness. Nor is there adequate recognition that gaining access to social/affordable housing is only the first hurdle, and ongoing supports, such as AHV's More than a Landlord program, must be in place to support people with mental illness to avoid future episodes of homelessness and insecure housing.
- AHV's submission to the Aboriginal Executive Council (AEC), outlining AHV's position on key housing issues and reform priorities, to support and inform the development of Victoria's Closing the Gap (CtG) Implementation Plan. In the submission, AHV proposes that *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* articulates targets that should be reflected in Victoria's CtG Implementation Plan, especially around the goal to reduce Aboriginal homelessness by 10% per annum for ten years.
- The Victorian Government is developing a 10-year strategy for social and affordable housing in Victoria, and is seeking submissions from the community. At the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) meeting on 5 March 2021, it was agreed that a written submission would be prepared by AHV and submitted on behalf of the AHHF. The submission is currently being developed. It stresses the importance of embedding *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* objectives in all relevant mainstream and Aboriginal policies, strategies and programs designed by the Victorian Government and the Aboriginal community sector.