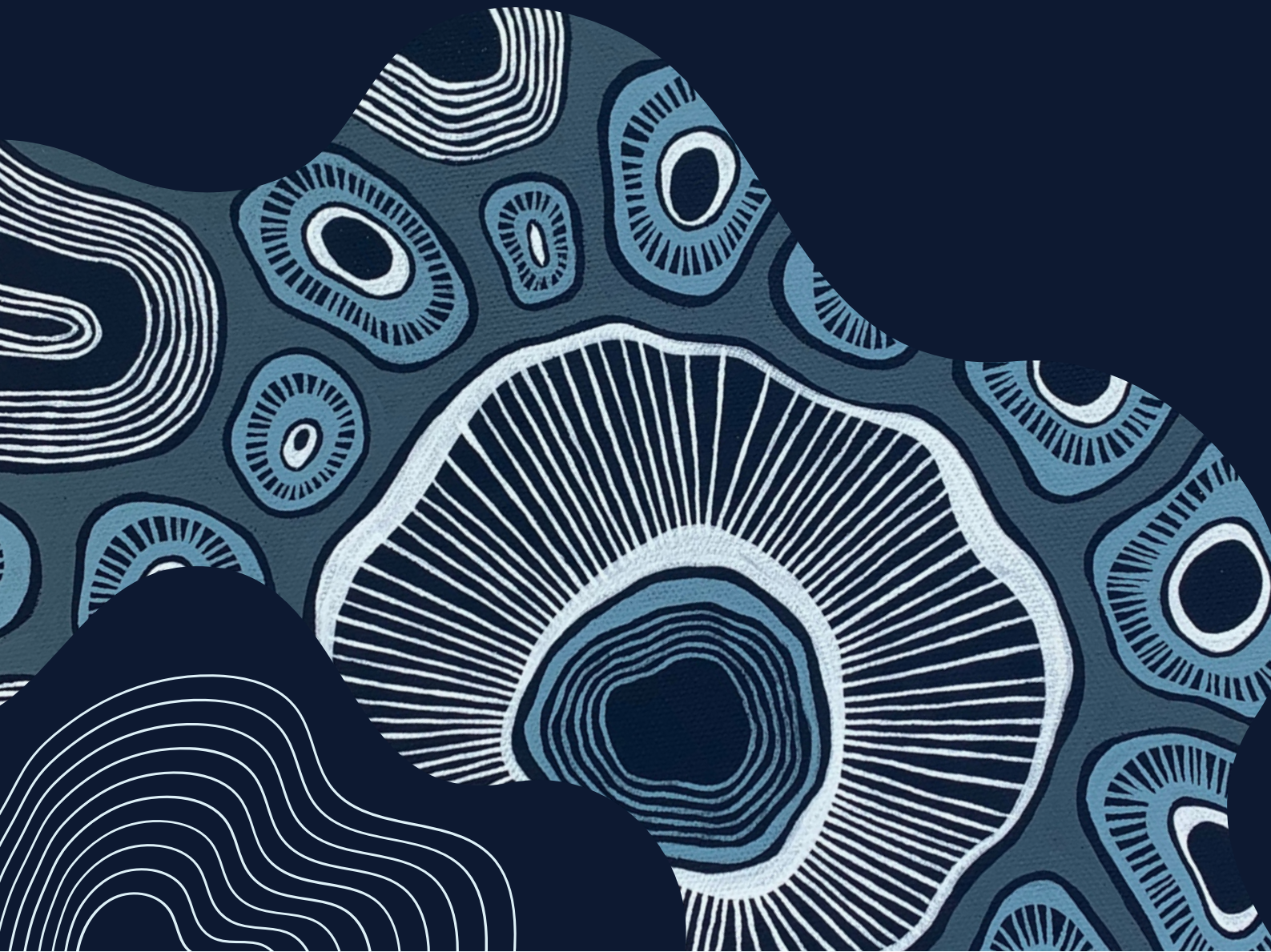


MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT:
EVERY ABORIGINAL PERSON HAS A HOME

ABORIGINAL HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SUMMIT REPORT

NOVEMBER 2022



Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort translates to 'Every Aboriginal Person has a Home' in the Gunditjmara dialects. The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework

Author: Aboriginal Housing Victoria

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Artwork Details: Tarryn Love | "Peeneeyt" Translation: Strength. Acrylic on canvas.

The central theme of this artwork expresses the idea of various different Indigenous Nations coming together to a central meeting place to co-exist and co-operate with unity, therefore creating a strong diverse community. The large circular shape in the centre recognises all the Indigenous voices contributing to this community and represents the sovereignty and self-determination of each of those individuals. The design that dominates the movement of the artwork, characterises the waterways that act as bloodlines across country. Rivers are so vital in connecting Nations and the symbols inside the river emphasize the large amount of different Nations that exist across Australia. The contouring lines in the artwork are a direct link to country and its physical landscape. This symbolism signifies Indigenous people's strong relationship not only physically but spiritually to the land. Overall this artwork is a reminder of the importance and strength that Indigenous people source from place, while also coming together to support this connection. Tarryn Love is a proud Gunditjmara Keeray Woorrong woman from Western Victoria. Tarryn has a strong passion for culture which is heavily inspired by her family who teach her traditional stories and practices. Through her art she not only continually explores her knowledge but also revives and reinvigorates styles through her experience as a young modern Indigenous woman, while concurrently expressing her identity.

Graphic design: Jamie Vergara

Throughout this document the term 'Aboriginal' is used to refer to both Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Unless noted otherwise, the term should be considered inclusive of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

We would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Custodians of the lands throughout Victoria. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples continue to live in spiritual and sacred relationships with this country on lands that have never been ceded.



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Thanks to:

Minister for Housing, The Hon. Danny Pearson

Homes Victoria CEO, Ben Rimmer

Co-Chair First Peoples' Assembly, Marcus Stewart

Commissioner for Tenancies, Dr Heather Holst

CEO VACCA, Aunty Muriel Bamblett

Co-Chair Aboriginal Justice Caucus, Aunty Marion Hansen

Co-Chair Aboriginal Justice Caucus, Chris Harrison

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First Peoples Assembly, Rachel Lenehan

Housing Choices, Roberta Buchanan

Insight First, Tim Flowers Principle

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Message from the Chair

Good morning – It's great to see so many familiar faces this morning.

I begin by paying my respects to the many Elders here this morning and to the Elders on whose shoulders we stand, especially those whose vision built the Aboriginal Housing Board and what has become Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV). I hope that they would be proud of what we have been able to maintain and we honour their legacy.

I also want to acknowledge that we are meeting this morning on the lands of the Wurrundjeri People of the Kulin Nations. We meet on land that was never ceded, land that has a spiritual value beyond the reckoning of commerce and real estate. I pay my respects to the Elders of the Wurrundjeri People. Thank you for the welcome to your country.

I would also like to acknowledge the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Daniel Pearson and thank him for opening the Summit. We look forward eagerly to a close and productive working relationship. Similarly, I would like to acknowledge the Co-Chair of the First Peoples Assembly of Victoria Marcus Stewart and other Assembly members who are participating over the next two days. Thank you Marcus for your keynote speech this morning. I also wish to acknowledge the tenants of Aboriginal community owned housing this morning and to tell them how welcome they are at this Summit and how glad we are that they have taken the time to be here.

Finally, I would like to thank all of you that have taken the time to come along and participate in our second Summit. I am particularly grateful for the time devoted by CEO and senior managers of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Traditional Owner groups and housing and homelessness providers. Many of us were here three years ago at the first Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit held in Victoria. We came to the April 2019 Summit with a dream – a dream to create an Aboriginal Housing Strategy that reflected our values that would begin to improve our access to decent housing.

We have a good story to tell about that – the ideas formed at our last Summit created the foundation for our policy framework - *Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort*. Our policy framework took the name of the framework Vision. It translates to Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home. It is in part because we remain so far from this Vision that we have asked you to reconvene at this second Summit, so that we can find new ways to make this Vision a reality. We are facing new adversity and persistent challenges. Some have got worse since we last met. But before looking at those I want to take a moment to acknowledge what - together - we have achieved.

Following our last Summit the community entrusted a Steering Committee Chaired by Professor Kerry Arabeena to take your ideas and turn them into a rigorous policy framework – a plan to improve our housing. When that work was complete, it was launched with the Ministers for Housing and Aboriginal Affairs in Queens Hall in the Victorian Parliament Building in February 2020. We were determined this would not be a report to gather dust but a living document, a dynamic policy that would shape Government action. So, shortly after its launch, an Implementation Working Group was established to resource and implement the many actions contained in our housing policy framework.

That group continues its work. It is jointly chaired by myself as the Chair of the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) and by the most senior housing bureaucrat in the Victorian Government, Ben Rimmer, CEO of Homes Victoria. And together we have achieved some important progress under the *Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort* banner. High on that list is the commitment from the Government to spend 10% of its social housing budget from the Big Housing Build stimulus package on housing Aboriginal people. It's important because it will translate into at least 420 new houses for Aboriginal people in this state. Houses where cultural safety is assured because we run them.

But just as important, this creates a precedent that – consistent with our policy framework – we, the Aboriginal community, get at least a 10% share in housing investment by the Government going forward. The Government also committed over \$4m for an Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program at the launch of the framework. That program has assisted almost 200 Aboriginal families into a private rental house. It has proven effective and is ripe for expansion.

Working with other ACCOs we secured one of the largest contributions to maintenance and repairs of Aboriginal owned housing in a generation in 2020. The \$35m investment will extend the life of our houses and improve the comfort of tenants across the state living in houses owned by their local Aboriginal organisation and owned by AHV. Some of those works have already been completed and builders are now commencing other works across Victoria.

There have been big steps forward in improving cultural safety. The Community Housing Industry Association has adopted an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework developed by us that will make tenants safer in mainstream community housing. You told us that the specialist homeless service system in Victoria serves our people poorly – that it was hard to navigate and that people who were homeless on the way in were more often than not still homeless when their period of support ended.

So, a Steering Committee made up of members of the AHHF and government worked with KPMG to design a Blueprint for an Aboriginal homeless system that will be more accessible, provide more sustained support and will deliver better housing outcomes. In the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (VAHHF) we committed to transparently report both what we do to make things better and what the housing outcomes for our people are. To this end we developed an indicator framework with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare with 20 measures of housing outcomes.

We have committed to report progress against these measures publicly every year so we can see how the housing experience of Aboriginal people in this state are tracking against outcomes for everyone else.

Our 2021 Report Card of progress was released last year and the Minister for Housing launched the 2022 Report Card this morning. Yet despite all of this work, we are back here again seeking your ideas about how to generate more and better secure housing for Aboriginal people in our state. We're working hard and it feels like we're achieving some wins. But I'm sure for many of you, housing times have never felt so tough. We have never worked harder to make things better but market forces have never created more powerful headwinds for housing security. I want to spend some time now explaining why so many of us are doing it tough to secure decent secure housing.

The Social Housing Safety Net

The first thing to say is the protection that social housing provides from savage market forces has weakened considerably and continues to weaken. While in 2006 over 30 percent of us, or 1 in 3, had the security of long-term social housing, by 2016 it was just 18.6%, or fewer than 1 in 5 of us. To its credit, the state government has recently made a large investment and we will pick up 420 new social houses. But in the time since the last Summit, the number of Aboriginal people on the waiting list has grown by more than 2,000 families in just three years. We have many more on our waiting list than New South Wales and they have five times our population. Why is this happening?

Private Ownership

Many of those families who were once in social housing would like to buy their own home. Opening doors to ownership was a major goal of our policy Framework. But over the past few years, as COVID has taken effect, the cost of buying houses has risen all over the world. The rise in housing costs in Australia have been faster and higher than almost anywhere else and we had higher house prices than almost any market in the world before COVID began to make things worse. According to Demographia International, Melbourne's affordability for owner-occupiers deteriorated the fifth fastest of any major city in the world during COVID. When the ratio of property values to median income is 5 to 1 a market is considered seriously unaffordable. In Melbourne, it had reached 9 to 1 before the pandemic and is now 12 to 1. The increase in the cost of buying a house has been even faster in regional Victoria than in the capital over the past three years. Nobody without deep pockets or an inheritance or help from parents can enter this market. Because Aboriginal people were locked out of the market for over 100 years we are less likely to have that back up. The door to ownership has been fastened shut even tighter in the past few years.

Private Rental Market

High house prices have a cascading effect on higher rental prices. Of that large share of our people no longer accommodated by social housing, most have moved into the private rental market. Of those, many people who aspired to buy their first home – but were overtaken by rising house prices – these too have moved into the private rental market. The private rental market has been crunched from the bottom and from the top. The proportion of the overall population living in the private rental market has grown but no group has grown faster than the Aboriginal population trying to secure private rental. The problem with this is that the affordability of the private rental market – already strained before the pandemic – has since collapsed. Rental vacancies are at their lowest level in many parts of Australia since records began. They were below 1% in every regional area of Victoria in early 2022 according to SQM research. There are now virtually no private rental lettings affordable to people on Government income support, the pension or the minimum wage.

Since its introduction in 1995, Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) has been pegged to inflation (CPI) and has been raised by 75 per cent. Over the same period, rents have gone up almost 300%. Raising CRA by 30% at a cost of \$1B would halve the number of renting families in housing stress. But this is not on the Federal Government's agenda. Meanwhile, the jobseeker unemployment payment is the lowest unemployment benefit of any of the world's advanced nations. No wonder people on low incomes can't score a rental home. And affordability has collapsed to an even greater extent in regional areas of the state than in the city. As sea and tree changers escaping COVID rushed to the regions, many houses that were previously let were bought by owner occupiers.

These areas of the market have been saturated and there are virtually no rental properties to be had. The number of affordable lettings in regional Victoria on a quarterly basis fell by 41% between March 2019 and March 2021. In a private rental market characterized by bidding wars, offers of 12 months rent in advance and the ongoing pernicious effects of racial discrimination, it has never been harder for an Aboriginal person on a low income to secure a private rental. This is one of the major reasons why 17% of us show up at homeless services every year and the waiting list for social housing has grown by more than 2000 Aboriginal families in just a few short years.

Transitions

But there are other causes of housing distress too. When individuals experience big transitions in their lives the risk of losing a foothold in housing goes up. Family breakdown is a huge risk for homelessness. When violence is involved everything escalates, including homelessness. 41% of Aboriginal people who presented to homeless services last year were dealing with family violence issues. 4,435 Aboriginal people dealing with violence appeared in the homeless system last year and yet the service deficits in culturally-specific support remain profound.

Elizabeth Morgan House remains the only high-security refuge for Aboriginal women in the state of Victoria with accommodation for just four families. One additional high security refuge is set to open in 2022 and only two low security refuges exist. – And they're supposed to deal with over 4,000 families each year. How can people get back on their feet without secure housing and the wraparound services that can help them address their trauma?

Contact with the justice system is another huge accelerant of homelessness. Increasingly, prison has become an expensive form of de facto housing in our state. Half of Aboriginal women leaving prison expect to be homeless. Ten years ago 1 in 20 Aboriginal people seeking homeless support were transitioning from jail. Now it is 1 in 8 of the Aboriginal homeless population. Harsher bail laws and lower tolerance for minor infractions are massing people into punitive, unproductive correctional settings where they lose their homes, their children and their hope. Not having a home to go to increases the danger of being denied bail, being denied parole and of having children removed. People are further punished for their poverty.

When those children end up in the out of home care system – which in Victoria they do in the largest numbers in Australia – you can bet your bottom dollar that at least one in two will find their way into homelessness as they make the traumatic exit towards independence. Our system asks young people leaving care to do so without the supports we all take for granted to get started in life.

Where is the transitional housing for these young people? Where are the youth foyers and supported accommodation facilities that the Indigenous Youth Justice Commissioner recommended in the Our Youth Our Way report? And what about our Elders? The Royal Commission into Aged Care dedicated a whole chapter to the failings in providing decent, culturally safe housing for Elders.

A year on we're still waiting for the 43 recommendations the Commissioners made to take affect and make aged care accessible, affordable and culturally safe. Well a good place to start would be to fund the creation of some Aboriginal controlled aged care facilities in Victoria, where currently only two exist. Another idea might be to train some more Aboriginal workers to undertake the assessments that trigger access to support packages and places in care.

Conclusion

I want to conclude on a positive note. So much has been achieved over the past three years. We started with a dream, just as the Elders who built our service had the vision to dream all those decades ago. Our dream was to have an Aboriginal led housing framework that could shape a better housing future for our community. It is no small achievement to have delivered the first Aboriginal community led housing policy to be adopted as a Government policy by any jurisdiction in Australia. The community's fingerprints are all over it – they are your ideas and it is your vision that we are attempting to advance. But we can't ignore the facts that the challenge has become harder over the three years since we last convened this Summit, through worsened market conditions
That's why we've called you back here.

We need your ideas, your ambition, your support to create a future in which Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home. That's what *Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort* means. In some ways the Australian dream is in fact that Australian Governments will do something about housing affordability. They won't do it without our prompting. I encourage you over the next two days to share your ideas, to bring your wisdom to solving some of the wicked problems we face and which Governments have created but can't solve without our help. I know that together we can build a plan for the next five years that pulls together our collective will, our assets and our intellectual capital to build a better housing future.

