



ABORIGINAL HOUSING VICTORIA

## **Communique**

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

### **Friday 31 July 2020**

The Board of Directors of Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) held their eighth Board meeting for the calendar year on Friday 31 July via videoconference.

#### **Victorian Government *Building Works* COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Package**

The Board acknowledged that AHV's joint proposal with 20 other Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) across Victoria has now been submitted to Government to attract \$35m for Aboriginal community housing for maintenance, upgrades and modular housing.

AHV will also continue to advocate with the Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, to explore funding for a shared equity housing initiative, to assist Aboriginal Victorians to purchase their own homes.

#### **AHV rental payments**

AHV would like to acknowledge the efforts of our tenants in these challenging times in maintaining rental payments. During 2019-20, a significant reduction of 37% in current rental arrears was achieved. There was also a 20% reduction in the number of AHV tenants in arrears.

The result is a very positive reflection on AHV's tenant community. Our tenants have demonstrated strength and resilience despite the significant challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented to the Aboriginal community. If tenants need support they can reach out to Housing Officers and AHV's Wellbeing Team who can assist with active referrals to services, to ensure that tenants receive the support they need to successfully sustain their tenancies.

#### **2020-21 Business Plan**

As part of our reporting requirements to the Housing Registrar, AHV is required to prepare an annual Business Plan. The AHV Board approved the 2020-21 Business Plan at today's meeting.

The Business Plan identifies AHV's key priority areas. This year, our focus is on the implementation of the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework, and the potential opportunities presented by the Government's *Building Works* economic stimulus programs, to improve and grow AHV's portfolio and Aboriginal social housing more broadly, in partnership with Victorian ACCOs.

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

We understand that many people are experiencing 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.