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## Message from the CEO

DARREN SMITH

It is a great honour to take the reins as CEO of Aboriginal Housing Victoria, and I'm very excited for what the future holds for our organisation and our tenants.

I have a strong foundation to build on. Under the former CEO Jenny Samms' leadership, AHV took great strides forward.

Our long held aspirations for self-determination were realised with the Victorian Government's decision to transfer ownership of the 1,448 properties we manage.

My highest priority is to ensure the smooth transfer of all the properties over the next two years.

Ownership means we will be able to better manage the housing assets. We can better match houses to tenant needs because we will control the design and housing standards. We can now decide when we repair houses, when we sell houses that no longer meet tenant needs, and when and where we buy or build new houses.

Many of the houses are old and deteriorated, and improving the housing stock will take time.

We have a 15 year plan to grow, manage and improve the housing stock.

Improving maintenance and repairs is a priority. We understand the frustration tenants experience

waiting for repairs and we are committed to the reducing time contractors take to complete works.

We are also focused on improving our tenancy services and how we work with other organisations to support vulnerable tenants.

Beyond this, I am committed to looking at ways AHV can support Aboriginal people in Victoria to meet their future housing needs. Some tenants have told us they would like to become home-owners and this is something we are keen to explore in the near future.

When the transfer of properties is complete we will be one of the largest community housing organisations in Australia. We will be in a very strong position to improve housing for Victoria's Aboriginal community long into the future.

## Peer researchers training opportunity for AHV tenants

AHV has been working in partnership with the University of Melbourne on a trial project "More than a Landlord" to help us understand the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people in social housing in the Whittlesea area to help improve outcomes for our tenants.

The University of Melbourne's Indigenous Health Equity Unit is coordinating the delivery of a confidential survey to help AHV get a better understanding of the needs of their tenants and their families.

This survey will have comprehensive questions about the individual and their household members. The survey will be completely confidential.



Peer researchers (L-R): Lucinda Jackson, Christine Kardum, Ketia Ahwung, Alisha Warden, and Sharyn Lovett.

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*"I think I'll be able to relate to the tenants." said Ketia Ahwang. "It's about having a voice. Sometimes you can feel like you're just a number when you apply for maintenance or things. It's an awesome feeling knowing I'm helping my community."*

To ensure the surveys are conducted in a culturally appropriate manner, AHV and the University of Melbourne have trained AHV tenants as Peer Researchers. The three day accredited training program was held at AHV recently and we have trained five Peer Researchers who are conducting the survey with tenants in the Whittlesea area.

Further training will be held shortly to provide other tenants an opportunity to become Peer Researchers. If you are interested, please contact Samantha French on **9403 2153** or email:

**[Samantha.french@ahvic.org.au](mailto:Samantha.french@ahvic.org.au)**

## ***AHV receives White Ribbon Workplace accreditation***

Aboriginal Housing Victoria has proudly taken a further stand against family violence by becoming an accredited White Ribbon Workplace.

AHV joins with just three other Aboriginal organisations across Australia who have become White Ribbon Workplaces.

Given the high rates of family violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities, AHV recognise the critical importance of taking steps to address the issue.



AHV staff and community members star weaving at Narrandjeri House

"We hope that White Ribbon accreditation will increase community confidence and show that we are committed towards ending family violence," said Darren Smith, AHV CEO.

For more information on White Ribbon:

**<https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/>**



Proudly accredited  
by White Ribbon



## ***Know your rights as tenants***

COME ALONG TO A SERIES OF COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND HAVE A YARN WITH US ABOUT:

- **title transfer of properties from the Victorian government to AHV and what this means**
- **tenants rights and responsibilities**

AHV is inviting tenancy support services such as VCAT, Tenants Union Victoria (TUV), Victorian Aboriginal Legal Services (VALS) and Victorian Legal Aid (VLA) to come along and give you information about the services they can provide.