Thanks for being here, thanks for the contributions I know you will make and thanks for listening.

Report Structure

The report is structured to describe the outworkings of each workshop held over the two days of the Summit. For each workshop issue, the report provides an overview of: the policy context; the future directions we proposed; and discussion prompts which generated them. A detailed overview of discussion feedback is captured in Appendix 1. The report commences with a quick overview of what has been achieved on the back of the 2019 Summit.

I commend the report to our community and to the Victorian State Government.
Yours sincerely,



Darren Smith
Chair, Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF)
CEO, Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV)

1

Executive Summary

Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit 2022 Findings

We have the resilience – there are pressures coming down destroying love and culture – we need to focus on the positives of resilience for our community while the pressure increases
- 2022 Summit participant

The Findings that follow arose out of workshop discussions. The workshop subjects have been used to structure the findings. For each workshop we analyse:

- **the policy context:** the policy and environmental factors shaping outcomes for Aboriginal people; the way these have changed since the 2019 Summit; and the status of previously recommended actions proposed to address them in the *Mana-na maarn-tyeen maar-takoort* policy framework;
- **future directions:** the ideas proposed or endorsed by Summit participants for what we should do next in the face of the policy challenges
- **discussion prompts:** the questions that guided the discussion.

Detailed notes on the discussions held at the Summit have been captured in Appendix 1.

The 2022 Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit Report outlines the path to advance the goals of *Mana-Na Woom-Tyeen Maar-Takoort* and to move beyond crisis management of Aboriginal housing.

Across the entirety of the housing system, Aboriginal Victorians continue to experience discrimination, barriers to entry and economic disadvantage. This is all occurring within an environment of rising house prices, inadequate investment in social and community housing and a private rental market with record low vacancy rates.

Housing and homelessness is the space in which the gap between Aboriginal Victorians and the mainstream population is plain for everyone to see and needs to be addressed in order to ensure our people can experience the same economic prosperity enjoyed by the rest of the population.

The recommendations contained within this report highlight the next steps that we need to take to build an Aboriginal specific housing and homelessness system and create the conditions necessary to address this disparity within a generation. This critical work will begin by adopting a Housing First model for assisting Aboriginal people to stabilise their lives underpinned by culturally safe and appropriate wraparound support services.

The report below details how over the next twenty years Aboriginal community housing agencies will emerge to become self-determining, financially viable, independent organisations that deliver high-quality affordable housing to low-income Aboriginal Victorians. The development of these Aboriginal community housing agencies will be facilitated by maintaining or increasing the 10% target of social housing investment directed to the Aboriginal community and the development of a skilled workforce to ensure their long-term viability.

The Aboriginal specific housing and homelessness system envisioned within this report moves beyond crisis management is able to meet the needs of all Aboriginal Victorians including those experiencing family violence, our Elders, young people and those who have come into contact with the justice system. The support provided by this Aboriginal specific system will be defined by the delivery of integrated, trauma-informed services to First Nations people in culturally safe ways. This will be critical in creating the conditions to move beyond crisis management and allowing Aboriginal Victorians to flourish within a housing system that is better able to meet their needs.

Going forward, this system will be integrated within a secure and ongoing pipeline of investment in social and community housing on a scale that is able to address rising homelessness, the growing housing needs of the Victorian Aboriginal population and the increasingly complex needs of our Elders

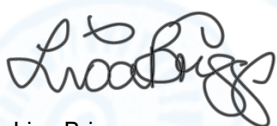
Mana-Na Woom-Tyeen Maar-Takoort is a living document that is able to respond to the needs of the Victorian Aboriginal community and recognises the opportunity that treaty represents in relation to housing and homelessness. The treaties negotiated with the Victorian State Government will be a vehicle for the Aboriginal community as a whole to assert self-determination and realise economic self-sufficiency. These treaties must assert greater power and control over housing both as individuals and as a community – with a clearly defined goal of ensuring that every Aboriginal person has a home.

In developing this report, we are guided by the aspirations of the Victorian Aboriginal community and the dream to create an Aboriginal Housing Strategy that reflects our values and improves our access to decent housing. The 2022 Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit Report is representative of the ideas of our community on how to generate more and better secure housing for Aboriginal people in our state.

All recommendations that our community have articulated in this report will be integrated into the Five-Year Implementation Plan that will outline the immediate priorities of realising the goals of *Mana-Na Woom-Tyeen Maar-Takoort*. The recommendations are organised into the following areas of focus: Housing as a Base for Life, social housing Supply, Private Rental, Treaty Outcomes and Housing, Housing Sector Capacity Building, Homelessness, Home Ownership, Family Violence, Housing People in Contact with the Justice System, Elders NDIS and Housing Young People at Risk.

The wholistic nature of the areas of focus listed above highlights the commitment of our community to improving the housing outcomes of all First Nations people and ensuring that we are able to truly build an Aboriginal specific housing and homelessness system.

This report and its recommendations fulfill a vision for a unified and vibrant Victorian Aboriginal community housing sector, delivering high quality services and housing equity within a generation – providing housing as a base for life and economic opportunity.



Lisa Briggs,
Manager of Strategy and Performance at Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) and proud Gunditjmara women.



MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT

EVERY ABORIGINAL PERSON HAS A HOME



Reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal people accessing homeless services

To meet the demand for 64,271 Aboriginal Households by 2041

2.6% (54,800) Aboriginal population growth by 2041

Meeting housing needs of regional Victoria

Reduce the increasing rate of Aboriginal homelessness

300 new social and affordable dwelling per annum

Reduce the rate of overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in social housing

Embedding cultural safety across the Housing and Homelessness Industry

Increase Aboriginal Home Ownership

Can't close the gap without housing

Compared to other Australian's, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are:

- 10x more likely to experience homelessness
- 16x more likely to live in severely overcrowded dwellings
- 10x more likely to access Specialist Homelessness Services
- 10x more likely to live in Social Housing

\$800 Million

20 Year Investment strategy

Right Now

- Victoria has the highest rates of Aboriginal people seeking specialist homelessness services nationally
- One in three Aboriginal Victorians who presented to a specialist homelessness services were homeless when their support ended due to social and affordable housing shortages
- There are 6,000 Aboriginal applicants on the Victorian Housing Register, an increase of close to 2000 new applications over two years
- Securing home ownership rates 25 percentage points lower than other Victorians
- Facing growing exposure to a private rental market in which around half of low-income earners experience housing stress

ADVOCACY

VAHHF GOAL 1: Secure Housing Improves Life Outcomes

1.1 Embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people and mainstream policies where relevant

- Advocate for Government to formally adopt a Housing First principle for assisting homeless people stabilise their lives, underpinned by wraparound support services. Propose additional targets within CTG and the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework to align them with the VAHHF targets, starting with the headline target to reduce homelessness in Victoria by 10% per annum over ten years.
- Pursue council rate relief on a Council by Council basis (rebates are allowable under the Local Government Act) and invest savings in more Aboriginal controlled social housing.

1.2 Establish stable and affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness

- Make social housing an integrated program delivery platform from which we can intervene earlier, build resilience and strengths and reduce Aboriginal inequality and disadvantage.

1.3 Make housing the platform for fulfilment of life aspirations and successful education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

- Secure increased funding commitments from the Victorian Government for ACCOs to build housing linked to a community employment strategy.

1.4 Sustain tenancies through culturally strong Aboriginal focused systems and practices

- Advocate for a major investment to bring the More Than A Landlord Program to scale so that it can benefit all AHV social housing tenants.
- Lobby the Commonwealth to better target Commonwealth Rental Assistance to those low income households experiencing rental stress.
- Incorporate housing security into the Commonwealth Wellbeing Budget.
- Remove disincentives for people (especially Elders caring for grandchildren) in social housing to work and lift their incomes.

VAHHF GOAL 2: Building supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population

2.1 Building supply of homes owned by Aboriginal people and community

- Maintain or increase the 10% target of Government social housing investment directed to the Aboriginal community.
- Establish additional supply-related targets for Closing the Gap, such as:
 - a) Reducing the number of Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness by 10% per annum;
 - and b) Increase housing stock owned and managed by ACCOs.
- Secure funding through the Commonwealth to prioritise Aged Care accommodation for our community.
- Governments to treat social and affordable housing as essential social infrastructure and adopt a regular, reliable revenue stream to provide long term funding certainty for new Aboriginal housing supply matched to need.
 - a. State Government to invest a reasonable proportion of Land Tax into community housing stock owned and managed by ACCOs, in recognition that sovereignty of the land was never relinquished. One participant suggested investment of 2.1% of Land Tax should be set aside.
- Pursue opportunities to build social housing on unused Aboriginal land through partnership ventures with philanthropy.
- Persuade the Government to agree to designate a proportion of Aboriginal social housing when selling vacant land to developers.
- Provide special purpose developments of Aboriginal owned and managed aged care facilities where Elders can be assured of a culturally safe level of care, consistent with Chapter 7 of the Aged Care Royal Commission (March 2021). Undertake feasibility assessments in 2 communities to implement the Aboriginal integrated liveable housing aged care concept based on the Rumbalara and ACES model.
- Government to commit to funding investment for Elder specific services and wraparound support for Elders housing and improve funding for modification of existing properties to enable Elders to use them for as long as possible. Undertake a review of properties of Aboriginal social housing renters to identify the need for disability and aged care modifications (and develop a funded works programs).
- Commit to a target that creates pathways for Aboriginal Victorians eligible for NDIS SDAs to access appropriate specialist disability housing.
- That the Victorian Government establish at least 4 ACCO youth foyers across the state, with consideration given to 3 regional locations and one metropolitan location (Recommendation 44).

2.2 Build 5000+ Social Housing properties by 2036: 300 new dwellings per annum

- Seek to secure a new pipeline of investment in social housing on a scale to arrest rising homelessness.
- Lobby the Commonwealth to create actionable National Homeless and Housing supply targets in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and add a schedule for outcomes with timelines to drive change for Aboriginal people:
 - a) That a minimum of 10% of all new investment in housing and homelessness should be directed to Aboriginal outcomes.
 - b) That a minimum of 10% investments in new housing should result in Aboriginal ownership of new housing.
 - c) Increase the percentage of social housing investment for Aboriginal people ("a minimum 300 houses a year for a decade" was suggested).
- Secure funding through the Commonwealth to prioritise Aged Care accommodation for our community.
- Document the integrated Aboriginal liveable housing aged care concept based on the Rumbalara and ACES models to replicate and expand across the state.

2.3 Meet supply needs for transitional and short term (crisis) and special housing needs

- Step up efforts to secure a larger share of mainstream community housing units for Aboriginal families.
- Partner with VACCA and other mainstream organisations to implement an Aboriginal youth foyer model in two agreed locations to determine demand and uptake for wider roll out.
- Fund and build more long-term supported accommodation for women and children leaving violent relationships, with housing that is well designed and flexible to meet the safety and family needs of these women and children. A number of models were identified as having potential:
 - a) The Safe Haven Rapid Housing Approach - this involves a head lease support for 12 months, before women take on the tenancy - support is provided in obtaining employment and with wraparound services (participants believe it has a 90% success rate).
 - b) Kids Under Cover adds units to the back of properties (but this requires a designated maintenance authority).
 - c) Housing options for Grandparents who care for children are required.
- Fund and build more Aboriginal-run refugees auspices by ACCOs where safe, culturally embedded, holistic healing is the primary goal. Wraparound health, mental health and family related services would be provided. This would reduce the risk of Aboriginal women returning to violent relationships.
- Direct Orange Door funding back to ACCOs so that funding can be exercised consistent with self-determination and made available to meet the current needs.
- Design new investment models, which bring together capital investment in accommodation and culturally appropriate, structured service supports that can lead to sustainable accommodation for people with complex needs.
- Fund and implement new transitional and emergency housing options to respond to the immediate deficit in housing which is driving people back into youth justice and prison settings. Consideration could be given to a DTF Social Impact Bond model of housing people after prison, which participants expect to operate over the coming 2-3 years at a cost of \$30 million.
- Reform Bail laws that incarcerate as a first rather than last resort.
- Advocate for prisons to be run by Government not private companies from overseas who may have no long-term interest in or accountability for the wellbeing of people in prison or the wider Victorian community.
- Victorian Government to establish Aboriginal community-controlled crisis accommodation for Aboriginal children and young people in every region, informed by the model provided by Nungurra Youth Accommodation Services (Recommendation 43).

2.4 Support Native Title and Treaty to grow affordable housing

- Reform housing registration requirements to provide access for Aboriginal providers. The links to Treaty give Aboriginal community a stronger basis for renegotiating differently in this housing provision space.
- Advocate for returned soldier settlements for Aboriginal people and their families to be negotiated to right historic wrongs as part of Treaty.
- Create an overarching policy for investment into housing and homelessness that can be secured through Treaty. Treaties must assert greater power and control over our housing both as individuals and community – First Peoples in the driver's seat for First Peoples housing and homelessness.
- Explore the application of Treaty for land acquisition, land transfer as part of Treaty agreements. First Peoples have always associated land as home, so any discussion about securing Country must consider infrastructure for houses to enable First Peoples to live on Country.
- Propose that the Assembly participate, along with AHV, in discussions with local government on Treaty and housing to establish a framework for trilateral agreements to deal with such issues as planning and land tax exemptions for rates as part of State-wide Treaty.
- Pursue a new investment deal in social housing as an arm of Treaty negotiations.

VAHMF GOAL 3 Opening Doors to Home Ownership and Private Rental

3.1 Increase uptake of private rental

- Propose that the Government implement recommendations from the Residential Tenancies Commissioner to tackle discrimination in the private rental market, based on findings from the Excluded section of the Start Report.
- Ensure that other framework proposals not yet adopted by Government inform next steps.
- Support a significant increase in Commonwealth income support payments and rent assistance (30-50%) to restore capacity to achieve CRA's policy objective of making rental housing affordable to people on benefits.
- Support a significant increase in Commonwealth income support payments and rent assistance (30-50%) to restore capacity to achieve CRA's policy objective of making rental housing affordable to people on benefits.
- Consider incentives for home owners to put pressure on private rental estate agents to support tenancy applications from our vulnerable community members.
- Build capacity in the private rental market to support Aboriginal Victorian's accessing private rental through brokerage and head leasing arrangements.

3.2 Support to get established in your home

3.3 Create opportunity for investors to invest in ethical affordable rental

- Explore joint housing development ventures with mainstream social and private providers.

3.4 Make home ownership available to more people

- Pilot and establish a scalable Aboriginal Rent to Buy program where Aboriginal people can build equity in a property, initially through renting (based on existing models) that would incorporate:
 - a) A five-year rental period.
 - b) Assistance with saving a deposit, low interest loan and reducing debt.
 - c) Opportunity to enter into shared equity at the end of 5 years or purchase outright.
- Establish an Aboriginal-specific shared equity program or provide strong pathways to mainstream programs where the Government pays part of the deposit and retains a share of equity in homes owned by Aboriginal Victorians.
- Advocate for an end to negative gearing on residential property, which allows investors an unfair competitive advantage over owner-occupiers in being able to offset net rental loss against other income earned in a way not available to people seeking to buy a home for shelter.
- Advocate to introduce a tax offset on borrowing costs for owner-occupiers on low incomes, based on the US taxation model.

VAHMF GOAL 4: An Aboriginal Focussed Homeless Service System

4.1 Rebuild an Aboriginal homeless service system from the ground up

- Embed homelessness of existing prisoners in the metrics of performance on recidivism of the state's justice agencies given its proven link with re-offending.

4.2 Provide tailored support for those at risk

- Reform legislation to provide greater legal protection for tenants who are vulnerable to eviction.
- Support the development of a review to undertake a stocktake of Elders services and support by mainstream services; review the definition of Elder in legislation; scope existing assets; improve data sharing of existing services; scope best practice for housing Elders.

4.3 Increase supply of crisis and transitional housing

- Redesign and recommission Aboriginal hostels and partner with an Aboriginal organisation to develop properties to ensure Aboriginal Victorians have culturally safe housing options.
- Outline a transitional plan between social housing and Aboriginal aged care at both individual and policy making levels.
- Advocate for an increase in Commonwealth Youth Allowance and rent assistance in recognition that no rental properties in Victoria are affordable to a single on Youth Allowance (see Anglicare March 2022 Rental Snapshot).

