



IN THEIR WORDS...

"Organisations such as Aboriginal Housing Victoria have a long history of supporting their community, strengthening and maintaining cultural and community ties."

**Aboriginal Affairs Minister,
Natalie Hutchins**

"It's everyone's dream to own their own home sooner or later and with this happening it's one step closer."

– AHV tenant Rebecca

"This is an exciting time for Aboriginal Housing Victoria as it grows its capability to deliver affordable housing and build better pathways to stronger communities."

**– Housing Minister Martin
Foley**

"Now I can think of the future."

– AHV tenant Christine



From the Chair

TIM CHATFIELD

History was made on the 5th of September 2016, when the Victorian Government announced it would transfer ownership of 1,448 properties to Aboriginal Housing Victoria.

It is the single largest transfer of freehold title back to Aboriginal ownership in Australian history.

Our people have historically experienced terrible housing outcomes as a direct result of dispossession and discriminatory policies.

The Victorian Government's decision recognises these injustices. It's the first step toward putting things right.

We've been on a journey that has seen us transition from advocacy to tenancy management and now, the custodians of a half a billion dollar property portfolio on behalf of our people. It's been a long and difficult struggle and the hard work won't stop.

But by controlling our destiny, our future is a lot brighter.

Message from the Premier

For more than a century, the burden of failed policies and practices has fallen on Aboriginal children, families and communities.

Forcibly removed from their traditional lands and robbed of the connection that comes with it, Aboriginal people have been fighting for justice ever since.

Integral to that fight has been Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV).

Over the last decade, AHV has helped thousands of Aboriginal Victorians get the secure and affordable housing they deserve.

At the heart of AHV's work: dignity, compassion and respect for the Aboriginal Victorians it serves, their history and their culture.

Recognising that better outcomes for Aboriginal people begins with

Aboriginal led decision-making, our Government decided to transfer over 1400 properties to AHV.

This handback is just one small step in putting right so many of those past injustices.

I congratulate the Elders, past and present Board members, and the existing management and staff of AHV for their relentless struggle for self-determination.

*Daniel Andrews
Premier of Victoria*



Josh Muir

ARTIST



To commemorate the historic transfer of ownership, Aboriginal Housing Victoria, with the generous support of corporate partner PricewaterhouseCoopers, commissioned an artwork by young artist Josh Muir.

A Yorta Yorta, Gunditjmara and Barkinji man, Josh is the grandson of former AHV Board member and artist Myrtle Muir.

Josh's work, "Home is Where the Heart Is", portrays the elements he sees as important in making a strong foundation that supports healthy households: fire, air, water and earth.

He drew on the Yin and Yang for his inspiration. "The good with the bad and the bad with the good."



He sees housing gives people a platform to build responsibility and healthy lives. "Maintaining a household, making it your own, helps to create something that our people can feel a sense of pride in."

Josh said he was very grateful to PricewaterhouseCoopers. "I hope they enjoy the work as much as the community will. I think its great for PWC to be a part of Aboriginal success."

Josh Muir's artwork is proudly sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers **pwc**

Mick Harding

ARTIST

To mark the historic occasion and ensure that there would be a permanent cultural reminder in the Victorian Parliament, AHV commissioned two shields from artist Mick Harding, to present to the Premier of Victoria.

Mick, a Taungwurrung Kulin man and well known Victorian artist, wanted to reflect the journey of the organisation and his people in the design of the shields.



"The shield has a protective element. The design down the middle is like a stream and the shape of the shield represents everybody's journey."

"There's the house design symbol and figures that represent families."

Mick hopes the transfer of properties into Aboriginal hands will bring the possibility for Aboriginal people in the Victorian community that can potentially own their own properties.

"With the shift from the Government owning the asset, the potential not just for the organisation but for Aboriginal people in Victoria is huge."

The shields are made out of red cedar wood, a hardwood that is also very light in weight and easy to work with.



1978

First State
Aboriginal Housing
meeting held

1981

Inaugural meeting of
the Aboriginal
Housing Board of
Victoria Victoria
(AHBV) and office
established in
Collingwood

1982

First Annual General
Meeting held in
Northcote

1987

AHBV office moves
to Gertrude Street,
Fitzroy

1988

Feasibility study on
Future Ownership of
the Aboriginal
Housing Program



Jenny Samms

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I'm enormously proud that the Victorian Government has the confidence in Aboriginal Housing Victoria to undertake this historic development.

