



## The Give Tanks campaign First steps in push for more solar heating

### Public funding campaign kickstarts investment in energy saving innovations.

AN EXCITING NEW PARTNERSHIP between AHV and the Earthworker Co-operative is turning into a big win for AHV tenants, with the beginning of a project to install solar hot water tanks in AHV properties.

In January, the first solar hot water tank was installed in one of our properties in Melbourne's northern suburbs.

It's part of Earthworkers' Give Tanks campaign which is raising funds to provide solar hot water tanks into the homes of low-income households.

With AHV's involvement, the crowdsourcing campaign has so far raised enough funds to purchase tanks for three of our properties.



Find out more about Give Tanks at:  
[www.chuffed.org/project/givetanks](http://www.chuffed.org/project/givetanks)



Coree Thorpe and Riley Bain

Director of Operations, Des Rogers, said: "AHV was very keen to be part of the campaign, because of the many benefits for tenants, jobs and the environment".

"Solar hot water tanks can result in significant savings in heating costs. With so many of our tenants on low incomes, reducing energy costs is a great outcome and that's why we jumped at the chance to be involved in this campaign."

"Of course, the other benefits are reduced carbon emissions and local job creation - with the tanks being manufactured in Australia."

"The opportunities that this partnership might create longer term are really exciting. If we're

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# “1 Million Stars to End Violence” Project



AHV IS COMMITTED TO BECOMING White Ribbon accredited. We want to be recognised as an organisation that is committed to actively preventing and responding to violence against women and to practise respect and safety for women. Our staff have undertaken training and workshops so they can effectively recognise and



respond to violence and inappropriate behaviour.

On White Ribbon Day last November, White Ribbon Ambassador and AHV Board Member, Ian Hamm, talked to staff about his personal

commitment as an Ambassador and as an Aboriginal man. He spoke of the responsibility we all have to support victims of violence and ensure their safety.

“As men in our communities we need to lead by example and say that violence against women is not OK!” Ian said.

AHV Project Officer, Jo Thitchener introduced the “1 Million Stars to End Violence” Project to staff on White Ribbon Day - which is also a United Nations worldwide campaign to end violence against women.

The “1 Million Stars” Project started in 2012 as a response to the brutal rape and murder of Jill Meagher in Brunswick. A group of people

came together to weave stars as a symbol of light, courage and solidarity to end all forms of violence.

Staff participated in star weaving to encourage thinking about ways we can work together to promote women’s safety and work towards an end to violence in all forms.

AHV made a commitment to become a Weave100 community, which means we will weave 10,000 stars in ATSI flag colours by March 2017. It’s just one way we can raise awareness about ending violence and to get more people across the community involved as well.



Tracey Winmar, Jo Thitchener and The Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP

Our Starweaving Count is 812 as at 22 February 2016. We will host more star weaving workshops at AHV this year (*see below for upcoming dates*).

You can also weave a star and send it to us at AHV! See the “1 Million Stars to End Violence” website for more information on the project:

[www.onemillionstars.net](http://www.onemillionstars.net) and watch the instructional video here:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSjyDqztzaQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSjyDqztzaQ)

If you or anyone in your community are interested in the project, please contact Jo Thitchener on 03 9403 2100, or email: [jo.thitchener@ahvic.org.au](mailto:jo.thitchener@ahvic.org.au)

## Catch up with AHV

INCLUDES culturally responsive housing Design Principle workshops, Community outreach, Elders Awareness Forum and Star Weaving workshops.

For more info: please contact AHV on 9403 2100 or email: [info@ahvic.org.au](mailto:info@ahvic.org.au)

### MARCH

Star Weaving Workshop	Tues 8, 10am-2pm	Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-operative, 5a High Street, Eaglehawk
Elders Awareness Forum	Wed 9, 10am-2pm	VACSAL, 496 High St, Northcote
Design Principle Workshop	Wed 16, 11am-2pm	St Mary’s Catholic Church, 23 Pyke Street, Bairnsdale
Design Principle Workshop	Tues 22, 10am-12pm	Gathering Place, Unit 1-2, 7 Wedge St, Werribee
Star Weaving Workshop	Wed 23, 12-2pm	Narrandjeri House, 125 Scotchmer St, Nth Fitzroy

### APRIL

Design Principle Workshop	Wed 6, 11am-2pm	AHV Office - 8 Grace Avenue, Warrnambool
Star Weaving Workshop	Wed 13, 12-2pm	Narrandjeri House, 125 Scotchmer St, North Fitzroy
Community Outreach	Tues 19, 10am-12pm	Gathering Place, Unit 1-2, 7 Wedge St, Werribee
Design Principle Workshop	Wed 20, 11am-2pm	AHV Office - The Deakin Business Centre, Corner Eighth St & Lemon Avenue, Mildura

# AHV Community Meetings: we're learning from each other

AHV IS COMMITTED TO ACTIVELY listening to our tenants so we understand their issues and needs. We know that some of our tenants experience difficulties with sustaining their tenancies and we want to be able to respond with flexible solutions.