VAHHF GOAL 5: A capable system that delivers Aboriginal Housing Needs

5.1 Create a strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure and quantify the financial cost of homelessness, including the cost on other service systems to strengthen the benefit cost argument for more effective intervention. • Develop and fund the delivery of an Aboriginal community housing capacity building plan, including fully resourcing the AHHF Secretariat to maintain the AHHF's strong Aboriginal policy and advocacy voice and leadership in strengthening the sector. • Adopt the framework proposal for a Koori-list at VCAT for tenancy dispute hearings, and continue to build on existing VCAT practice to support Aboriginal renters. Approximately 40% of people seeking homeless assistance do so following eviction (few of which are contested). • Embed a local commissioning approach and create a devolved model of shared decision-making between community and government.
5.2 Make the mainstream housing and homelessness system culturally safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up discussions with Homes Victoria CEO regarding First Nations NDIS funding where services are unmet by mainstream providers. This needs to occur through IWG discussion in the first instance to deliver a briefing paper as a basis for action.
5.3 Build a system based partnership between the mainstream and Aboriginal housing and homelessness system	

CAPACITY BUILDING

VAHHF GOAL 1: Secure Housing Improves Life Outcomes

1.1 Embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people and mainstream policies where relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summit participants discussed and endorsed a 20 year vision for the Aboriginal community housing sector. • The high-level directions of an Aboriginal community housing capacity building plan to achieve the long term Aboriginal community housing sector vision were discussed and agreed.
1.2 Establish stable and affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness	
1.3 Make housing the platform for fulfilment of life aspirations and successful education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians	
1.4 Sustain tenancies through culturally strong Aboriginal focused systems and practices	

VAHHF GOAL 2: Building supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population

2.1 Building supply of homes owned by Aboriginal people and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist more ACCOs to explore options for accreditation and expand their service offering of supported housing, linked to culturally safe, trauma-informed services. • Provide adequate quantity and quality of housing specifically for Aboriginal Victorians through the Big Housing Build to enable choice and culturally safe living arrangements, including social affordable, crisis, and transitional accommodation. • Create an NDIS Business Model that incorporates becoming a registered Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) provider. • Support Victorian ACCOs with an interest to become SDA providers to meet registration requirements. • Build a list of NDIS experts that can work with ACCOs to become SDA registered, help develop their business model, asset plan and strategic plan to ensure financial viability.
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2.2 Build 5000+ Social Housing properties by 2036: 300 new dwellings per annum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a management transfer of Aboriginal public housing, based on choice, to Aboriginal community housing providers to accelerate growth and scale in the Aboriginal community housing sector.
2.3 Meet supply needs for transitional and short term (crisis) and special housing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Family Violence models across the state and identify best practice that can be deployed as a basis for wider application. Document case studies of 'above and beyond' ACCO led work. Create networks for sharing best practice for providing refuge and supporting families experiencing violence. • Investigate solutions to current inequities in the system, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ a) Women being required to pay for damage caused by men ◦ b) Racism as a barrier to services ◦ c) Break up of families in circumstances where this is not needed and causes further trauma ◦ d) Lack of support options for families with older boys (12+) • Increase access to housing for people trying to exit the justice system. • Extend existing small scale programs with potential to assist young people leaving care, using those identified in the summit discussion paper as a starting point for exploration (noting most are transitional). • Improve holistic services while in prison in preparation for managing the transition out, including access to housing. • Institute a housing first approach for post-release prisoners with support services to enable viable tenancy. Without housing, other support services have limited long-term traction.
2.4 Support Native Title and Treaty to grow affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with Aboriginal people / Aboriginal community outside of Traditional Owners groups for input to the Treaty process on achieving housing outcomes. • Engage Treaty to support introduction of an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system based on the Blueprint developed by the community. • The community must initiate and lead the conversations for what could be done now on housing in the context of the Treaty, rather than passively letting the process evolve. • The concept of "home" to be a central pillar for treaty reform encapsulating housing, family supports, education and wealth generation.

VAHMF GOAL 3 Opening Doors to Home Ownership and Private Rental

3.1 Increase uptake of private rental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with VEOHRC to ensure there are consequences for real estate agents engaging in discriminatory action.
3.2 Support to get established in your home	
3.3 Create opportunity for investors to invest in ethical affordable rental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an Aboriginal Home Ownership Hub that can be a resource to individuals and ACCOs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ a) Build skills to manage & maintain homes & finances ◦ b) Develop a panel of culturally safe experts to advise on and support Aboriginal home ownership
3.4 Make home ownership available to more people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore Home Ownership options using Aboriginal owned land to meet a share of equity and offset costs, including community land trusts. • Review recommended actions from the Framework that have not been progressed to test viability.

VAHMF GOAL 4: An Aboriginal Focused Homeless Service System

4.1 Rebuild an Aboriginal homeless service system from the ground up	
4.2 Provide tailored support for those at risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build in greater opportunity for VCAT to stand matters down, to give more time for resolution and to link to wraparound supports to tenancies at risk to prevent avoidable homelessness.
4.3 Increase supply of crisis and transitional housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage leased and rented properties in the private market to reduce time in transitional or crisis accommodation. • Improve promotion and investment for ACCOs of existing Elder services, including the increasing of support hours for ACCOs services existing and new.

VAHHF GOAL 5: A capable system that delivers Aboriginal Housing Needs

5.1 Create a strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector

- Adopt the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homeless System in Victoria to implement the system reforms developed by the AHHF and articulated in the blueprint.
- Build on the successful elements of the Homelessness to the Home initiative with housing and support packages. Participants believe this program “had the will, the funding, and levers in the systems to actually create change for the chronically homeless (included 290 Aboriginal people)”.
- Explore the transfer of ownership of public housing stock to ACCOs as a critical platform for the development of a viable, scaled up Aboriginal housing sector in our state. To achieve this requires the Government to engage with interested ACCOs to achieve registration and begin to trade in the market and build their portfolios.
- The Housing Regulator and Homes Victoria to put in place supports to assist ACCOs with an interest in achieving housing registration within existing policy settings to do so. This should include the removing of unnecessary compliance barriers to registration and recognition of other compliance required from ACCOs as part of their wider service offering.
- Housing Registrar to consider fit-for-purpose registration for smaller scale ACCOs, such as exists in other jurisdictions, in keeping with recommendations of the Social Housing Regulatory Review Interim Report of late 2021. Compliance, viability and the capacity to maintain registration are all considerations for smaller services. Work is required to streamline compliance requirements across total provision: family violence, housing, health etc.
- Investigate whether there are ways in which ACCOs without registration can provide effective housing services.
- Explore the development of a modest funding stream for ACCOs to slowly build scale until full registration becomes viable.

5.2 Make the mainstream housing and homelessness system culturally safe

- Use the Melbourne University findings of More than a Landlord to inform better support practices in mainstream housing providers.

5.3 Build a system based partnership between the mainstream and Aboriginal housing and homelessness system

- Explore new models of partnership between ACCOs and mainstream social housing providers that enable ACCOs to maintain ownership of social housing stock, piggybacking on mainstream agency tenancy regulation.
- Develop models for true, respectful, equitable and trusting partnerships between ACCOs and Community Housing Providers.
- Extend the timeline for ACCOs interested in exploring feasibility studies and business cases for expanding housing services or partnership opportunities to share land for social housing.
- Work with CHIA Victoria to develop a communication and engagement plan to enable us to work in partnership with the mainstream community housing sector to build our respective capabilities.
- Establish cross-sectoral cooperation with organisations engaged in an alliance or network of organisations at a regional or community level across the state.

SUPPORT SERVICES

VAHHF GOAL 1: Secure Housing Improves Life Outcomes

1.1 Embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people and mainstream policies where relevant

1.2 Establish stable and affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness

1.3 Make housing the platform for fulfilment of life aspirations and successful education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

1.4 Sustain tenancies through culturally strong Aboriginal focused systems and practices

- Review household income assessments as part of social housing rental policies to obviate the risk that they financially disadvantage Aboriginal Elders who have employed children or grandchildren living with them.
- Explore NDIS Pathway Solutions for Aboriginal people to remain living independently at home with support

VAHMF GOAL 2: Building supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population

2.1 Building supply of homes owned by Aboriginal people and community

- Support the development of an Elders Engagement Framework that increases communications across stakeholders.
- Explore the potential to create a kinship model based on Aboriginal cultural values and self-determination as part of the NDIS Independent Living Option.
- Provide adequate support to Aboriginal organisations delivering the Aboriginal Leaving Care Program and assist them to make connections with housing providers who can meet the accommodation needs of the young people they are attempting to assist.
- Make available the option to support care leavers to age 21 (The Final Stretch) for all young Aboriginal people who seek this option.

2.2 Build 5000+ Social Housing properties by 2036: 300 new dwellings per annum

2.3 Meet supply needs for transitional and short term (crisis) and special housing needs

- Review the allocation of flexible violence funding packages to enable safe relocation from dangerous relationships and assess whether they are equitably allocated and whether further or better allocation is required.
- Consider outcomes of trials of existing models by Dhek Dja (including a trial in St Kilda) addressing the housing needs of men who use violence. Many of these men require support to deal with complex issues that contribute to their violent behaviour.
- Provide more services with wraparound support for people with mental illness and/or disabilities to reduce rates of family violence.
- Assist family violence survivors with letters of support to advocate their access to private tenancies and explain poor rental records owing to violence victimisation. Build on new protections available in the revised Residential Tenancy Act for non-discrimination.
- Reassign part of the corrections asset budget to provisions of post-release housing stock (to be managed by ACCOs and the wider community housing sector).
- Consult families of people in contact with the justice system on their transition needs.
- Put in place integrated, wraparound supports for those trying to put their experience of incarceration behind them.

2.4 Support Native Title and Treaty to grow affordable housing

VAHMF GOAL 3 Opening Doors to Home Ownership and Private Rental

3.1 Increase uptake of private rental

- Fund the expansion of the APRAP pilot program ongoing, state wide, at scale. Roles must be properly resourced.
- Extend effective private rental assistance programs to assist people leaving violent relationships.

3.2 Support to get established in your home

3.3 Create opportunity for investors to invest in ethical affordable rental

3.4 Make home ownership available to more people



VAHMF GOAL 4: An Aboriginal Focussed Homeless Service System

4.1 Rebuild an Aboriginal homeless service system from the ground up

- Establish an Aboriginal-specific Housing Advisory Service to assist Aboriginal people navigate their housing options in a complex housing market.
- Improve information for renters across the entire renting journey, including on their legal rights and responsibilities in forms they can easily access and understand. For example the Aboriginal Tenants at Risk program could be expanded beyond the Northern and Western regions of Melbourne to support people wherever they live in Victoria.
- Advocate for the establishment of a mechanism to intercede in Centrepay cancellation to argue for suspension as an alternative first response to a breach.
- Explore provision of rental brokerage programs for Aboriginal young people, in which an adult advocate or support worker brokers a private rental for the young person and supports them to maintain the repayments liaising with the rental providers. This model could be expanded, and coupled with greater interpersonal support and coaching provided to the young tenant but is contingent on increased Commonwealth Income Support

4.2 Provide tailored support for those at risk

4.3 Increase supply of crisis and transitional housing

- Build on and extend duration of existing post-exit supports, to ensure transitions into longer term social housing, private rental or home ownership is well-managed and supported.
- Establish a dedicated allocation of VHR housing for Elders and Stolen Generations, including support provision.

VAHMF GOAL 5: A capable system that delivers Aboriginal Housing Needs

5.1 Create a strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector

- Advocate for other structural reforms to make the NDIS and SDAs culturally safe as required.
- Consider the following principles in working with young people leaving care
 - a) All young people leaving care or youth justice and protective services facilities should have a leaving care plan
 - b) Support Services must be ongoing for young people as they leave care
 - c) Family - Culture - Community: these are what keep Aboriginal people strong. If family is missing, culture and community must step in
 - d) Young people should not be "turfed out" of care early and extended care should be pursued wherever possible
 - e) It is essential for the community to create relationships with young people before they leave care. The system should support and facilitate this
 - f) Getting young people back home before they reach the age of 18 should be pursued whenever possible
 - g) Leaving care plans should include a cultural component, including returning to country
- Establish flexible support packages, which can be allocated through local level commissioning based on the needs of individual communities.

5.2 Make the mainstream housing and homelessness system culturally safe

5.3 Build a system based partnership between the mainstream and Aboriginal housing and homelessness system

- Implement a new approach to screening: A 'no wrong door' approach distributes entry into the homelessness system amongst various front-line stakeholders, including other social services.
- Support the development of a review to undertake a stocktake of Elder services and support by mainstream services; review the definition of Elder in legislation; scope existing assets; improve data sharing of existing services; scope best practice for housing and support for Elders.

WORKFORCE

VAHMF GOAL 1: Secure Housing Improves Life Outcomes

1.1 Embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people and mainstream policies where relevant

1.2 Establish stable and affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness

1.3 Make housing the platform for fulfilment of life aspirations and successful education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

1.4 Sustain tenancies through culturally strong Aboriginal focused systems and practices

VAHMF GOAL 2: Building supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population

2.1 Building supply of homes owned by Aboriginal people and community

2.2 Build 5000+ Social Housing properties by 2036: 300 new dwellings per annum

2.3 Meet supply needs for transitional and short term (crisis) and special housing needs

- Employ Aboriginal case managers to assist Aboriginal people with the transition from prison and build on the success of ACCOs who have provided this continuity and had good outcomes for community members. In addition to accommodation, this includes:
 - a) ensuring people have identification papers and some money when they exit
 - b) connecting them to their mob
 - c) addressing health issues

2.4 Support Native Title and Treaty to grow affordable housing

VAHMF GOAL 3 Opening Doors to Home Ownership and Private Rental

3.1 Increase uptake of private rental

- Employ Aboriginal case managers to assist Aboriginal people with the transition from prison and build on the success of ACCOs who have provided this continuity and had good outcomes for community members. In addition to accommodation, this includes:
 - a) ensuring people have identification papers and some money when they exit
 - b) connecting them to their mob
 - c) Addressing health issues

3.2 Support to get established in your home

3.3 Create opportunity for investors to invest in ethical affordable rental

- Develop a panel of culturally safe experts to advise on and support Aboriginal home ownership.

3.4 Make home ownership available to more people

VAHHF GOAL 4: An Aboriginal Focussed Homeless Service System

4.1 Rebuild an Aboriginal homeless service system from the ground up

4.2 Provide tailored support for those at risk

4.3 Increase supply of crisis and transitional housing

VAHHF GOAL 5: A capable system that delivers Aboriginal Housing Needs

5.1 Create a strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector

- Support RMIT and Government in undertaking workforce development for the homelessness sector for better workforce recognition, attraction, retention and professionalism.
- Fund the development of an Aboriginal work force training and development plan. The plan would address the need to reshape the role of housing workers to incorporate skills beyond tenancy management, including proactive life coaching and intensive case management of high risk clients in sustaining tenancies. This program would build the capacity for Aboriginal providers (ACCOs) to become entry and referral points into the housing and homeless service system.
- Engage more skilled case managers to work with people with complex needs. In other states this is happening with some success.

5.2 Make the mainstream housing and homelessness system culturally safe

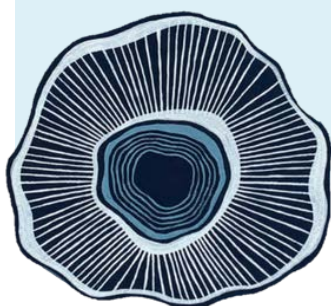
5.3 Build a system based partnership between the mainstream and Aboriginal housing and homelessness system

CULTURAL SAFETY

VAHHF GOAL 1: Secure Housing Improves Life Outcomes

1.1 Embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people and mainstream policies where relevant

- Implement recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission (March 2021) in Victoria, where these pertain to Elders, with particular reference to Chapter 7 - "Aged Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People" In particular that:
 - a. A guiding Principle of the administration of the Aged Care Act should be that "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to receive support and care that is culturally safe and recognises the importance of their personal connection to community and Country" (Reco 3bxii).
 - b. The Aged Care Commission should have as a core responsibility "ensuring that appropriate aged care services are widely available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples" (Reco 3, cvi).
 - c. The Aged Care Commission should include an Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commissioner (Reco 4f).
 - d. All recommendations (47-53) of Chapter 7 should be actioned as reforms to create an effective Aboriginal Aged Care system in Australia, enabling ACCOs to become aged care providers, establishing training and employment opportunities, creating discrete funding streams for ACCOs and building safe, accessible pathways into care for Elders.
 - e. If implemented, the Aged Care recommendations would address the need for trained Aboriginal advocates who can facilitate aged care assessments and overcome threshold, gate-keeping barriers to aged care services.
 - f. All aged care facilities should have cultural safety plans in place to ensure they have the skills to care for Elders, particularly Stolen Generations (Reco 3bxii).





1.2 Establish stable and affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness

1.3 Make housing the platform for fulfilment of life aspirations and successful education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

1.4 Sustain tenancies through culturally strong Aboriginal focused systems and practices

- Provide greater resources for ACCOs to deliver integrated, trauma-informed services to Aboriginal people in culturally safe ways, integrated with secure housing.

VAHMF GOAL 2: Building supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population

2.1 Building supply of homes owned by Aboriginal people and community

- Explore options of capacity and capability for transfer of state government aged care facilities to ACCOs to deliver culturally safe services.
- Support recruitment and training of a significant expansion of Aboriginal NDIS workers and set targets to extend packages to Aboriginal users based on gap analysis. This may require funding for capacity building specifically for this purpose

2.2 Build 5000+ Social Housing properties by 2036: 300 new dwellings per annum

2.3 Meet supply needs for transitional and short term (crisis) and special housing needs

- Embed cultural safety in mainstream family violence services to mirror ACCO service cultural safety.

