



Communique

Aboriginal Housing Victoria Board Meeting

Thursday 4 November 2021

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

AGM and Appointments to the Board

The AHV Board held its Annual General Meeting for 2021, immediately prior to the November Board meeting.

This was the forty-first AGM held by AHV, and the former Aboriginal Housing Board Victoria. On behalf of the Board and the AHV Community, The AHV Chairperson Tim Chatfield, paid his respects to the founding Elders of the organisation and all the community members who have worked tirelessly to make the organisation what it is today.

The Board welcomed the re-appointment of Daphne Yarram, Rob Leslie and Alan Herrman as Directors to the Board, for further three year terms.

Board Committees

The Board reviewed the Terms of Reference for the 3 Board Committees;

- Finance, Audit and Review (FAR)
- Assets; and
- Governance.

No changes were made to the terms of reference for the FAR and Asset Committees, and only minor formatting and terminology changes were approved for the terms of reference for the Governance Committee.

Annual Report

The 2020-21 was presented at the AGM. The Annual Report will be published on the AHV website and promoted in the “latest news” section.

The Annual Report will be sent to AHV’s stakeholder email list (600+ contacts), which includes Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, government and the community housing sector. It will also be shared on social media to reach a broader audience.

AHV renters will receive a shorter, more accessible overview of the Annual Report, which does not include Financials. Renters will be advised that the full report is available online.

Aboriginal Rapid Housing Response program (ARHRP)

The Board approved the engagement of contractors to undertake the following works in AHV properties and properties owned by other Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations (ACCO), under the ARHRP:

- Programs 7 – installation of ceiling fans in 162 ACCO properties
- Program 8 – cyclical maintenance in 1,803 AHV and ACCO properties; and
- Program 11 – pilot hot water (energy efficiency) in 76 AHV properties.

Current rent arrears

The Board noted a report on current rent arrears. Since the lifting of the COVID-19 moratorium on legal action in March 2021, significant delays continue to be experienced for VCAT hearings. As legal action is generally initiated by AHV when renters have disengaged with us in relation to their rent arrears, extended delays in hearings often result in significant increases in the arrears during the period between commencing legal action, and the hearing date. Consequently, by the time the VCAT hearing occurs, the renter feels overwhelmed by the scale of their arrears debt.

AHV is also maintaining positive working relationships with the Koori Engagement unit at VCAT, to work through some of the particular issues faced by Aboriginal social housing providers and renters, when attending VCAT hearings. Given that many Aboriginal people have had negative contacts with the justice system, it is often very difficult for AHV to convince renters to attend the hearing and tell their stories.

Aboriginal Home Connect Program

A direct mail campaign using Marlion Pickett (AFL footballer) as the ambassador was initiated in the last week of September, advising 3,200 DFFH social housing clients of the program. In response to the mail out, we received over 120 enquires with 79 new clients registered.

To date, we have had over 402 clients access the program in approximately 9 months of operation. Overwhelmingly the majority are high needs clients with the main areas of concern being requests for urgent food aid and for yarning due to social isolation.

For more information on the program go to:

<https://ahvic.org.au/aboriginal-community-home-connect-program>