



Communique

Aboriginal Housing Victoria Board Meeting

Thursday 16 September 2021

The Board of Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) held their twelfth Board meeting for the calendar year on Thursday 16 September 2021, via videoconference.

First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria (FPAV) Treaty Engagement Framework

Aunty Geraldine Atkinson presented to the Board on the work undertaken to date by the FPAV, and the ongoing consultation that the FPAV is leading on the treaty process within Victoria.

The Assembly is currently made up of 31 Members – all proud Traditional Owners of country in Victoria. These Aboriginal leaders were chosen by their communities, to represent community views.

Over the coming months the FPAV Assembly and Members will continue to progress discussions on possible options for a State-wide Treaty and Traditional Owner Treaties. As community feedback is received, this will inform the development of the Treaty Negotiation Framework, Treaty Authority and Self-Determination Fund.

If you would like to have your say, you can contact your local Assembly Member at:

<https://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/your-region-members-events/>

Approval of works for damaged properties

The Board noted advice received from AHV's insurer, regarding the reconstruction of several AHV properties that were so extensively damaged that the original dwellings had to be demolished. The Board was pleased to approve the engagement of builders to commence reconstruction works. When construction is completed, the properties will be available for low-income Aboriginal Victorians in need of secure, affordable housing.

Aboriginal Home Connect (AHC) Program

The Board was pleased to note that the AHC program has undertaken a rapid evaluation to support further funding of the program. Due to some staff attrition, AHV had been able to extend the program into November 2021, using internal savings. In addition, Homes Victoria is providing funding to enable the program to continue until the end of the 2021-22 financial year. This extension of funding provides an important "buffer", while we continue to investigate options for securing funding from alternative sources.

AHC is a free telephone and online service for Aboriginal renters living in Victorian social housing, to help them connect to the services they need, or to simply have a yarn with someone who cares. To find out more, go to the AHV website at:

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

Or pick up the phone and have a yarn to one of our friendly AHC staff members on Free Call: 1800 313 030.

AHV COVID-19 Update

We understand that many people continue to experience higher levels of stress and hardship as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, which finds those of us in Melbourne in hard lockdown again. To keep our community safe, government and community agencies are adopting a partnership approach to the crisis.

These are the 3 points of contact we strongly recommend for access to health updates and services:

- Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) coronavirus updates. This should be your first point of reference for government-issued updates related to the outbreak. Visit <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus> or call 1800 675 398 (available 24/7). Please leave 000 (triple zero) for emergencies only.
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS): VAHS is available for a range of services, including if you are suffering from stress or anxiety related to the outbreak. You can follow them on Facebook page for the latest updates <https://www.facebook.com/victorianaboriginalhealthservice/> or give them a call on (03) 9403 3300.
- Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO): please visit their website to learn more about VACCHO's response: <https://www.vaccho.org.au/about-us/coronavirus/>

Keep strong and stay connected. If you need support, there is support out there:

- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service **03 9403 3300**
- Djirra Aboriginal Women's well-being helpline **1800 105 303**
- Dardi Munwurro Aboriginal men's well-being helpline **1800 435 799**
- Safe Steps family violence support **1800 015 188**
- Beyond Blue **1300 22 46 36**
- Lifeline **131 114**
- Kids Helpline **1800 551 800**
- In a medical emergency call **000**