2.4 Support Native Title and Treaty to grow affordable housing

VAHMF GOAL 3 Opening Doors to Home Ownership and Private Rental

3.1 Increase uptake of private rental

3.2 Support to get established in your home

3.3 Create opportunity for investors to invest in ethical affordable rental

3.4 Make home ownership available to more people

VAHMF GOAL 4: An Aboriginal Focussed Homeless Service System

4.1 Rebuild an Aboriginal homeless service system from the ground up

- Make intake Assessment and Planning culturally safe, and ensure it includes an exist plan with secure housing central to transition.

4.2 Provide tailored support for those at risk

4.3 Increase supply of crisis and transitional housing

- Make intake Assessment and Planning culturally safe, and ensure it includes an exist plan with secure housing central to transition.

VAHMF GOAL 5: A capable system that delivers Aboriginal Housing Needs

5.1 Create a strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector

- Establish Open Entry Points: Resource a network of ACCOs across Victoria to be 'front doors' into an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system. Work should begin immediately to identify ACCOs to lead this work and to upskill them. Adopt the proposed IAP tools immediately to confer cultural safety.
- Support Aboriginal Victorians in approaching and engaging with the service of their choice in culturally safe ways.

5.2 Make the mainstream housing and homelessness system culturally safe

- Consider grants to enable partnerships with mainstream housing agencies: ACCOs require assistance to put in place the organisational conditions required to partner with Housing Agencies (both AHV and mainstream providers) to provide the social housing required by their communities more immediately. The funding of grants administered by Government could partner ACCOs with mainstream housing providers to build cultural safety in mainstream providers and develop housing management and development capability in ACCOs with established housing portfolios. Partnerships must give primacy to self-determination.
- Build cultural safety conditions into housing registration for mainstream providers. In keeping with advice from AHV and ACCOs, the Social Housing Regulatory Review Panel has recommended, in its first Interim Report, that all social housing providers should satisfy cultural safety criteria as a condition of accreditation. The Government should revise the Regulations to implement this recommendation.

5.3 Build a system based partnership between the mainstream and Aboriginal housing and homelessness system

- Capacity Building: Implement an ongoing program for cultural safety, to ensure all services are culturally safe. This could include a program for co-location of staff to ensure reciprocal capacity building on-the-job with the mainstream to mirror ACCO wraparound services and actively eradicate systemic racism; and an ACCO-specific capacity building program or network to build ACCO capacity

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

VAHMF GOAL 1: Secure Housing Improves Life Outcomes

1.1 Embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people and mainstream policies where relevant

1.2 Establish stable and affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness

1.3 Make housing the platform for fulfilment of life aspirations and successful education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians

1.4 Sustain tenancies through culturally strong Aboriginal focused systems and practices

VAHMF GOAL 2: Building supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population

2.1 Building supply of homes owned by Aboriginal people and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ACCOs with access to the NDIS Data Dashboard as it relates to Aboriginal Victorians to assist in accountability, design, planning and implementation of new service access, consistent with data sovereignty commitments in the current Closing the Gap Agreement.
2.2 Build 5000+ Social Housing properties by 2036: 300 new dwellings per annum	
2.3 Meet supply needs for transitional and short term (crisis) and special housing needs	
2.4 Support Native Title and Treaty to grow affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the use of Treaty to reinforce accountability to the Aboriginal community for housing programs, services and human outcomes.

VAHMF GOAL 3 Opening Doors to Home Ownership and Private Rental

3.1 Increase uptake of private rental	
3.2 Support to get established in your home	
3.3 Create opportunity for investors to invest in ethical affordable rental	
3.4 Make home ownership available to more people	

VAHMF GOAL 4: An Aboriginal Focussed Homeless Service System

4.1 Rebuild an Aboriginal homeless service system from the ground up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and expand on successful models such as the H2H program of housing with intensive care packages (5-6 clients with chronic homelessness and recidivism issues have now maintained their properties for a year with great success. They're working and some are out of prison for the longest period in their adult lives).
4.2 Provide tailored support for those at risk	
4.3 Increase supply of crisis and transitional housing	

VAHMF GOAL 5: A capable system that delivers Aboriginal Housing Needs

5.1 Create a strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase accountability by linking housing, education, health and intergenerational poverty data and demonstrate savings from investment in housing. Institute a single or integrated Aboriginal controlled steward for the system; to oversee, monitor and ensure integration of housing and support consistent with self-determination as the guiding principle. Implement an effective data and CRM system that supports a single view of the client to prevent re-telling of their story, and enables system-wide performance improvement, leveraging the existing work being undertaken by Homes Vic. Undertake an evidence-based gap analysis of Aboriginal Victorian eligible to access NDIS and SDA against those actually accessing services and accommodation Adopt a preliminary target of 300 eligible NDIS Aboriginal persons to have an SDA and support package by 2030
5.2 Make the mainstream housing and homelessness system culturally safe	
5.3 Build a system based partnership between the mainstream and Aboriginal housing and homelessness system	

2

20 Year Vision for the Aboriginal Community Housing Sector



20-year Vision:

■ For a unified and vibrant Victorian Aboriginal community housing sector delivering quality services and housing equity within a generation.



Our vision is for a unified, strong, financially viable, self-determining Aboriginal housing sector that, over the next 20 years, is a significant contributor to ensuring every Aboriginal Victorian has a home. This will be achieved through providing community housing as part of a pipeline out of homelessness and towards private rental and home ownership for all Aboriginal Victorians.

Purpose

The purpose of the Aboriginal community housing sector's Vision is to outline the role of Aboriginal community housing organisations in delivering appropriate accommodation outcomes for Victoria's Aboriginal people over the next 20 years.

It is intended to guide the transformation of the Aboriginal community housing sector from being loosely organised, under-resourced and straining to cope with a burgeoning Aboriginal homelessness and housing crisis into a platform that advances Aboriginal self-determination and ensures every Aboriginal Victorian has a home that supports their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

A summary of the AHHF's Aboriginal community housing sector agenda

1. Working effectively with government and otherwise providing leadership in implementing all elements of the VAHMF.

2. Helping to meet anticipated State-wide demand for 27,000 additional Aboriginal household dwellings by 2036, of which 5000 are social/community housing. This includes through Victoria's mainstream Big Housing Build which promises \$5.3 billion of social and affordable housing (12,000 new dwellings) and that includes a focus on increasing ACCO community housing.

3. Transforming community housing into a foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness (including person-centred intensive, culturally appropriate, structured case management), a platform to deliver wraparound social and economic programs, and one that also supports education and employment opportunities.

4. Transforming community housing into a pathway to housing independence that includes private rental and home ownership.

5. Shaping the sector to maximise social benefit from its housing pool through engaging continuous quality improvement cycles.

6. Working in partnership with mainstream social housing to ensure it is culturally safe for, or otherwise contributes effectively to meeting the housing needs of, Aboriginal people.

Implementing the Vision

Achieving the Aboriginal community housing sector's Vision will require focus and sustained effort by Aboriginal sectoral members and government over the next 20 years. It will also require a joint commitment to shared values and goals, cooperation and collaboration in determining and delivering capacity building, sector-shaping strategies and actions, and resources to deliver them. Key actions, with a particular focus on leveraging future capability growth in the first five years, will be outlined in an Aboriginal Community Housing Sector Capacity Building Plan scheduled to be finalised in 2023.

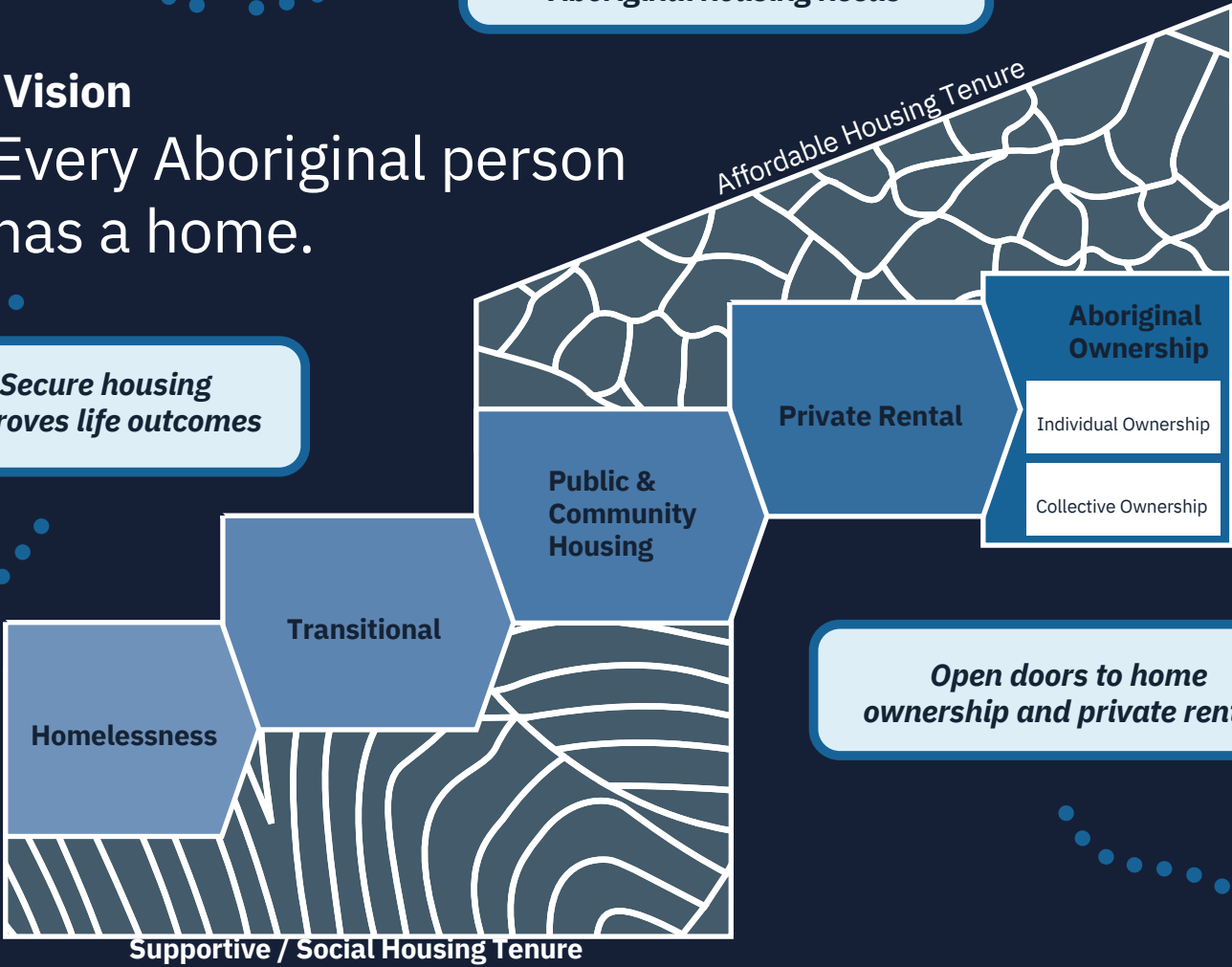


A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs

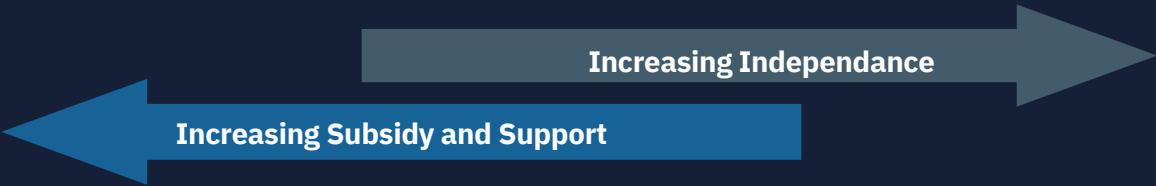
Vision

Every Aboriginal person has a home.

Secure housing improves life outcomes



Open doors to home ownership and private rental



Purpose

Aboriginal Victorians achieve quality housing outcomes in a generation.

An Aboriginal focused homelessness system

Build supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population

3

Standing on the Shoulders of the 2019 Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit

Introduction: Standing on the Shoulders of the 2019 Aboriginal Housing & Homelessness Summit



In April 2019, AHV hosted a major Summit at which the Victorian Aboriginal Community came together with Government officials to discuss the housing challenges we faced as a community in our state at that time. Around 160 people shared honestly their ideas for a better housing future for Aboriginal people living in Victoria. A careful record of the community's ideas was taken and distilled into a Summit Report.

AHV then held a Symposium with the Aboriginal community to further examine and refine these ideas. The community placed its trust in a Steering Committee chaired by Professor Kerry Arabena to develop a state-wide policy framework based on the Summit Report to present to the Government. That policy became *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home* (Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (VAHHF)).



The Government, represented by the then Minister for Housing, the Hon Richard Wynne MP, and the then Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon Gavin Jennings MLC, joined with the community to launch *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* in the Victorian Parliament in February 2020. *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* has been adopted as the Victorian Government's plan for improving housing and homelessness outcomes for Aboriginal people across Victoria. This is the first such housing framework developed by the Aboriginal community to be adopted by an Australian Government jurisdiction.



The 2019 Summit, which was so generative of innovative ideas for change, bore fruit.

This is not to suggest that the housing experience has been plain sailing over the past three years.

But there is value in acknowledging what has been achieved.



Achievements arising out of the 2019 Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit

Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort established clear goals, targets, objectives, and recommended actions. While far from all have taken effect, major new initiatives have resulted. Without the policy framework, which began with the 2019 Summit, these clear goals would not have been achieved. This section looks at some of the achievements resulting from a Self-determining policy approach to date.

Self-determination in governance:



The role of the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF), which was established in the lead-up to the development of the Framework, was consolidated as part of the overall governance arrangements to implement *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*. The Forum is comprised of all Aboriginal community controlled organisations, Traditional Owner groups and Aboriginal Trusts that provide housing and/or homeless services. The Forum is used to share information, shape and develop the sector, build capability and inform Government policy and program design. An Implementation Working Group was established, jointly chaired by Darren Smith, CEO of AHV and Chair of the AHHF, and Ben Rimmer, CEO of the Government's Homes Victoria to implement the Strategy. Its members are members of the AHHF, housing and homeless experts, and senior government officials. Its terms of reference are detailed and its mandate is to oversee an effort to resource and implement the actions contained in *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort*.

A Fair Share:

The *Mana-na woorrn-tyeen maar-takoort* established a target to reduce Aboriginal homelessness in our state by 10% each year for 10 years and argued for a fair share of resources for Aboriginal housing and the setting of an Aboriginal housing target for all Government developments and housing funding (Mana-na action 1.1.2). The government adopted a target that 10% of new houses built under the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build would be allocated to Aboriginal Victorians. Government also made a commitment that 10% of the \$1.38 billion COVID stimulus funding for community housing to build 4,200 new houses would not only house Aboriginal people but would be owned by the Aboriginal community. This target provides a growth pathway for Aboriginal housing providers where there wasn't one, if they are prepared to partner with registered housing agencies or commit to becoming registered themselves.

An Aboriginal Rental Assistance Program:

As part of the launch of the *Mana-na woorrn-tyeen maar-takoort*, the Government announced an Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (action 3.1.3). The Program has been funded at over \$4m for two years to provide brokerage assistance and advocacy. It has assisted approximately 200 households to achieve private rental accommodation. The two-year pilot has succeeded as a proof of concept and should now be extended and expanded.



Scan to learn more about
the APRAP program



A major maintenance injection:

AHV coordinated a proposal to the government for a major maintenance injection to improve the quality and life of social housing units owned by Aboriginal-controlled organisations in our state. Approximately \$35m was secured for repairs, maintenance and improvements to Aboriginal controlled housing in 2020-2021. This was the largest one-off investment in the maintenance and restoration of Aboriginal housing in a generation. AHV was able to use its status as a tier 1 housing association to auspice the proposal and secure funding on behalf of 20 Aboriginal housing providers.



Strengthening alliances and embedding cultural safety:

We have seen some positive responses to *Mana-na woorrn-tyeen maar-takoort* from mainstream leaders in Government and the community housing sector:

- The Residential Tenancies Commissioner, Dr. Heather Holst, adopted a recommendation from the framework to undertake an investigation into discrimination against Aboriginal people in the private rental market (action 3.1.1).
- In partnership with AHV, Dr. Holst commissioned Swinburne University to undertake research in partnership with the Consumer Rights Research Centre. Based on the research, Dr. Holst worked with the Koori Caucus of the *Mana-na woorrn-tyeen maar-takoort* Implementation Working Group (IWG) to develop recommendations for the Consumer Affairs Minister to address discrimination. The Government is considering the recommendations and the Implementation Working Group is monitoring the Government's response.