We also want to promote the work of AHV so that we can engage our tenants, communities, government and stakeholders, and encourage them to share our values of respect and support for culture and identity. This helps us strive for excellence and build strong collaborative relationships.

Our community meetings enable the voices of the Aboriginal people that we represent to be heard.

AHV held another round of community meetings in November and December 2015 with meetings held in Ringwood, Horsham, Werribee, Wodonga, Robinvale, Bendigo, Dandenong, Thornbury,

Warrnambool, Lakes Entrance, Sale and Shepparton.

The purpose of the meetings was to provide tenants with an update on what has been happening at AHV, including the Victorian Government's

commitment to work with AHV to progress transfer of ownership to AHV of properties that we manage on their behalf.

AHV's long term desire for ownership of the properties comes from our ambition to achieve self determination and financial independence of

Liza from Ngwala with Eric and Margaret at Mullum Mullum



the founding Elders and the current Board.

It will mean that:

- AHV can have better control on how we manage the housing properties and decide how and when to improve, replace or upgrade properties.
- AHV will have greater independence.
- AHV will continue to improve on our service delivery and build better relationships with our tenants.
- Maintenance and upgrades to properties will be planned and urgent upgrades will be prioritised.
- Opportunities for employment and consultancy work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- In the long term, there may be a possibility of home ownership for some AHV tenants.

We also wanted to give tenants the opportunity to share with AHV any concerns, problems, ideas or suggestions that they may have, to enable us to provide the best service that we can.

As part of our commitment to you, AHV plans to continue holding community meetings on a regular basis (**see page 2 for some meeting dates**).



## HERE IS SOME OF THE FEEDBACK FROM TENANTS WHO ATTENDED OUR MEETINGS:

*"Update on progress was excellent."*

Tenant, Southern Region

*"More regular meetings to keep people informed and up to date."*

Tenant, Shepparton

*"It will be good when AHV can upgrade properties; it is confusing at the moment because we do not know if DHHS or AHV is meant to do the work."*

Tenant, Eastern Region

# Advocacy and support for Aboriginal People

LATELY, WE'VE BEEN OUT AND ABOUT at a few community events and conferences.

AHV staff and Darren Smith, Director of Strategy and Performance presented a paper on "Housing as a platform for educational pathways and outcomes" at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Conference (NATSIEC) in November.

AHV staff held a stall at the ACES Elders Annual Fete in December. AHV information was made available and good connections with other agencies, Elders, Community and staff at ACES. Staff showed some Community members how to weave stars as part of the "1 Million Stars" Project.

We are committed to being a voice for the Aboriginal people we represent. AHV regularly attends industry and stakeholder forums and events, along with providing papers, presentations and submissions to help influence and effect change in Government policy, including:

- Submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Conference: Housing a platform for educational pathways
- Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness for Aboriginal Statewide Stakeholders
- Input to the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework
- Presentation to the West Metropolitan Aboriginal Advisory Group
- Gender Equality Consultation Paper
- AHV Information stall at ACES Elders Annual Fete



Our stall at the ACES Market

## Enter our Spring Garden Competition



AUTUMN IS A GREAT TIME to help your garden repair from the heat of summer and get ready for spring. Just in time to enter AHV's first ever Spring Garden Competition to be held later this year. There'll be more details in the next newsletter with prizes in different categories, so start planning now!

### Autumn garden jobs

*Pruning:* Pruning in autumn is important as it removes dead wood and promotes flowering and fruiting, keeps plants and trees in shape, and encourages new growth. Always prune your trees, vines, and shrubs with sharp tools.

*Feed your lawn:* If you have lawn or grass, autumn is a good time to feed the grass with a slow release lawn food.

*Compost:* Autumn leaves are good for the compost so if you haven't started a compost yet, now is a good time. As well as reducing your household waste by composting your kitchen scraps (raw fruit and vegetable scraps), you're also making your own fertilizer to help grow your fruit, herbs and veggies!

*Mulch:* It's important to protect soil, and replace any mulch that may have thinned out over summer. Local councils often have free mulch available for pickup, such as Yarra Council's free mulch pickup at their waste depot in Roseneath Street, Clifton Hill.