Check out our website or Facebook page for more dates of meetings in May/June across Victoria:

**[www.ahvic.org.au/events](http://www.ahvic.org.au/events)**

DATE	VENU	ADDRESS	TIME
22 May	Gippsland & East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative	37-53 Dalmahoy St, Bairnsdale	12 – 2pm
23 May	Ramahyuck District Co-operative	117 Foster St, Sale	1 – 3pm
1 June	Koori Hub	403 Main Road, Ballarat	11 – 1pm
2 June	Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative	62 Morgan St, North Geelong	11 – 1pm



## Three homes get an energy saving makeover

AHV is exploring ways to improve the energy efficiency of our housing, which also helps cut down on energy bills for our tenants. In partnership with the Moreland Energy Foundation, three AHV properties have had energy efficiency fit outs made.

Works included:

- ☉ Tree planting for shade
- ☉ Solar panels
- ☉ Air conditioning and ceiling fans
- ☉ Draught proofing of doors and windows
- ☉ Installing shade cloths
- ☉ Rainwater tanks and self watering hoses

One of our tenants to receive the fitout is Frank Scerri. "It has made such a big difference to my life, without a doubt, I can sleep now," Frank said.

Moreland Energy Foundation will record temperature graphs before and after the capital works.

Frank next to one of the nine trees that were planted at his property to provide more shade and keep his house cool.



Another tenant to receive the fitout, Diana Travis, said: "I've always hated the humidity and it has been uplifting to have had these improvements. It has made it much better."

*"It has made such a big difference to my life, without a doubt, I can sleep now."*

## Thank you gift vouchers for tenants completing the Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to all the AHV tenants who have completed the Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Your voice matters and we appreciate the responses from everyone who took the time to complete the survey.

Congratulations to the lucky winners of the early bird draw, who returned their surveys back to the NSW Federation of Housing Associations (who conducted the confidential survey on behalf of AHV) before 22 March, 2017. Georgina Nicholson, Crystal Monaro, Lavenia Harrison, Anne Martin, Anthony Thow, Jeanette Tasker, Shelina Strawbridge and Alicia Bates - all received a \$50 gift voucher!

Thanks also to AHV tenant Christine Kardum who is working at AHV to help other AHV tenants to complete the survey over the telephone.



Tony Thow, with Daughter Angelina and grandson Ryan

### THERE IS STILL TIME TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY!

An additional 8 x \$25 vouchers will be available for tenants who complete the Tenant Satisfaction Survey by **9 June**.

If you put your survey in early, your name will go back in to the drawer for a second chance to win a voucher. In addition, when we meet our 35% benchmark response, we will draw another lucky winner (from all surveys received) for a \$200 voucher!



Anne Martin

## Vale Uncle Trevor Edwards

The AHV Board and Staff were deeply saddened by the recent passing of Uncle Trevor Edwards.

While we all mourn his passing, we will also continue to acknowledge and celebrate Uncle Trevor's life and will seek to emulate his legacy of making a real and positive difference to the lives of Aboriginal people.



### SAVE THE DATE

**NAIDOC Family Day  
at the Collingwood  
Children's Farm**

Wednesday 5 July

#### EVENT

### RECONCILIATION ON THE ROOFTOP

HOSTED BY AHV, SNAICC AND YARRA LIBRARIES

#### DATE AND TIME

Mon. 29 May 2017  
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm AEST

#### LOCATION

Bargoonga Nganjin, North Fitzroy Library  
182 St Georges Rd  
North Fitzroy, VIC 3068

Link for tickets:

<http://bit.ly/2r090iU>



## It is Rent Review time

For many tenants, the weekly (or in some cases fortnightly) rental payment represents their biggest household cost. The way AHV sets, charges and reviews your rent is one of the most important aspects of your tenancy with us.

Changes to rent can impact on the amount of money your household has left to pay for utilities, food, clothing, health care and other expenses. With that in mind, in 2012, AHV changed the frequency of rent

reviews from 6 months to 12 months and moved to Fixed Rent Reviews - this means your rent is fixed for that period.

Every tenant's rent is based on 25% of their total household income. If you receive Centrelink Family Payments, 15% of those payments are added to your rent. If you receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance, 100% of that payment is added to your AHV rent.

In calculating your rent, AHV use either household income as a basis (see diagram below) OR the market rent of your property - whichever is lower.

If you have any further queries about how we calculate your rent, please contact your Housing Officer.