- In 2021, the Community Housing Industry Association Victoria (CHIA Vic) adopted an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework developed for AHV by Jenny Samms in consultation with the Aboriginal community. The Cultural Safety Framework provides clear, practical advice for mainstream community housing providers in creating a safe environment for those Aboriginal Victorians who are its community housing tenants. The Cultural Safety Framework provides greater confidence for mainstream providers to welcome Aboriginal tenants and to assist them to maintain their tenancies.
- New rental lettings to Aboriginal tenants in mainstream community housing have risen from around 4% to around 7% of all new lettings according to the latest publicly available data. The conditions are in place for this share to continue to rise to at least 10% (a minimum expectation for future lettings).
- Similarly, work is now complete on an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework for the specialist homelessness support sector. We expect the Council to Homeless Persons to formally adopt this framework.
- These initiatives help address priority action 5.2.1 of the *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort* that 'the mainstream system is culturally competent and workers understand and implement culturally safe practices....' *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort* also recommended that 'the registration system ensures a culturally safe community housing sector for Aboriginal clients and has the flexibility to register Aboriginal housing providers, recognising their particular strengths...' (Priority Action 5.2.2)
- AHV and the AHHF have worked hard to inform the work of the state's Social Housing Regulatory Review Panel to ensure that its recommendations align with the *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort* priority actions. Chapter 7 of the Panel's 2021 Interim Report contains 17 recommendations that aim to strengthen cultural safety for Aboriginal people in social housing in Victoria. If adopted by the Government, these will give effect to Objective 5.2 of the Framework (make the mainstream housing and homelessness system culturally safe). Of particular significance are the following Panel recommendations:
 - 7.1 Embed cultural safety in performance standards that apply to social housing providers and encourage the regulator to continue to build on the commitment demonstrated by the Housing Registrar to embedding cultural safety awareness and practices within its Office; and
 - 7.7 Provide appropriate resourcing to establish and maintain a culturally safe pre-registration team within the regulator to undertake active outreach with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and require the regulator to develop model policies and templates to facilitate ACCO registration. These are long-term reforms that are critical to making social housing safe. They need to be expedited as fast as possible. Opening housing registration to ACCOs is critical because it is a threshold condition of accessing state government funding for housing. Without it ACCOs cannot grow their housing portfolios and secure their future viability as providers.

Blueprint for an Aboriginal specific homeless system in Victoria:

Goal 4 of the *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort* was to develop an Aboriginal-focused service system with priority actions to 'Rebuild an Aboriginal homeless service system from the ground up' (Objective 4.1) and 'Provide tailored support for those at high risk'. (Objective 4.2) Using a significant grant from the Victorian Government, AHV led work with the AHHF and KPMG to develop a Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homeless System in Victoria. The Blueprint is based on extensive consultation with Aboriginal service users and Aboriginal and mainstream service providers. The Blueprint has been presented to the Government for consideration. Implementing the Blueprint will form a critical element of the next five-year plan for *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort*.



Aboriginal housing and homelessness policy and advocacy leadership in Victoria:

AHV is recognised as the lead agency for Aboriginal housing and homelessness policy and advocacy in Victoria. In recent years, the Aboriginal community in Victoria developed and advocated for a housing reform agenda through *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* that has raised the profile and priority of Aboriginal housing issues and met with some early implementation successes. While AHV leads in convening the AHHF, it is the strong leadership of the AHHF, drawing on the experiences and expertise of individual members, to set clear direction and produce credible, actionable advice that underpins these achievements. Some early achievements of note include:

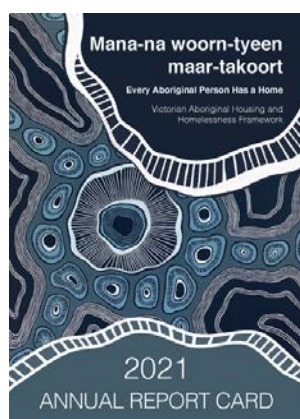
- Providing welfare and support services for Aboriginal public housing tenants during COVID;
- Actively driving implementation of *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* through the AHHF Implementation Working Group;
- Leading policy work on the design of a new homeless service system for Aboriginal people;
- Auspicing funding arrangements for improving maintenance of social housing units owned by ACCOs;
- Leading work on embedding cultural safety in mainstream social housing; and
- Advocacy to embed housing goals and targets in government policy frameworks, including Closing the Gap.

Accountability to the community:

The *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* also established a priority action to improve accountability to the community on progress in reducing housing distress and eradicating homelessness. Priority action 5.2.4 committed that 'the data and evidence base is reviewed to ensure it enables continuous improvement and accountability, including giving back to the Aboriginal community.' The Implementation Working Group has worked closely with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare to establish a robust indicator framework and to report trends in a clear and accessible way. To this end, the *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* Implementation Working Group has designed an Annual Report Card in which it commits to report annually on:

- 20 measures of housing outcomes, comparing the housing outcomes of Aboriginal Victorians with those of other Victorians and Aboriginal people in other parts of Australia; and
- The actions being taken to implement the Framework.

The 2021 and 2022 Annual Report Cards are now complete and have been published.



The Report Cards reveal that despite the enormous amount of work undertaken since the 2019 Summit, market conditions and wider policy settings are making it harder than ever to secure safe, affordable housing. The 2022 Summit was held to map a way to address these challenges over the next five year period. This report aims to capture the ideas for future directions arising from the Summit and build a solid platform for the next five-year work plan.



4

Housing as a Base for Life



Policy Context

As a fundamental human right, secure housing provides a powerful foundation for holistic health and wellbeing, successful educational outcomes, and enables Aboriginal people to access employment opportunities and enjoy the benefits available to other Australians. Secure housing enriches spiritual wellbeing and provides a platform for building emotional security and financial stability.

Secure housing for Aboriginal people in Victoria has not been a priority for Local, State or Federal Government investment. A major national policy of Closing the Gap (CtG) for example, presents only a single housing target on overcrowding which Victoria is already meeting and provides no targets on increased housing investment or homelessness, whilst rates of homelessness continue unabated. Housing security objectives should be central to overarching social and economic policy in Australia and housing targets are critical to Government accountability and transparent reporting.

MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

Goal 1: Secure Housing Improves Life Outcomes argues that housing is foundational to human wellbeing. Its objectives are to:

- Embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people.
- Establish stable affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness.
- Make housing a platform for successful education and employment outcomes.
- Sustain tenancies through culturally strong Aboriginal focused systems and practices.

This includes the principle of a fair share of investment in housing funding being directed to Aboriginal people. The Victorian Government's decision to assign 10% of Big Housing Built social housing signifies an important start to investment in housing for Aboriginal families. Victoria however continues to lack:

- A commitment to Housing First, a core principle of the Framework.
- A commitment to join up housing and human service funding (wraparound support for tenancies).
- Clear access points for entry into a navigable housing support system (Action 1.2.1).
- Intensive, culturally appropriate case management support for Aboriginal people presenting to housing and homeless services with complex needs (mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues, family violence trauma, vulnerability after leaving out of home care or in contact with the justice system) (Action 1.2.2).
- Integrated and wraparound support to meet tenant needs at particular life stages and to weather crises (Action 1.4.1).

Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Advocate that Government formally adopt a Housing First principle for assisting homeless people stabilise their lives, underpinned by wraparound support services.
2. Propose additional targets within CtG and the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework to align them with the VAHHF targets, starting with the headline target to reduce homelessness in Victoria by 10% per annum over ten years.
3. Implement the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homeless System in Victoria, ensuring case management is in place for homeless service clients who require it.
4. Advocate for a major investment to bring the More Than A Landlord Program to scale so that it can benefit all AHV social housing tenants.

- 
5. Establish an Aboriginal-specific Housing Advisory Service to assist Aboriginal people navigate their housing options in a complex housing market.
 6. Maintain or increase the 10% target of Government social housing investment directed to Aboriginal communities
 7. Make social housing an integrated program delivery platform from which we can reduce Aboriginal inequality and disadvantage.
 8. Provide greater resources for ACCOs to deliver integrated, trauma-informed services to Aboriginal people in culturally safe ways, integrated with secure housing.
 9. Measure and quantify the financial cost of homelessness, including the cost on other service systems to strengthen the benefit cost argument for more effective intervention. Increase accountability by linking housing, education, health and intergenerational poverty data and demonstrate savings from investment in housing.
 10. Incorporate housing security into the Commonwealth Wellbeing Budget.
 11. Use the Melbourne University findings of More than a Landlord (MTAL) to inform better support practices in mainstream housing providers.
 12. Support RMIT and Government in undertaking workforce development for the homelessness sector for better recognition, attraction, retention and professionalisation.
 13. Engage more skilled case managers to work with people with complex needs. In other states this is happening with some success.
 14. Build on the successful elements of the Homelessness to the Home initiative with housing and support packages. Participants believe this program “had the will, the funding, and levers in the systems to actually create change for the chronically homeless (included 290 Aboriginal people)”.
 15. Reform housing registration needs to provide access for Aboriginal providers. The links to Treaty gives Aboriginal community a stronger basis for renegotiating differently in this housing provision space.
 16. Assist more ACCOs to explore options for accreditation and expand their service offering of supported housing, linked to culturally safe, trauma-informed services.
 17. Explore new models of partnership between ACCOs and mainstream social housing providers that enable ACCOs to maintain ownership of social housing stock, piggybacking on mainstream agency tenancy regulation.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

How do we embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people? What needs to be done to have state Government commit to join up housing and human services funding?

How do we establish stable and affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness?

How do we embed intensive, culturally appropriate case management support for Aboriginal people presenting to homeless services with complex needs?

How do we ensure integrated and wraparound support to meet the renter's needs at particular life stages?

What more needs to be done to assist more ACCOs becoming registered for the delivery of housing in a culturally safe way that addresses complex needs such as family violence, youth, and Elders?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.

5

Social Housing Supply

Policy Context

Aboriginal Victorians were excluded from the housing market and wider economy for generations and we are far less likely to own a home. As a consequence, we have depended to a far greater extent on social housing for housing stability. In 2006, 30.1% of Aboriginal Victorians lived in social housing. By 2016 just 18.6% remained (10% were in public housing, 7% in Aboriginal housing and 2% in mainstream community housing).

In Victoria, approximately 22% of the Housing Register Waiting List population identify as Aboriginal (6,349 of 28,000 (est.) at March 2022). This is because social housing supply flat-lined (falling from 3.8% of all housing stock in 2006 to around 3.4% in 2016), while the Aboriginal population grew fast and this trend has largely continued. The result has been devastating as rates of presentation for homeless assistance accelerated fast during the period to 2016 (and beyond) to now be one in six people.

While across the OECD countries social housing makes up 7% of all stock, Australia's share languishes at 4.5% and Victoria has the least social housing of any state, now at little more than 3%. The result is a long-term trend of unmet need for social housing in Victoria. Only around 5% of Aboriginal people presenting in the homeless system and requiring long-term housing receive it. The proportion of unmet need has risen significantly since 2011-12.

MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

Objectives 2.2 and 2.3 were to "Build 5,000+ social housing properties by 2036 – 300 houses pa" and "Meet supply needs for transitional and (crisis) short term and special needs housing." Following the launch of the Framework, the Victorian Government announced the first significant expansion in social housing supply in a generation, committing to build up to 4,200 Social Housing dwellings, with 10% of housing (420) across the Social Housing Growth Fund (SHGF) grants program allocated to Aboriginal Victorians, in line with the Framework.

While very welcome, Victoria's rate of investment remains below the national per capita average and trails decades of underinvestment. The Framework projected that an additional 5085 additional social housing units would be required by the Aboriginal community between 2016 and 2036, just to maintain the proportion of the existing population in social housing.

The number of Aboriginal Victorians on the Housing Registrar waiting list has grown by more than 2,000 between June 2019 and March 2022 alone (from 4324 to 6349), underscoring the conservatism of our estimates. A long-term pipeline of social housing is urgently required. Of the highly rationed new public housing lettings coming on line each year, Aboriginal Victorians are accessing around 12% of new lettings. Around 7% of new lettings in mainstream community housing went to Aboriginal families in 2020-21 and this share has grown since the Framework was launched, but remains below our share of the homeless population (around 11%).

Efforts by the state to secure new revenue streams for social housing, through developer contributions and waiving council rates for social housing have been frustrated by opposition from opposing interests, and apparently abandoned as Government policies in the short-term. [DS1] Despite serious effort by the sector and the Government, the challenge to secure an ongoing resource stream for social housing has still not been achieved. Without it the rate of Aboriginal homelessness will not reduce by 10% each year in line with the Framework target, but instead will continue to grow.

Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Seek to secure a new pipeline of investment in social housing on a scale to arrest rising homelessness.
 - a) Increase the percentage of social housing investment for Aboriginal people ("a minimum 300 houses a year for a decade" was suggested)
2. Establish additional supply-related targets for CtG, such as:
 - a) Reducing the number of Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness by 10 per cent per annum
 - b) Increase housing stock owned and managed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

3. Lobby the Commonwealth to create actionable National Homeless and Housing supply targets in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and add a schedule for outcomes with timelines to drive change for Aboriginal people.
 - a) Target that a minimum of 10% of all new investment in housing and homelessness should be directed to Aboriginal outcomes
 - b) That a minimum of 10% investments in new housing should result in Aboriginal ownership of new housing
4. Lobby the Commonwealth to better target Commonwealth Rental Assistance to those low income households experiencing rental stress.
5. Secure funding through the Commonwealth to prioritise Aged Care accommodation for our community.
6. Step up efforts to secure a larger share of mainstream community housing units for Aboriginal families
 - Develop models for true, respectful, equitable and trusting partnerships between Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Community Housing Providers.
7. Explore joint housing development ventures with mainstream social and private providers.
8. Secure increased funding commitments from the Victorian government for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to build housing linked to a community employment strategy.
9. Deliver a management transfer of Aboriginal public housing, based on choice, to Aboriginal community housing providers to accelerate growth and scale in the Aboriginal community housing sector.
10. Pursue council rate relief on a Council by Council basis (rebates are allowable under the Local Government Act) and invest savings in more Aboriginal controlled social housing.
11. Governments to treat social and affordable housing as essential social infrastructure and adopt a regular, reliable revenue stream to provide long term funding certainty for new Aboriginal housing supply matched to need. State Government to invest 2.1% of Land Tax into community housing stock owned and managed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, in recognition that sovereignty of the land was never relinquished.
12. Pursue opportunities to build social housing on unused Aboriginal land through partnership ventures with philanthropy
13. Persuade the Government to agree to designate a proportion of Aboriginal social housing when selling vacant land to developers.
14. Advocate for returned soldier settlements for Aboriginal people and their families to be negotiated to right historic wrongs as part of Treaty.
15. Pursue a new investment deal in social housing as an arm of Treaty negotiations.
16. Remove disincentives for people (especially Elders caring for grandchildren) in social housing to work and lift their incomes.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

What can the Commonwealth Government do to grow Aboriginal community housing supply?

What can the Victorian Government do to grow Aboriginal community housing supply?

What can be done at a Local Government level to grow Aboriginal community housing supply?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.



6

Private Rental

Policy Context

Increasing numbers of Aboriginal people locked out of home ownership and social housing rely on a crowded private rental market where competition is fierce. More and more Aboriginal Victorians find themselves in this market where the vacancy rate is 1 per cent and 85 per cent of locations have reached record asking prices. By 2016, 36 percent of Aboriginal Victorians were living in the private rental market (up from 28-30 per cent a decade earlier). The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has shown that by 2016, 41 percent of renting Aboriginal households living in Victoria were in housing stress, up from around 22 percent in 2001, and we can be confident that the trend has accelerated since. Low incomes and racial discrimination place Aboriginal households at the end of a very long queue for scarce private rental offerings.

The largest numbers of Aboriginal households rent from private landlords. Many are in regional Victoria and on the city fringe where properties are least expensive, but where many of the proportionately largest cost increases have recently occurred. The private rental market has been saturated over the past two years, in much of regional Victoria, as many citizens escape city lock downs and take the opportunity to work remotely.

The number of private rental lettings affordable to people on low incomes in regional Victoria fell by 41% from 4,974 properties in the March quarter of 2019, to 2,930 properties in September 2021 as COVID migration to the regions took effect. The share of properties that were affordable in country Victoria fell from 45.2% to 33.3% during this period. Because 56% of Victoria's Aboriginal people live in rural and regional Victoria they are disproportionately displaced.

This crash in affordability has impacted people on income support and minimum wages hard in all parts of Victoria. According to the 2021 Census, only 58.5% of Aboriginal people in Victoria are in the labour force and 9.6% are unemployed (compared with 5% of other Victorians). The average weekly income of Aboriginal people in Victoria is just 77% that of other Victorians (\$619 compared with \$803 per week). As of April 2022, no private rental accommodation anywhere in Victoria was affordable to people on Job-seeker payment, Parenting payment, Disability support or Youth Allowance and only between 0.4 % and 1.5 % of properties were affordable to aged pensioners. Over 80 per cent of Aboriginal people who presented to homeless services in 2020-21 were dependent on Commonwealth income support and 13.2 per cent had no income at all.

These trends mean Aboriginal people require far greater assistance in the rental market now than they did at the time of the last Summit in 2019.



MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

Sections 3.1 and 3.3 outlined a wide range of actions Government could take to improve Aboriginal people's experience in the private rental market. The Government took two of these actions up.

- To work with the Residential Tenancies Commissioner to investigate apparent discrimination against Aboriginal people in the private rental market. A Report has been prepared and the Commissioner (with input from members of the Framework Implementation Working Group) has made recommendations to the Minister for Consumer Affairs. Further action is pending.
- The second was the funding of a two-year \$4.2m Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP), to underpin the launch of the Framework. The aim of the APRAP is to prevent or end homelessness by rapidly rehousing people in private rental, particularly assisting people in crisis, transitional or social housing to become independent in the private rental market. Commencing late 2020, APRAP had assisted 187 Aboriginal households at March 2022, from across five regions, assisting 82.4% of those who sought help.



Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Fund the expansion of the APRAP pilot program ongoing, state wide, at scale. Roles must be properly resourced.
2. Propose that the Government implement recommendations from the Residential Tenancies Commissioner to tackle discrimination in the private rental market, based on findings from the Excluded from the Start Report.
3. Support a significant increase in Commonwealth income support payments and rent assistance (30-50%) to restore capacity to achieve CRA's policy objective of making rental housing affordable to people on benefits.
4. Create sustainable incentives for ethical investment in affordable build to rent schemes to rapidly increase supply. This includes income and land tax concessions for affordable rental investment, addressing impediments for institutional investors.
5. Seek Government support to provide training opportunities for more Aboriginal real estate agents to reduce racial discrimination in the private rental market and offer cultural safety training with existing agents to help with early intervention to resolve issues which may place a tenancy at risk.
6. Reform legislation to provide greater legal protection for tenants who are vulnerable to eviction.
7. Build capacity in the private rental market to support Aboriginal Victorian's accessing private rental through brokerage and head leasing arrangements.
8. Adopt the Framework proposal for a Koori-list at VCAT for tenancy dispute hearings, noting around 40% of people seeking homeless assistance are facing a housing crisis often resulting from eviction and few evictions are contested, and continue to build on existing VCAT practice to support Aboriginal renters.
9. Build in greater opportunity for VCAT to stand matters down, to give more time for resolution and to link to wraparound supports to tenancies at risk to prevent avoidable homelessness.
10. Improve information for tenants across the entire renting journey, including on their legal rights and responsibilities in forms they can easily access and understand. For example the Aboriginal Tenants at Risk program could be expanded beyond the Northern and Western regions of Melbourne to support people wherever they live in Victoria.
11. Work with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) to ensure there are consequences for real estate agents engaging in discriminatory action.
12. Consider incentives for home owners to put pressure on private rental estate agents to support tenancy applications from our vulnerable community members.
13. Advocate the establishment of a mechanism to intercede in Centrepay cancellation to argue for suspension instead as a first response to a breach.
14. Other framework proposals not yet adopted by Government should also inform next steps.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

The work done so far has been about access into private rental. How can you assist to implement these 14 recommendations?

What would help people who are already in private rental with the other pressure points? For example, high and rising rents, notices to vacate for property sales, getting repairs done and bond return.

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.

7

Treaty Outcomes and Housing



Policy Context

The creation of a Treaty represents an historic moment in the State of Victoria. It presents an opportunity to remake the relationship between First Nations people and the Government on new terms.

Treaty is in part about resolving issues left over from the fact that Aboriginal sovereignty over land was never ceded in Victoria and that the land was taken through violence. Land contributes at least 60 per cent of the value of housing in Victoria. It is difficult to see how Treaty settlements could avoid issues relating to land and housing.

Accordingly, housing has been a consistent theme raised in the First People's Assembly of Victoria's (the Assembly) consultations with community on what should be included in Treaties. Participants identified housing and homelessness as important areas where increased funding and control can improve outcomes, and that services in these areas should be handed back to First Peoples' control.

In October 2022, the Assembly reached an agreement with the Victorian Government on the Treaty Negotiation Framework. The Framework provides for the:

- Assembly, as the democratic voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria, to negotiate a Statewide Treaty to deliver structural reform, and
- for Traditional Owners to negotiate Treaties in their area.

The Treaty Negotiation Framework sets out the principles and process for Treaty making at the State and Traditional Owner Treaty level, which includes:

- how negotiations occur,
- subject matters that may be negotiated (which includes housing), and
- how Agreements are made.

The Treaty Negotiation Framework allows for additional negotiating parties, such as Local Government or the Commonwealth Government, to participate in Treaty negotiations. This means the Treaty process has the scope to ensure all relevant parties can be involved in negotiations to address housing and homelessness issues for First Peoples in Victoria.

The Treaty Negotiation Framework also provides for interim offers and agreements to be made. This means rights and outcomes in specific areas can be secured early, and on an incremental basis, at the local and State level.

A State-wide Treaty, where outcomes are subject to negotiations between the Assembly and State, could aim to build housing independence through State-wide outcomes such as:

- a. significant changes to Victoria's structures and systems of government to achieve greater control over policy and decision-making (ie a First Peoples decision-making body whose decisions are legally binding)
- b. public-land rezoning and transfers to enable housing development
- c. the growth of private home ownership
- d. increasing community housing that is owned and operated by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Traditional Owner Groups and other Aboriginal organisations.

Future Directions

In response to current and emerging policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Create overarching policy for investment into housing and homelessness that can be secured through Treaty. Treaties must assert greater power and control over our housing both as individuals and community – First Peoples in the drivers seat for First Peoples housing and homelessness.
2. Explore the application of Treaty for land acquisition, land transfer as part of Treaty agreements. First Peoples have always associated land as home, so any discussion about securing Country must consider infrastructure for houses to enable First Peoples to live on Country.
3. Engage with Aboriginal people / Aboriginal community outside of Traditional Owners groups for input to the Treaty process on achieving housing outcomes.

4. Propose that the Assembly participate, along with AHV, in discussions with local government on Treaty and housing to establish a framework for trilateral agreements to deal with planning, land tax exemptions for rates and more as part of Statewide Treaty.
5. Engage Treaty to support introduction of an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system based on the Blueprint developed by the community.
6. Explore the use of Treaty to reinforce accountability to the Aboriginal community for housing programs, services and human outcomes.
7. The community must initiate and lead the conversations for what could be done now on housing in the context of the Treaty, rather than passively letting the process evolve.
8. The concept of “home” be a central pillar for treaty reform encapsulating housing, family supports, education and wealth generation.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit



These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

*What are the barriers and problems within the current government systems and process that Treaty could address?
How would treaties build upon and advance the reforms within the VAHMF?*

How could treaties build up and advance the reform of the blueprint for an Aboriginal specific homelessness system?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.

8

Housing Sector Building Capacity

Policy Context

The *Mana-na woorntyeen maar-takoort* policy Framework is built on the foundational pillar of self-determination. However the Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector requires greater scale and capacity to meet the enormous demand for social and affordable housing and homelessness support.

Of the estimated 28,000 Aboriginal households living in Victoria in 2021, a total of 5,419 were living in some form of social housing in our state with approximately:

- 2,999 in public housing
- 1,562 in AHV properties
- 444 in other Aboriginal community owned properties
- 413 living in non-Aboriginal community housing (2019 figure).

An additional 6,349 were on the Housing Register Waiting List by March 2022. Approximately one in three of these people will be classified as 'homeless with support' based on recent breakdowns of Aboriginal households on the waiting list. Meeting the needs of these people requires an expansion of capacity.

A fully realised Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector will need to be built over time. Among other focus areas this includes challenges relating to professional governance, fit-for-purpose regulation and workforce development and training.

An immediate challenge is presented by the fact that no ACCO in Victoria (apart from AHV) has registration as a Community Housing Provider or Association. This is a fundamental impediment to accessing Government social housing funding which would allow these ACCOs to build the scale to become viable. One means of building capacity and scale is through management or ownership transfers of existing public housing stock, housing Aboriginal families. AHV's annual surveys of tenants confirm that the overwhelming preference of Aboriginal social housing tenants is to have an Aboriginal landlord. Understanding the needs of its tenants, AHV is able to provide an exceptionally high level of stability in tenancies. Limiting the turnover of tenancies represents a significant cost saving.

The Literature Review undertaken for *Mana-na woorntyeen maar-takoort* found that non-Aboriginal providers constitute 97.7% of all social housing in the state (75% public and 22.7% mainstream community). This dominant share reinforces the importance of improving cultural safety in mainstream social housing as a critical project in capacity building.

MANA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

Goal 5 included Objectives to:

- a. Create a strong and viable Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness sector (Objective 5.1)
- b. Make the mainstream housing and homelessness system culturally safe (Objective 5.2)
- c. Build a systems-based partnership between the Aboriginal housing and homelessness service systems (Objective 5.3)





To date, modest capacity building work with the Aboriginal controlled sector has been undertaken through the establishment of an Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) convened and chaired by AHV. This Forum has led work to:

- a) Coordinate a state-wide program to undertake \$35m worth of maintenance, upgrades and modular housing for the Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) sector, including AHV.
- b) Undertake financial viability assessments and analysis of ACCO housing, with a view to better understand the viability of existing stock, maintenance and management requirements and its optimum utilisation. ACCOs apart from AHV own around 440 social housing units in addition to the 1585 (approx.) owned and managed by AHV.
- c) Understand and respond to critical policy issues confronting Aboriginal people with respect to their housing challenges and inform Government responses and program design.

Like other aspects of the response to the VAHHF, this funding is small scale and short-term. Ongoing funding is required to maintain this Forum and build skill and capability.

Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Summit participants discussed and endorsed a 20 year vision for the Aboriginal community housing sector.
2. The high level directions of an Aboriginal community housing capacity-building plan to achieve the long term Aboriginal community housing sector vision were discussed and agreed.
3. Develop and fund the delivery of an Aboriginal community housing capacity building plan, including fully resourcing the AHHF Secretariat to maintain the AHHF's strong Aboriginal policy and advocacy voice and leadership in strengthening the sector.
4. Fund the development of an Aboriginal work force training and development plan. The plan would address the need to reshape the role of housing workers to incorporate skills beyond tenancy management, including proactive life coaching and intensive case management of high risk clients in sustaining tenancies. This program would build the capacity for Aboriginal providers (ACCOs) to become entry and referral points into the housing and homeless service system.
5. Explore the transfer of ownership of public housing stock to ACCOs as a critical platform for the development of a viable, scaled up Aboriginal housing sector in our state. To achieve this requires the Government to engage with interested ACCOs to achieve registration and begin to trade in the market and build their portfolios.
6. Consider grants to enable partnerships with mainstream housing agencies: ACCOs require assistance to put in place the organisational conditions required to partner with Housing Agencies (both AHV and mainstream providers) to provide the social housing required by their communities more immediately. The funding of grants administered by Government could twin ACCOs with mainstream housing providers to build cultural safety in mainstream providers and develop housing management and development capability in ACCOs with established housing portfolios. Partnerships must give primacy to Self-determination.
7. Extend the timeline for ACCOs interested in exploring feasibility studies and business cases for expanding housing services or partnership opportunities to share land for social housing.
8. The Housing Regulator and Homes Victoria to put in place supports to assist ACCOs with an interest in achieving housing registration within existing policy settings to do so. This should include removing of unnecessary compliance barriers to registration and recognize the range of other compliance required from ACCOs as part of their wider service offering.

9. Housing Registrar to consider fit-for-purpose registration for smaller scale ACCOs, such as exists in other jurisdictions, in keeping with recommendations of the Social Housing Regulatory Review Interim Report of late 2021. Compliance, viability and the capacity to maintain registration are all considerations for smaller services. Work is required to streamline compliance requirements across total provision: family violence, housing, health etc.

10. Investigate whether there are ways in which ACCOs without registration can provide effective housing services.

11. Explore the development of a modest funding stream for ACCOs to slowly build scale until full registration becomes viable.

12. Build cultural safety conditions into housing registration for mainstream providers. In keeping with advice from AHV and ACCOs, the Social Housing Regulatory Review Panel has recommended, in its first Interim Report, that all social housing providers should satisfy cultural safety criteria as a condition of accreditation. The Government should revise the Regulations to implement this recommendation.

13. Work with CHIAVic to develop a communication and engagement plan to enable us to work in partnership with the mainstream community housing sector to build our respective capabilities.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

A strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector is fundamental to delivering on the goals of Manana worn-tyeen maar-takoort. How do we build the capacity of Traditional Owner and ACCO housing providers and shape the sector to deliver on the collective sector vision?

Why do we need a strong Aboriginal community housing sector?

What is the Aboriginal Community Housing Sectors Vision?

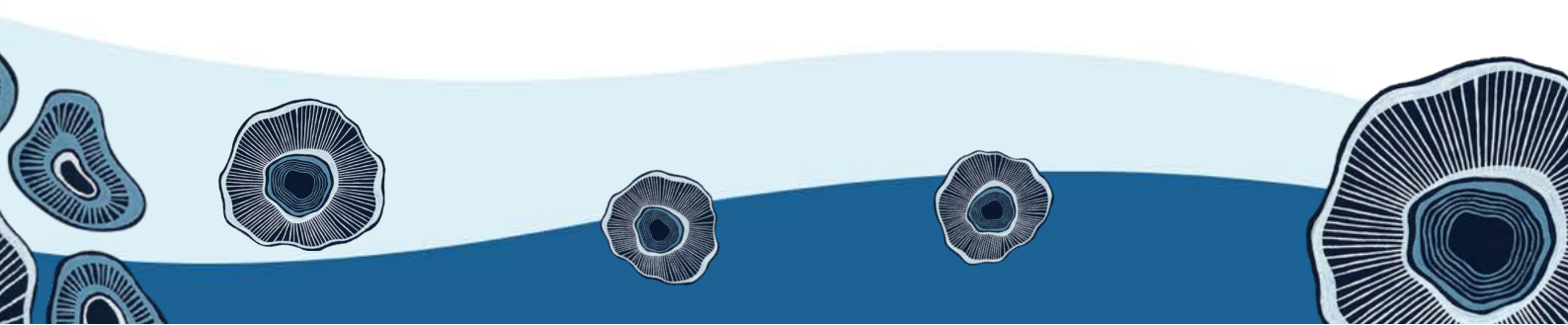
What capacities do we need to build?

What does the capacity building journey of Aboriginal housing providers look like?

What is the diversity of ACCOs' ambitions in relation to becoming registered providers?

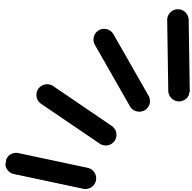
What are the barriers to housing registration for ACCOs who are interested?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.



9

Homelessness



“When a family loses its home it loses its bricks and mortar, it loses the foundation of the home.”

– Summit participant



Policy Context

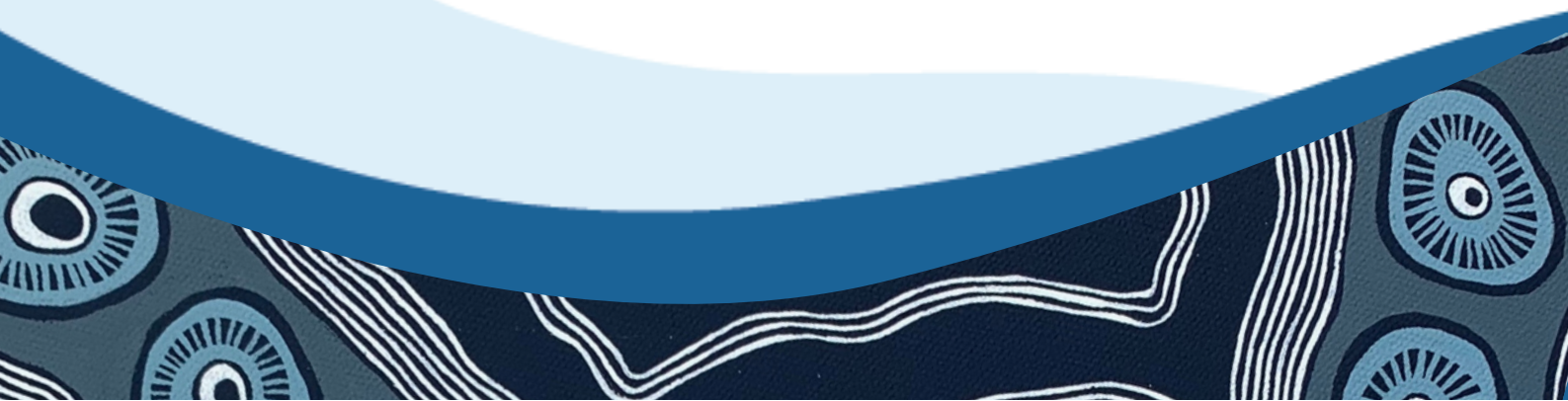
The Framework set a target to reduce Aboriginal homelessness by 10% per annum for ten years and we are yet to see progress in meeting the 10% reduction target:

- 17% of Aboriginal Victorians continue to seek homeless support each year and the long-term growth in those seeking assistance has continued to rise since 2018-19.
- Around four in ten of these 10,760 people in 2020-21 (or around 4,000) were homeless on presentation.
- Seven in ten (69.6%) Victorian Aboriginal people who entered the specialist homeless support system homeless, remained homeless when their period of support ended in 2020-21. Three in four were returning homeless clients.

The failure to resolve the housing stability of homeless people is a long-term problem, and the causes of homelessness are complex. Homelessness can be caused in part or in combination by:

- housing market factors (the cost of buying or renting housing);
- critical life events (like family violence, leaving prison, young people leaving home or care, Elders requiring supported care);
- the availability of household resources (income and wealth/poverty); and
- the adequacy of Government housing assistance (Commonwealth income support and rent assistance, social housing and homeless services).

