

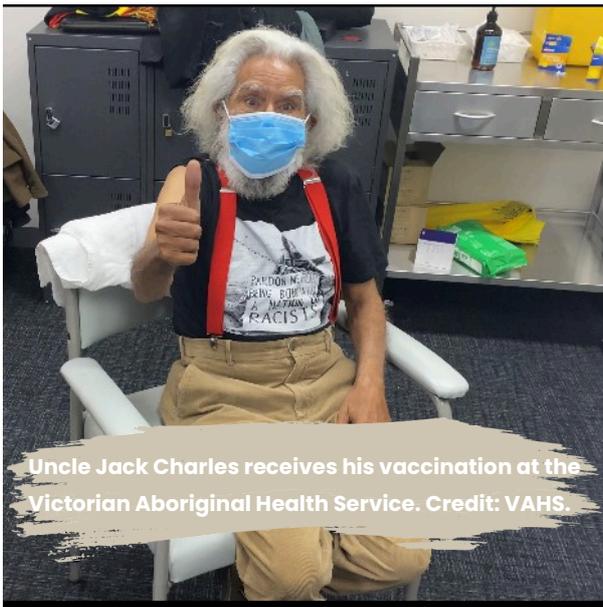


ABORIGINAL HOUSING VICTORIA

MIA MIA Renter Newsletter

Edition 3 - 2021

OUR COMMUNITY LEADING THE WAY IN GETTING THE JAB DONE



Uncle Jack Charles receives his vaccination at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service. Credit: VAHS.

Community members across the state are rolling up their sleeves to get the COVID-19 vaccination.

At time of print more than 45% of Aboriginal Victorians have had a first dose.

All Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people aged 12 and over are eligible to get vaccinated. There are also over 20 Aboriginal health services that are operating clinics administering vaccines across Victoria.

For more information and to book call the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398, speak to your

local health service or visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about a pre-existing medical condition and getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

PHONE SUPPORT SERVICE GETS EXTENSION

The Aboriginal Community Home Connect program has been extended. Since it began earlier this year we have provided support to over 300 clients, with information and regular follow-ups for physical and mental health, financial difficulties, housing and child welfare services. Our consultants can also assist in booking COVID vaccine appointments.

Give us a call on 1800 313 030 or visit www.aboriginalhomeconnect.org.au to have a yarn or learn more. Home Connect is available only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander renters living in social housing in Victoria.



CELEBRATING EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS



We're delighted to have received these lovely photos from a recent graduation at RMIT. The talented graduates completed courses ranging from diplomas in Community Services to Family Violence and Healing, run through RMIT University in conjunction with Dardi Munwurro and the Healing Foundation.

AHV team member Trudi was among those who graduated with a Diploma in Family Violence and Healing.

"It was an honour and a privilege to be allowed to be part of this course run for community, by community", said Trudi.

"I made some wonderful friendships, and learnt so much from the community members who also participated.

The course started being delivered in a group setting, and swiftly moved online due to COVID restrictions, which was challenging to say the least. It was a long slog, but we got there. It was the first of its kind to be delivered. I am so grateful to have been part of it."

The above pictures were taken at the graduation ceremony, which was lucky enough to occur during a period of eased COVID restrictions.

Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd is one of a number of registered training organisations that offer the Diploma in Community Services. To learn more visit www.vacsal.org.au or call (03) 9416 4266.

WELLBEING PROGRAM FEATURED IN STUDY

Our More Than A Landlord (MTAL) program has featured in the BMC Public Health journal. The paper – titled *Evaluation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander strengths based coaching program: a study protocol* – explores the effects life coaching on social and emotional wellbeing of renters.

MTAL life coaching is currently available to AHV renters in the North-West metropolitan Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong areas. For more information contact the Wellbeing Team via free call 1800 248 842 or email wellbeing@ahvic.org.au

STAY FIRE SAFE IN THE HOME

With all of us spending more time at home it is a good opportunity to review fire safety and ensure we know what to do in case of an emergency. One of the most important things we can do is ensure we have working smoke alarms.

- Check your smoke alarm monthly by pressing the test button and waiting for a beeping sound. If it does beep, this means your smoke alarm is still working.
- Dust around the outside cover of your smoke alarm at least once a year.
- If your smoke alarm emits a single, occasional beep, the battery needs to be changed or the smoke alarm may be faulty and must be replaced.

Please let our maintenance team know as soon as possible if a smoke alarm in your home is not working.

Specialised smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Funding for this assistive technology may also be available in National Disability Insurance Scheme plans. For more information visit www.expression.com.au

Always call triple zero (000) in an emergency.

For more tips visit www.frv.vic.gov.au or www.cfa.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA IN BLOOM GARDEN COMPETITION

Entries for this year's Victoria in Bloom garden competition are open! Victoria in Bloom recognises and rewards the great work of gardening enthusiasts living in social housing.

Renters can enter all types of gardens – from balconies, to back yards and community gardens.

There is no age limit either, with the Best Young Gardener category opening doors for under 25s.

Entries close on Friday 26 November 2021. Categories and more information available at www.housing.vic.gov.au/victoria-bloom-garden-competition or via (03) 8633 4357.

SOCIAL HOUSING VOLUNTEER AWARDS

There are two categories for the Social Volunteer Awards.

The Frances Penington Award celebrates an individual public or community housing renter, or a group of renters, who have made an outstanding voluntary contribution to their community. In 2019 this award was won by Gunggari Elder Aunty Judy Jackson for her volunteer efforts in the City of Port Philip area.

The Molly Hadfield Award honours outstanding services to older renters.

Entries close Friday 1 October 2021. More information available at www.housing.vic.gov.au/social-housing-volunteer-awards or via (03) 8633 4357.

ASSISTANCE FOR POWER SAVING BONUS

The team at Good Shepherd is providing support to apply for the Victorian Government's \$250 Power Saving Bonus. The Power Saving Bonus is a one-off payment which provides direct support to Victorian households experiencing power bill stress during the coronavirus pandemic. It is available to over 900,000 eligible Victorian households with at least one eligible concession cardholder. To see if you're eligible and to get assistance, visit www.goodshep.org.au/services/powersaving or call 1300 026 500.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO NAVIGATE UTILITY SERVICES

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV) provides a free service for Victorian customers that can resolve complaints about electricity, gas and water companies.

Do you have outstanding energy bills? Do you have a payment plan but cannot make your payment?

If you are behind on your bills, you can ask your energy company for help and they must help you. If you have a debt over \$55 they must offer you a payment plan you can afford, check to see if you are eligible for a Utility Relief grant, and help you with the application and apply any concessions you are eligible for.

Your company cannot disconnect your supply if your debt is \$300 or less and/or you have an active payment plan.

If you have an outstanding debt with your water company, you can also ask them for help.

You can contact EWOV on 1800 500 509 or via www.ewov.com.au if your company does not help you or if you have any questions.



Do you have outstanding energy or water bills?

Artwork by Gary Saunders
A Bangerang/Wiradjuri/
Dja Dja Wurrung/
Yorta Yorta man.

 **FREECALL**
1800 500 509
ewov.com.au

 **ENERGY AND WATER
OMBUDSMAN**
Victoria **Listen Assist Resolve**