We've put the hard work in over the past few years to get here, and the Government believes we have what it takes to achieve independence.

There have been no special arrangements because we are an Aboriginal organisation. We have met the standards required of any housing organisation in the country.

Ownership of the housing portfolio means we

"Other Aboriginal housing organisations around the country are closely watching what we are doing because it has never been done before."

JENNY SAMMS, CEO

can develop the housing to provide the type of accommodation that our tenants need.

It's a very exciting time. Other Aboriginal housing organisations around the country are closely watching what we are doing because it has never been done before.

Our Elders established this organisation because people were literally sleeping on river banks.

We will own a half a billion dollar property portfolio with the potential to drive significant improvement in the lives of Aboriginal Victorians well into the future.



Nick Foa (State Government Housing Director) and Tim Chatfield (AHV Chairperson)



Tim Chatfield and Jenny Samms holding the property deeds



Tim and Nick seal the deal

"The future's in our hands"

Artist Coree Thorpe's design of the commemorative key ring incorporates the colours of both the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags, and shaped like a key to indicate housing ownership.



Coree, who works at AHV, was very happy to bring his passion for art to celebrate ownership.

"It's a big thing for our community. We have this responsibility now, and we need to make sure that our young ones understand the significance. The future's in our hands."



Coree overcame the challenge of getting a drawing onto a small scale with a striking design for the key ring, which will be given out to dignitaries, Board members, tenants and staff.

Both Coree's parents are artists. His mum Lyn's

work is very familiar to AHV, including the boardroom table, the stained glass window, and the house design also used in this newsletter.

"Painting is my passion and it runs in the family. My mum got to do a piece for the Board in 1995. I'm very lucky."



1993

AHBV receives ownership of 4 rental properties purchased out of ATSIC funds

1995

AHBV transfers to new office premises at Narrandjeri House in North Fitzroy

2009

Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) registered as a Housing Provider

2010

AHV becomes landlord for Aboriginal public housing tenants who choose to transfer AHV

2016

Housing Registrar registers AHV as a Housing Association and the first transfer of 511 properties commences

"The future is much brighter"

Aunty Pat Ockwell has been a central figure in the struggle for housing independence. She thinks it's a wonderful development that will help young people especially.

"I have been involved with Aboriginal housing for over 30 years. I've seen big changes and I am thrilled to bits to see at last that we will own our properties.

"When I first started it was a big struggle. Things were very tough for our people. The were turned away because of too many kids, or just discrimination against them.

"The first people of this country were always pushed aside."

Aunty Pat said ownership of housing would enable Victoria's Aboriginal communities to make real progress.

"We are growing, there's a lot of young families coming through.

"We are growing, there's a lot of young families coming through. The future is much brighter for them now.."

The future is much brighter for them now.

"We are coming alive."

Aunty Pat paid tribute to the efforts of the Board and staff of AHV. "They have worked very hard over the years."



CHAIRS OF AHV



1981
Kennedy Edwards



1987
Winnie Quagliotti



1991
Sid Clarke



1994
Esme Thompson



1996
Pat Ockwell



2003
Tim Chatfield

"DEADLY!"

HANDBACK GIVES HOPE FOR HOME OWNERSHIP

Nicole Cassar has been an AHV tenant for nearly 13 years, after 14 years on the public housing waiting list. Before that, her family was forced to move from rental property to rental property as the private housing market boomed. Home ownership became further and further out of reach.

Nicole thinks the transfer of ownership will provide hope for many.

"This has been a long time coming. The community's fought for this handback for a very long time.

"What the Government has done is deadly!

"It will allow Aboriginal Housing Victoria to fully determine its future, and give Aboriginal people hope around home ownership. Getting the titles back - that's the start of it.

"My family has been in our home for 12 years, and my youngest son was born a few weeks after we moved here. We've had 13 years of stability, and now there is hope we will own our home one day."

Thank you and community event

This historic transfer of ownership will be recorded and celebrated by Aboriginal Housing Victoria in many ways over the coming year.

A community celebration is planned for the first half of 2017, and all our tenants and partners will be asked to join in.

Aboriginal Housing Victoria thanks everyone who has worked so hard to make this a reality – our past and present Board members, tenants, staff and our partners and supporters.