The specialist homeless support system is currently unable to resolve the crisis of most Aboriginal people who present in the system. A large part of the reason is that people with long-term housing needs are not provided housing. Only 5% of Aboriginal people requiring long-term housing assistance receive it and 64% were turned away altogether last year. While 78% of those seeking short-term crisis housing receive it, less than half of those seeking transitional housing are able to be accommodated (2020-2021 AIHW data). As a consequence, the housing status of Aboriginal people in our state is often the same after receiving homeless assistance as it was before they sought help. These are very long-term and escalating problems, exacerbated by an acute and growing shortage of social housing in our state and a long-term failure of Commonwealth rent assistance to keep up with rent inflation which is accelerating to record highs. But there are serious failures in the homeless service system too and these must be addressed as a priority.



MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

1. The Framework recommended that Victoria “Rebuild an Aboriginal homeless service system from the ground up” (Objective 4.1).
2. AHV commissioned an external consultant to work with the AHHF membership to review and identify the flaws in the homeless support system with recommendations and has presented this to the Government.
3. In its resulting Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific homeless service system, AHV has documented significant limitations to the homeless service system and proposed major system reform.
4. The Framework also proposed that the Government “provide tailored support for those at high risk” (Objective 4.2) and that the Government “increase supply of crisis and transitional housing” (Objective 4.3). These priorities are reflected in the Blueprint.



Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were endorsed by Summit participants:

1. Adopt the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homeless System in Victoria to implement the system reforms developed by the AHHF and articulated in the blueprint.
2. Implement a new approach to screening: A ‘no wrong door’ approach distributes entry into the homelessness system amongst various front-line stakeholders, including other social services.
3. Establish Open Entry Points: Resource a network of ACCOs across Victoria to be ‘front doors’ into an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system. Work should begin immediately to identify ACCOs to lead this work and to upskill them. Adopt the proposed Initial Assessment and Planning (IAP) tools immediately to confer cultural safety.
4. Provide culturally safe support services, which are linked to properties, to Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness. Provide support to navigate the complexities of the system, including housing, mental health, justice, child protection, Centrelink and so on. The best way to deliver this may be through healing, wraparound services delivered by ACCOs that are strengths based and resilience focused.
5. Provide adequate quantity and quality of housing specifically for Aboriginal Victorians through the Big Housing Build to enable choice and culturally safe living arrangements, including social and affordable, crisis and transitional accommodation.
6. Leverage leased and rented properties in the private market to reduce time in transitional or crisis accommodation
7. Build on and extend duration of existing post-exit supports to ensure transitions into longer term social housing, private rental or home ownership is well-managed and supported.

8. Support Aboriginal Victorians in approaching and engaging with the service of their choice and in culturally safe ways.
9. Institute a single or integrated Aboriginal controlled steward for the system; to oversee, monitor and ensure integration of housing and support consistent with self-determination as the guiding principle.
10. Embed a local commissioning approach, and create a devolved model of shared decision-making between community and government.
11. Establish flexible support packages, which can be allocated through local level commissioning based on the needs of individual communities.
12. Establish cross-sectoral cooperation with organisations engaged in an alliance or network of organisations at a regional or community level across the state.
13. Capacity Building: Implement an ongoing program for cultural safety, to ensure all services are culturally safe. This could include a program for co-location of staff to ensure reciprocal capacity building on-the-job with the mainstream to mirror ACCO wraparound services and actively eradicate systemic racism; and an ACCO-specific capacity building program or network to build ACCO capacity.
14. Implement an effective data and CRM system that supports a single view of the client to prevent re-telling of their story, and enables system-wide performance improvement, leveraging the existing work being undertaken by Homes Vic.
15. Redesign and recommission Aboriginal hostels and partner with an Aboriginal organisation to develop properties to ensure Aboriginal Victorians have culturally safe housing options.
16. Partner with VACCA and other mainstream organisation to implement an Aboriginal youth flyer model in two agreed locations to determine demand and uptake for wider roll out.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

What steps can be taken in progressing the Blueprint in the year prior to the funding being released in 2022/23 financial year?

How do we move forward without the required funding?

What aspects of the plan can be implemented without funding?

What capacity does the sector have to implement the first phase?

What steps can be taken to seek funding from other sources outside Vic Gov?

If we did have the funding required, what would the system look like in 5 years?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.



10

Home Ownership



Policy Context

Aboriginal people's rates of home ownership are more than 20 percentage points lower than those of other Victorians – a result of intergenerational economic exclusion. The time when Aboriginal people were finally given the opportunity to participate economically coincided with a period when the cost of buying a house moved out of reach of most ordinary wage earners unless they have financial assistance or an inheritance.

In early 2020 the VAHMF was released, with the high hope of the property market finally moderating, after two decades of large price rises. One month later COVID hit Victoria and the RBA reduced interest rates to the lowest levels in Australian history. Cheap money and population movement out of city locations set the buyer market on fire in the regions, driving prices further out of reach for many Aboriginal Victorians.

Over the 12 months to September 2021 alone, the median house price in country Victoria increased by 22.4 per cent from \$412,500 to \$505,000. In metro Melbourne the median price had soared to \$850,000 by September 2021 (Valuer-General). The Domain House Price Reports cites even higher median prices, including a median above \$1m for Melbourne houses. Demographia International uses a price-to-income ratio of the median house price divided by the gross median household income to measure affordability. According to this measure, Melbourne is now the fifth most expensive city in the world to buy a home. Housing markets with a median multiple above 5 are regarded as seriously unaffordable. The Melbourne median multiple rose steadily from 4 in 1996 to 9 by 2019. During the period from 2019 and 2021 the median multiple in Melbourne soared from around 9 to above 12, shifting the market from seriously unaffordable to prohibitive to all but the best resourced purchasers. Of the major city markets measured by Demographia, Melbourne suffered the eighth largest deterioration in affordability from pre-pandemic to post pandemic levels, as the years taken to save for a deposit increased by 2.6 in just two years.

By March 2022, the average loan for an established house in Victoria reached a record high of \$675,700 (*The Age 2 March 2022*), having risen \$147,200 or 27.9% since February 2020. At that time, CoreLogic's research director, Tim Lawless argued that house "prices have risen almost 11 times faster than wages over the past year". While prices are now moderating, they remain well above pre-pandemic levels.

Purchasing a property at times of record prices and historically low interest rates is fraught with risk. While borrowing costs are currently low in historic terms, mortgages endure for decades and rates are already rising at the fastest speed in decades.

Housing supply issues are also a problem as the recent Australian House of Representative Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue Inquiry into Housing Affordability and Supply: The Australian Dream has again demonstrated. There is scope to further streamline planning regulations and approval processes, reduce building costs, disperse populations from major cities through improved infrastructure and better match supply to demand.

The combined failure of demand and supply policy settings have been disastrous for the aspiration of Aboriginal Victorians to share in an Australian home ownership dream, which for our mob continues to morph into a worsening nightmare.

MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

Objective 3.4 was to make home ownership available to more Aboriginal people, including by:

- a) Building aspirations for home ownership and capacity to act on them
- b) Establishing an Aboriginal end-to-end pilot support program to increase home ownership (shared equity home purchase; special financing; loan vehicles and advice; and related support to enter the market)
- c) Establishing rent to buy schemes for Aboriginal people

Despite extensive modeling by AHV discussions with the Department of Treasury and Finance, and promises in the 2020 Victorian State Budget, an Aboriginal shared equity program for home ownership has not been established by the Victorian Government. Other Framework recommendations to advance home ownership have also languished.

Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Develop an Aboriginal Home Ownership Hub that can be a resource to individuals & ACCOs to:
 - Increase understanding of how to get into the housing market.
 - Build skills to manage & maintain homes & finances.
 - Develop new home ownership models.
 - Develop a panel of culturally safe experts to advise on and support Aboriginal home ownership.
2. Pilot and establish a scalable Aboriginal Rent to Buy program where Aboriginal people can build equity in a property, initially through renting (based on existing models) that would incorporate:
 - A five year rental period.
 - Assistance with saving for a deposit, low interest loan & reducing debt.
 - Opportunity to enter into shared equity at the end of 5 years or purchase outright.
3. Establish an Aboriginal-specific shared equity program or provide strong pathways to mainstream programs where the Government pays part of the deposit and retains a share of equity in homes owned by Aboriginal Victorians.
4. Explore Home Ownership options using Aboriginal-owned land to meet a share of equity and offset costs, including community land trusts.
5. Review recommended actions from the Framework that have not been progressed to test viability.
6. Advocate for an end to negative gearing on residential property, which allows investors an unfair competitive advantage over owner-occupiers in being able to offset net rental loss against other income earned in a way not available to people seeking to buy a home for shelter.
7. Advocate to introduce a tax offset on borrowing costs for owner-occupiers on low incomes, based on the US taxation model.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

How do we continue to support increased rates of Aboriginal home ownership?

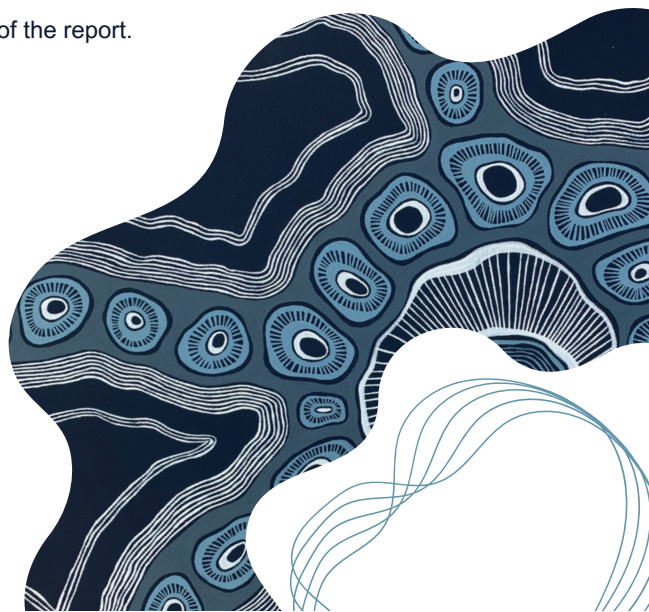
What are the types of programs are required?

Would a rent-to buy program be supported by the community?

What support do applicants and new home owners need to participate in these new programs?


Should homeownership on Aboriginal owned land be considered?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.



11

Family Violence and Housing



"The paths that we choose have a cultural destination - or they don't."

– Summit participant

Policy Context

Despite very positive reform and significant investment by the Victorian Government, and strong leadership by the Victorian Aboriginal community, family violence remains the single biggest presenting issue for Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness in Victoria. 41 per cent of presentations (4,435 people) to specialist homeless support services by Aboriginal Victorians in 2020-21 related to family violence.

Our state performs well in responding to immediate family violence crisis but the need for sustained housing support with trauma-informed wraparound services remains a critical gap. The better integration evident in the family violence service system is not yet evident in the emergency housing and social housing systems.

Poverty is often the antecedent and provides the intersection between family violence and homelessness. However, addressing poverty in the community is a major challenge. Men's violence is driving children into out of home care, therefore reducing male violence is fundamental. Many women are also having children removed because they are both homeless and victims of violence. Fear of losing children often deters women from leaving violent relationships.

Aboriginal women are the fastest growing cohort of the prison population and many of these women are also survivors of family violence. Safety risks are amplified in regional areas, in part because opportunities to safely leave an abusive relationship are more limited.

The high cost of housing is increasingly driving displacement of people from their support communities. This makes them more vulnerable to family violence and makes escaping a violent relationship more difficult. The absence of affordable, stable housing is driving women back into violent relationships extending their exposure to violence and placing children at sustained risk.

The service deficits in culturally-specific support remain profound. Elizabeth Morgan House remains the only high-security refuge for Aboriginal women in the state of Victoria with accommodation for just four families. One additional high security refuge is set to open in 2022 and two low security refuges exist.

Family violence is more than intimate partner violence. It can include extended family and violence directed at parents.



MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

Action 1.2.2 proposed that "Intensive, culturally appropriate structured case managed approaches drawing in relevant specialist service supports must be sustained and based on need. Those at high risk must receive specialist and intensive housing, community support and pathways, including those experiencing:

- a) Mental health
- b) Drug and alcohol
- c) Family violence – victims and people who choose to use violence
- d) Leaving out of home care (at least 5 years) and/or
- e) Contact with and leaving the justice system."

Action 1.3.1 proposed that "AHV and social housing be used as a platform to deliver social and economic programs for Aboriginal Victorians."

Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Fund and build more long-term supported accommodation for women and children leaving violent relationships, with housing that is well designed and flexible to meet the safety and family needs of these women and children. A number of models were identified as having potential:
 - a) The Safe Haven Rapid Housing Approach – this involves a head lease support for 12 months, then women take on the tenancy – support is provided in obtaining employment and with wraparound services (participants believe it has a 90% success rate).
 - b) Kids Undercover adds units to the back of properties (but this requires a designated maintenance authority).
 - c) Housing options for Grandparents who care for children are required.
2. Fund and build more Aboriginal-run refuges auspiced by ACCOs where safe, culturally embedded, holistic healing is the primary goal. Wraparound health, mental health and family related services would be provided. This would reduce the risk of Aboriginal women returning to violent relationships.
3. Direct Orange Door funding back to ACCO's so that funding can be exercised consistent with self-determination and made available to meet need.
4. Audit Family Violence models across the state and identify best practice that can be deployed as a basis for wider application. Document case studies of 'above and beyond' ACCO led work. Create networks for sharing best practice for providing refuge and supporting families experiencing violence.
5. Review the allocation of flexible family violence funding packages to enable safe relocation from dangerous relationships and assess whether they are equitably allocated and whether further or better allocation is required.
6. Extend effective private rental assistance programs to assist people leaving violent relationships.
7. Consider outcomes of trials of existing models by Dhelk Dja (including a trial in St Kilda) addressing the housing needs of men who use violence. Many of these men require support to deal with complex issues that contribute to their violent behaviour.
8. Embed cultural safety in mainstream family violence services to mirror ACCO service cultural safety.



9. Investigate solutions to current inequities in the system, including:

- Women being required to pay for damage caused by men
- Racism as a barrier to services
- Break up of families in circumstances where this is not needed and causes further trauma
- Lack of support options for families with older boys (12+).

10. Provide more services with wraparound support for people with mental illness and disabilities to reduce rates of family violence.

11. Assist family violence survivors with letters of support to advocate their access to private tenancies and explain poor rental records owing to violence victimisation. Build on new protections available in the revised Residential Tenancy Act for non-discrimination.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

What is required to develop long-term supported accommodation for women and children leaving violent relationships, with housing that is well designed and flexible to meet the safety and family needs of these women and children?

What needs to be included for flexible family violence funding package to enable safe relocation from dangerous relationships?

People who choose to use violence also require housing when they must leave the family home. How do we create a system that supports increased housing?

What additional supports are required to ensure families remain safe?

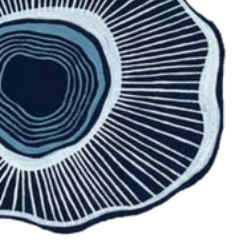
What investments can be made into early intervention of family violence to keep families safe and together if they choose to stay?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.



12

Housing People in Contact with the Justice System



Policy Context

Prisons have become de facto housing for too many homeless Aboriginal people. In 2011-12 exiting prisoners made up 5 per cent of the Aboriginal people presenting for homeless support in Victoria. By 2020-21 it was 12 per cent (935 people). This means more than 1 in 10 Aboriginal people seeking homeless assistance in our state are leaving prison.

Criminalisation of Aboriginal people has become an accelerating driver of growing rates of Aboriginal homelessness in Victoria. Doherty and McNicol from Elizabeth Morgan House report that “half of all women exiting prison expect to be homeless on release”.

Changes to the Victorian Bail Act 1977, introduced in 2018, shifted responsibility for justifying bail to the offender. Bail, like parole, is regularly denied if prisoners have no fixed address, leading to an increase in sentenced and unsentenced Aboriginal people. These new bail conditions also now apply to low-level offences, drawing more Aboriginal women into the net of those incarcerated without conviction.

These reforms have been enormously and predictably damaging to Victorian Aboriginal families as more and more women are held on remand, unable to provide a stable presence in the home for their children. These retrograde policies drive more and more Aboriginal children into out of home care (OOHC) where their risk of future homelessness is dramatically increased.

Lack of appropriate housing after prison drives reoffending as prisoners who are homeless upon exiting return in greater numbers. On release, it acts as a barrier to reunification with children. The absence of stable housing is keeping children and parents apart as children are left languishing in child protection and OOHC services. If stable housing with integrated support was provided after any stage where an individual exits an institutional setting, it would be possible to reduce high recidivism rates.

Not only is the human cost of imprisonment devastating for Victorian Aboriginal families, it constitutes an avoidable financial cost burden for the Victorian community. Supported housing for Aboriginal people would pay dividends for the people and for the wider community.

Governments are also increasingly unlikely to meet demand for alcohol and drug counselling for homeless people. Unmet need for these services has almost doubled from around 23% a decade ago to over 40% last year. These failures are extending periods of homelessness and driving more Aboriginal people into the justice and corrections systems. The same pattern of rising failure is evident for unmet demand for mental health services for homeless Victorians, with more than 40% of Aboriginal Victorians denied assistance.

