



## **Communique**

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

### **Friday 30 October 2020**

The Board of Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) held their twelfth Board meeting for the calendar year on Friday 30 October 2020 via videoconference.

#### **Our new logo**

AHV is proud to represent over 4,000 tenants and household members, each with their own unique stories, cultural ties and connections to Country.

We are also very privileged to operate on the lands of the Aboriginal people, who have respected, cared for and had a deep connection to these lands for thousands of years.

These lands – as well as the seas, the rivers, the bush and the earth – form an integral part of the stories of Aboriginal people. AHV is committed to celebrating these stories.

AHV was established in 1981 by a Board of determined and dedicated Elders. We have now grown into the largest Aboriginal housing organisation in Australia, with over 1,548 properties under our ownership and more than 60 staff members.

We are continuing to grow rapidly. Our drive for self-determination, a unique, clear and strong identity, as well as advocacy on issues that matter to our community, is coinciding with this growth.

We have produced a new Aboriginal-designed logo that reflects this evolution, while also honouring the heritage from which AHV was born. It retains the Mia Mia and incorporates the state icon to highlight our area of operation.

The new logo also incorporates colours significant to Aboriginal Victorians representing:

- the blues of our sea and rivers,
- the greens of the beautiful Victorian bush, and
- the ochres of the earth

It is hoped that the new logo will generate discussion around the rich history and culture of Aboriginal people in Victoria, and will also be a source of pride for tenants of AHV, and all who reside on these special lands.

#### **Meeting with Minister Wynne on Thursday 22 October 2020**

The Board noted that AHV had coordinated a meeting of the Koori Caucus of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing Homelessness Framework, *Mana-Na Woorn-Tyeen Maar-Takoort* Implementation Working group with the Hon Richard Wynne, Minister for Housing.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss successes and solutions relating to the goals of *Mana-Na Woorn-Tyeen Maar-Takoort*.

The key points discussed were:

- the need for ongoing government commitment to supporting the principles of Self-determination (including prioritising funding to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCO)), particularly in relation to the recent Homelessness funding rounds;
- enabling the ACCO sector to drive development of an appropriate and responsive homelessness prevention and response system for Aboriginal people;
- an update on where the rollout of Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program; and
- continuing to build ACCOs' capacity by increasing scale through management transfers of properties, and access to Housing Emergency Funds.

AHV will coordinate further meetings with The Hon. Gabrielle Williams, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Shadow Ministers Mr Tim Smith and The Hon. Peter Walsh in early 2021.

### **COVID funding - Aboriginal Community Home Connect**

Recruitment to the position of Manager for the Aboriginal Community Home Connect program is underway. The successful applicant will lead the development and implementation of the program, to be delivered to Aboriginal social housing households. The position is identified for Aboriginal applicants only.

Through telephone and internet contact with Aboriginal social housing households across Victoria, the Aboriginal Community Home Connect program will:

- deliver immediate support, assistance and service referral;
- support social and community connection; and
- build cultural strength and resilience that will continue beyond the pre-vaccination COVID-19 crisis.

AHV will deliver the program with financial assistance from the Victorian Government, as part of the Government's COVID-19 economic stimulus and support response.

### **Communications**

AHV has planned online and remote NAIDOC Week activities for the 8-15 November dates. AHV will host online performances by The Merindas, Alice Skye, Uncle Kutcha Edwards, Mabu Mabu and Sharyn Lovette with Yarra Libraries. These videos will be launched on Facebook and shared by AHV and Yarra Libraries.

The City of Yarra has kindly provided grant funding for the videos, and tenants will be invited to watch the video online. In the *Mia Mia* newsletter, tenants will also be invited to join in a NAIDOC colouring-in competition and NAIDOC 'selfie' photo competition. All prizes are from Aboriginal businesses.

The AHV website has been updated and is going live in late October. The key change in the updated website is a news feed that will assist to improve AHV's digital communications. The change in AHV's logo has been coordinated with the website update.

### **AHV COVID-19 Update**

While we've had some easing of restrictions in Victoria, we understand that many people are continuing to experience higher levels of stress and hardship as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. 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/covid19/>

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**

Remember to practice good hygiene and regularly wash your hands to stop the spread. Please visit our website <https://ahvic.org.au/communications-and-resources/coronavirus> for the most current information from us and for a list of support services.