### What to plant in autumn

- Garlic • Pumpkin • Beetroot • Broad beans
- Peas and sweet peas • Broccoli • Silverbeet
- Celery • Onions, leeks and spring onions

# Christmas Toy Appeal: a resounding success!

LAST CHRISTMAS WE RAN A TOY APPEAL for the first time. We thought we might get a few toys donated that we would be able to distribute to some tenants with families who were doing it tough this Christmas. We also thought it would be a good way to invite some of our neighbours from North Fitzroy into our office to see who we are and what we do. When we hosted a BBQ for

Sorry Day last year, we heard a few of our neighbours comment that: "We've seen the building, but we don't know what you do". So in the first week of December we decided to do a letter drop to engage with our local community and to encourage them to get involved in the spirit of Christmas.

AHV staff distributed fliers off to local businesses and residents during their lunchtime. The

response was phenomenal and immediate! We had toys donated from the very first day we letter dropped right up until Christmas eve. We were overwhelmed with the response and the genuine interest, compassion and generosity of spirit shown by the local community. Some people who came in to the office to donate goods expressed an interest in helping out next year and some wanted to stay in touch with what we do.

Over 25 local businesses and over 100 local residents gave to the Toy Appeal and we were able to provide Christmas presents to over 250 Aboriginal children across metropolitan and regional Victoria.



Some of the toys donated to AHV

Thank you to everyone who supported our Toy Appeal – including all the local residents and businesses including Pet Art, Moppit & More, Officeworks, Francis Maurice Design, Abstar productions, North Fitzroy Primary School, Little Toy Shop, Good Shepherd Microfinance, The Snake Pit, the Hon. Natalie Hutchins MP, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Manad Plus, Curves Fitness, Clifton Hill Pharmacy, Select Group, Capra Coffee, North Fitzroy Library, Readings Bookstore and Holden Street Neighbourhood House.



Tania and her son Jordan were very excited

*"That's so deadly. The girls will be so rapt!"*

AHV tenant who picked up presents from AHV

*"What an amazing experience this toy drive has created. For me it has shown me that the spirit of Christmas is alive and well in this sometimes harsh world in which we live. It has been so nice to be able to spread the joy! A BIG congratulations to everyone who has been involved."*

AHV Staff Member



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successful in attracting more funding - either through further crowdsourcing or through new partnerships - we can install more tanks in more properties. And we'll be looking at opportunities to generate employment for Aboriginal people too."

"AHV was thrilled to be able to be part of this campaign and we hope that the first few tanks are just the beginning."

The crowdsourcing campaign raised \$24,000 in total.

## The latest on property inspections

AHV HAS RECENTLY BEEN UNDERGOING a process of conducting property condition inspections. These inspections are vital so that we can have a full assessment of the current state of our properties as we work in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, to initiate upgrades or repair works for 31 of our managed properties. These properties were selected on need for structural repairs, general age, and wear and tear. DHHS will now start the process of scoping the

properties to obtain quotes before agreeing on the level of work to be completed and starting dates. We expect this work to be complete by the end of this year.

If you receive a notice that your house is to be inspected by AHV for a property assessment, we ask that you work with us co-operatively, to help us with this very important process.

Don't forget to "LIKE" us on Facebook



## We welcome our new AFL SportsReady trainees

AHV WAS DELIGHTED to take on three new AFL SportsReady Trainees at our North Fitzroy office. Rebecca, Nakitah and Anthony recently joined us and they are undertaking their Certificate 3 in Business under the experience and guidance of our dedicated team at AHV.

AFL SportsReady is a national employment and training program that works in partnership with organisations, like AHV, to help young people into careers through on the job training.

It provides on the job support and training, mentoring, and assistance with finding work. Over 1500 young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have been assisted through AFL SportsReady.

Nakitah was working in restaurant hospitality prior to taking up the traineeship, but could not see a career in it. She told Mia Mia that finding the time to study on top of work was a real barrier. With the AFL SportsReady program, she



Rebecca, Anthony and Nakitah

is able to undertake study as part of her job. "The three hours I get released for study is really helpful."

For all your repairs and maintenance needs please call one of the following AHV Maintenance Lines:

**General metro: (03) 9403 2166**

**Regional: 1300 664 392 (cost of local call)**

**Emergency after hours: (03) 9403 2171**



**Hours of Business:** Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm. **Address:** Narrandjeri House, 125-127 Scotchmer Street, North Fitzroy, VIC 3068. **Telephone:** (03) 9403 2100.

**Fax:** (03) 9403 2122. **Email:** info@ahvic.org.au **Aboriginal Housing Victoria** is a not-for-profit organisation that works to deliver accessible, affordable, appropriate and secure housing to meet the social, cultural and economic aspirations of the Victorian Aboriginal Community.