



Communique

Aboriginal Housing Victoria Board Meeting

Thursday 4 March 2021

The Board of Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) held their fourth Board meeting for the calendar year on Thursday 4 March 2021, via videoconference.

Out of session meetings

The Board held out of session meetings on 12 and 23 February 2021, in relation to the Victorian Government's Social Housing Growth Fund (SHGF).

At the 12 February meeting, the Board approved the SHGF Community Housing Funding Program Funding Deed between AHV and the Director of Housing. The funding deed provides for \$3.61M (ex-GST) to AHV to support the construction of 2 multi-unit developments in south east metropolitan Melbourne.

At the 23 February meeting, the Board approved the budget to engage an external consultant to assist AHV to develop a competitive proposal for the SHGF Round 1 Request for Proposal (RFP). 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.

In order to be eligible for funding under the SHGF Round 1, AHV must lodge the submission by 18 March 2021. The Board recognised that AHV's Asset and Development team is already focused a range of challenging activities, including: the delivery of AHV's internal development program; grant funded stimulus works packages; and development of a strategic framework to underpin AHV's long term portfolio development pipeline. The Team therefore does not have the current internal capacity to develop a competitive proposal within the limited timeline required, without support from a suitably qualified external consultant.

Quarterly reporting

The Board received quarterly reports on progress against the Business Plan actions and the Dashboard report on organisational performance. The Board noted actions underway to continue to improve performance.

Human Resources policy review

A review of AHV's Human Resources policies has commenced and the following documents were approved by the AHV Board:

- Occupational Health and Safety Statement;
- Disciplinary Policy;
- Equal Opportunity and Anti-Bullying Policy; and
- Grievance Policy

Rent Arrears report

The Board noted that since 14 August 2020, rent arrears have gradually increased. During this time, AHV staff have been unable to manage arrears in the normal manner, due to the COVID-19 emergency measures, including a moratorium on evictions, which reduce the capacity to take legal action for non-payment of rent.

Instead, AHV staff have prioritised regular contact and constant communication with tenants to encourage payment of rent and rental arrears.

The moratorium on evictions is due to end shortly, and AHV is keen to ensure that tenants in arrears sign up to and maintain agreements to repay their arrears, so that legal action, and ultimately evictions can be avoided. We recognise that the period of the pandemic has been a difficult one for many of our tenants and their families, and AHV wants to avoid commencing legal action to evict tenants wherever possible. AHV is approaching support agencies and making them aware of the potential for legal action once the moratorium ends, in the hope of securing financial assistance for tenants to bring their rental accounts back in line.

AHV will continue to work with tenants and their support providers wherever possible to address rent arrears issues. However, if tenants continue to miss rental payments, and fail to engage with AHV to resolve these issues, AHV will have no option other than to commence legal action. AHV tenants who are experiencing difficulties in meeting their rental payments are therefore urged to contact their Housing Officer as a matter of urgency, so that we can work together to develop an agreed way forward.