For these programs to be effective, they need to be delivered to people whose housing has been secured, in keeping with the VAHHF Housing First Principle.

MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

- Action 1.2.2 proposed that intensive, culturally appropriate structured case managed approaches drawing in relevant specialist service supports must be sustained and based on need. Those at high risk must receive specialist and intensive housing, community support and pathways, including those experiencing a) mental health b) drug and alcohol c) family violence – victims and people who choose violence d) leaving out of home care (at least 5 years) and/or e) contact with and leaving the justice system.
- Action item 4.2.2 proposed that Government should “provide tailored and targeted support for those at high risk– provide housing, support and pathways for leaving out of home care, leaving justice system.”
- Unfortunately, significant progress has not been made in improving stable, long-term supported post-release housing for Aboriginal prisoners, many of whom are dealing with mental health issues, drug and alcohol issues, family violence and children in care, in addition to the trauma of incarceration.

Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Increase access to housing for people trying to exit the justice system.
2. Reassign part of the corrections asset budget to provisions of post-release housing stock (to be managed by ACCOs and the wider community housing sector).
3. Require that each exiting prisoner has a plan in place providing for 3 months of transitional accommodation.
4. Consult families of people in contact with the justice system on their transition needs.
5. Improve holistic services while in prison in preparation for managing the transition out, including access to housing.
6. Institute a housing first approach for post-release prisoners with support services to enable viable tenancy. Without housing, other support services have limited long-term traction.
7. Put in place integrated, wraparound supports for those trying to put their experience of incarceration behind them.
8. Employ Aboriginal case managers to assist Aboriginal people with the transition from prison and build on the success of ACCOs who have provided this continuity and had good outcomes for community members. In addition to accommodation, this includes:
 - a. Ensuring people have identification papers and some money when they exit
 - b. Connecting them to their mob
 - c. Addressing health issues.
9. Design new investment models, which bring together capital investment in accommodation and culturally appropriate, structured service supports that can make the accommodation for people with complex needs sustainable.
10. Fund and implement new transitional and emergency housing options to respond to the immediate deficit in housing which is driving people back into youth justice and prison settings. Consideration could be given to a DTF Social Impact Bond model of housing people after prison, which participants expect to operate over the coming 2-3 years at a cost of \$30m.
11. Reform Bail laws that incarcerate as a first rather than last resort.
12. Advocate for prisons to be run by Government not private companies from overseas who may have no long-term interest in or accountability for the wellbeing of people in prison or the wider Victorian community.
13. Provide living skills for young Aboriginal people while in youth justice and prison through Youth Justice Care Teams.
14. Embed homelessness of exiting prisoners in the metrics of performance on recidivism of the state's justice agencies given its proven link with re-offending.
15. Make Intake Assessment and Planning culturally safe and ensure it includes an exit plan with secure housing central to transition.
16. Evaluate and expand on successful models such as:
 - a. the H2H program of housing with intensive care packages (5-6 clients with chronic homelessness and recidivism from across their lives since coming into contact with OOH systems have now maintained their properties for a year with great success, they're working and some are out of prison for the longest period in their adult lives).
 - b. Dardi Munwurro is operating in the housing and justice space (limited to urban and regional centres: 12 weeks for 8x males)
 - c. Other models identified by the Aboriginal Justice Forum.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

What are the major housing related issues and challenges your clients face and how do they hamper your ability to resolve their problems? What are the biggest housing related service gaps or system failures you see and what are the results for the people affected?

Is there a lack of support while in prison and justice system?

Are you aware of any existing models here or in other places that might provide a better way of housing the people you work with?

How can we bring together capital investment for housing with the service supports you can provide to create models that will deliver sustainable, stable housing solutions for people with high needs?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.





13

Elders

Policy Context

The population of Elders in Victoria is forecast to grow by 66% between 2021 and 2036 from 5415 to 8971. From 2023, all members of the Stolen Generations in our state will be over 50 years and requiring culturally safe, trauma-informed care. As a state we appear wholly unprepared for these changes.

While the aged care sector has been placed under inordinate pressure by the COVID pandemic, the most recent Royal Commission made clear that it was already a system under enormous stress. The pandemic ruthlessly exposed failures and weaknesses in a variety of aged care setting both mainstream and Aboriginal. Identifying some residential aged care facilities becoming the sites of the highest death rates wrought by COVID in Australia.

Productivity Commission Reports consistently find that Aboriginal people are less likely than any other cohort to receive the aged care assessments which trigger support packages and entry into the supported aged care system. Unlike many CALD groupings, culturally specific aged care offerings are largely absent for Aboriginal Elders. We are aware of only two Aboriginal specific aged care facilities in Victoria (one in Brunswick and one in Shepparton). This was already a problem identified at the 2019 Summit and further investments by Government have not been made.

Imminent future growth in the Elder population increases the urgency of the need for the development of culturally safe aged care to develop. Due to COVID and recent emergency events we have seen rising rental prices occur in metropolitan and regional areas with most notably a growing trend in regional Victoria, coupled with the sale of rental properties in the recent housing boom. This has all contributed to increasing numbers of Elders being pushed into homelessness.

As is well documented, Aboriginal people in Australia carry an unequal burden of morbidity. They are far more likely to develop disabilities as they age and these arise at earlier ages, reinforcing the need for care and support. The community is carrying this burden as, despite higher levels of need, Elders are receiving lower levels of access to aged care support than other seniors.



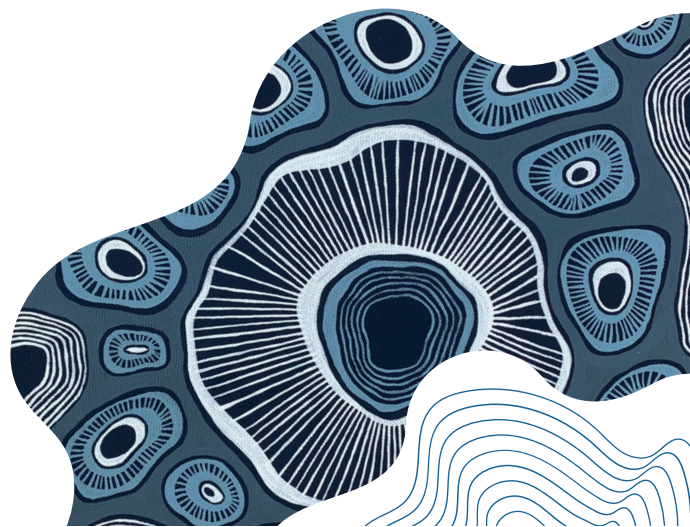
MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

Action 1.2.1 proposed that “clients be supported to navigate integrated housing support pathways and access points”

Action 1.2.2 proposed that “intensive, culturally appropriate structured case managed approaches drawing in relevant specialist service supports must be sustained and based on need. Those at high risk must receive specialist and intensive housing, community support and pathways.”

Action 2.3.2 dealing with special needs housing proposed that the “needs of Elders and clients with disabilities be addressed through special purpose developments.”

Governments have thus far failed to invest in the kinds of special purpose developments for Elders in Victoria advocated by the AHHF.



Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed:

- Document the integrated Aboriginal livable housing aged care concept based on the Rumbalara and ACES models to replicate and expand across the state.
- Provide special purpose developments of Aboriginal owned and managed aged care facilities where Elders can be assured of a culturally safe level of care, consistent with Chapter 7 of the Aged Care Royal Commission (March 2021).
 - a) Undertake feasibility assessments in 2 communities to implement the Aboriginal integrated livable housing aged care concept based on the Rumbalara and ACES model.
- Support the development of an Elders Engagement Framework that increases communications across stakeholders.
- Explore options of capacity and capability for transfer of state government aged care facilities to ACCOs to deliver culturally safe services.
- Support the development of a review to undertake a stocktake of Elder services and support by mainstream services; review the definition of Elder in legislation; scope existing assets; improve data sharing of existing services; scope best practice for housing Elders.
- Improve promotion and investment for ACCOS of existing Elder services, including the increasing of support hours for ACCOS Services existing and new.
- Outline a transitional plan between social housing and Aboriginal aged care at both individual and policy making levels
- Establish a dedicated allocation of VHR housing for Elders and Stolen Generations.
- Establish cultural safety for stolen generations in Elder housing, including in mainstream agencies.
- Government to commit to funding investment for Elder specific services and wraparound support for Elders housing and improve funding for modification of existing properties to enable Elders to use them for as long as possible.
 - a) Undertake a review of properties of Aboriginal social housing renters to identify the need for disability and aged care modifications (and develop a funded works program).

1. Implement recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission (March 2021) in Victoria, where these pertain to Elders, with particular reference to Chapter 7 - "Aged Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People" In particular that:





- a) A guiding Principle of the administration of the Aged Care Act should be that “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to receive support and care that is culturally safe and recognises the importance of their personal connection to community and Country” (Reco 3bxii).
 - b) The Aged Care Commission should have as a core responsibility “ensuring that appropriate aged care services are widely available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (Reco 3, cvi).
 - c) The Aged Care Commission should include an Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commissioner (Reco 4f).
 - d) All recommendations (47-53) of Chapter 7 should be actioned as reforms to create an effective Aboriginal Aged Care system in Australia, enabling ACCOS to become aged care providers, establishing training and employment opportunities, creating discrete funding streams for ACCOs and building safe, accessible pathways into care for Elders.
 - e) If implemented, the Aged Care recommendations would address the need for state and local trained Aboriginal advocates who can facilitate aged care assessments and overcome threshold, gate-keeping barriers to aged care services.
 - f) All Aboriginal & mainstream aged care facilities should have cultural safety plans in place to ensure they have the skills to care for Elders, particularly Stolen Generations (Reco 3bxii).
- 2. Review household income assessments as part of social housing rental policies to obviate the risk that they financially disadvantage Aboriginal Elders who have employed children or grandchildren living with them.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

What are the major housing related issues and challenges your clients face and how do they hamper your ability to resolve their problems?

Are there statistical data sources that you recommend we examine to provide evidence to Government of the extent of these problems?

What are the biggest housing related service gaps or system failures you see and what are the results for the people affected?

Do you have evidence of these failures we can use to make the case to Government?

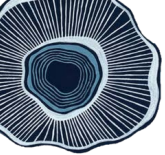
What are the five highest priority actions needed to address these housing related problems?

How can we bring together capital investment for housing with the service supports you can provide to create models that will deliver sustainable, stable housing solutions for people with high needs?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.

14

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)



Policy Context

The National Disability Insurance scheme is designed to support people living with a disability and chronic mental health issues to access the services that would enable them to participate socially and economically in the Australian community.

The NDIS has driven a significant expansion in support for people with a disability but Aboriginal people in Victoria (who are over-represented in having a disability) appear to be missing out on accessing support and specialist accommodation. Aboriginal people with disabilities are not accessing generous NDIS support packages, partly because there is a shortfall in skilled workers to assist them navigate this complex system.

There is also a shortfall of Aboriginal NDIS workers. The Aboriginal National Disability Insurance scheme is designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia living with a disability and chronic mental health issues. As part of this scheme Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) supports four member Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to employ four key identified Aboriginal staff members, across four different regions in Victoria (Loddon/Mallee; Eastern Victoria; Outer Eastern Metro; Western Victoria), known as NDIS Access and Community Linkages workers (or NACL workers).

Whilst an important start, four workers cannot cover the entire state, and there are no Aboriginal Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) providers in Victoria.

While the Aboriginal service system operates on a kinship model, the NDIS does not. Policy reform is required to reshape the NDIS for cultural safety.

Future Directions

In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:

1. Explore NDIS Pathway solutions for Aboriginal people to remain living independently at home, with support.
2. Create an ACCO NDIS Business Model that incorporates becoming a registered Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) provider.
3. Follow up discussions with Homes Victoria CEO regarding First Nations NDIS funding where services are unmet by mainstream providers. This needs to occur through IWG discussion in the first instance to deliver a briefing paper as a basis for action.
4. Undertake an evidence-based gap analysis of Aboriginal Victorians eligible to access NDIS and SDA against those actually accessing services and accommodation.
5. Adopt a preliminary target of 300 eligible NDIS Aboriginal persons to have an SDA and support package by 2030.
6. Support Victorian ACCOs with an interest to become SDA providers to meet registration requirements.
7. Build a list of NDIS experts that can work with ACCOs to become SDA registered, help develop their business model, asset plan and strategic plan to ensure financial viability.
8. Support the recruitment and training of a significant expansion of Aboriginal NDIS workers and set targets to extend packages to Aboriginal users based on gap analysis. This may require funding for capacity building specifically for this purpose.
9. Explore the potential to create a kinship model based on Aboriginal cultural values and self-determination as part of the NDIS Independent Living Option.
10. Commit to a target of Aboriginal Victorians eligible for NDIS SDAs and create pathways for these people to access appropriate specialist disability housing.
11. Provide ACCO access to the NDIS Data Dashboard as it relates to Aboriginal Victorians to assist in accountability, design, planning and implementation of new service access, consistent with data sovereignty commitments in the current Closing the Gap Agreement.
12. Advocate for other structural reforms to make the NDIS and SDAs culturally safe as required.

Discussion Prompts at 2022 Summit

These future directions arose out of discussion at the Summit in response to the following questions.

What are the major housing related issues and challenges your clients face and how do they hamper your ability to resolve their problems?

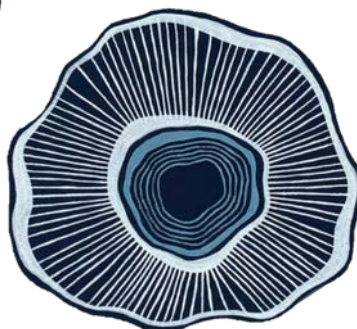
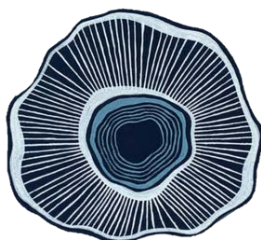
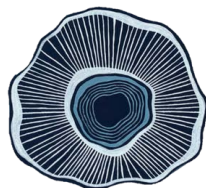
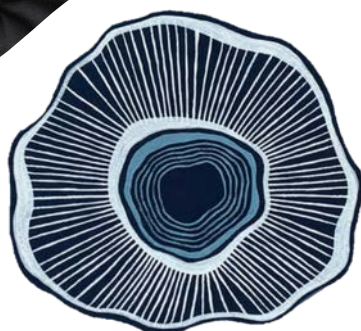
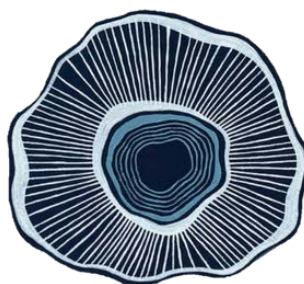
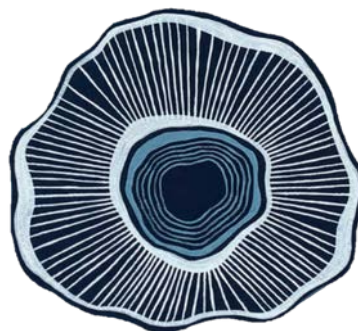
Are there statistical data sources that you recommend we examine to provide evidence to Government of the extent of these problems?

What are the biggest housing related service gaps or system failures you see and what are the results for the people affected?

Do you have evidence of these failures we can use to make the case to Government?

How can we bring together capital investment for housing with the service supports you can provide to create models that will deliver sustainable, stable housing solutions for people with high needs?

More detail of the discussion at the Workshop is available in Appendix 1 of the report.





15

Housing Young People at Risk

Policy Context



In 2020, Aboriginal children were 15 times more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be on care and protection orders in Victoria. Each year in Victoria around 80 Aboriginal young people leave the out of home care system and many subsequently become homeless. In a report released in April 2020 – *Children at the Intersection of Child Protection and Youth Justice Across Victoria* – it was revealed that 1,938 of 5,063 (or 38%) of all children and young people sentenced or diverted in the justice system in the calendar years 2016 and 2017 had been the subject of a child protection report. Of these only 2 per cent had contact with the justice system before encountering the child protection system. The same report found that the more carers a child had, the more likely they were to appear in court.

Aboriginal children are vastly over-represented in both out of home care and juvenile justice systems, often setting them on a path toward truncated, trauma-filled lives. Safe, secure housing options would help break these cycles. To end the clear intersection between entering and exiting Out-of-home Care (OoHC), child protection services and contact with the criminal justice system, housing insecurity for Aboriginal young people and their parents must be addressed. The State Government's *Beyond 18: Longitudinal Study on Young People Leaving Care* revealed that those closest to children transitioning from care (carers and case managers) identify safe and affordable housing as the single most critical need for these young people. Despite this, housing is the need least likely to be met. It appears that a majority of these young people present in the homelessness system after leaving care, making up around 2% of SHS clients.

The deficit in safe, affordable housing options is escalating despite the clear risk of incarceration, drug dependency, early unplanned pregnancies (resulting in child removal) and homelessness of failing to provide adequate housing to young people exiting care.

Finding 20 of the 2021 *Our Youth Our Way* Report by the Aboriginal Youth Commissioner was that: "A significant proportion of Aboriginal children and young people in the youth justice system experience housing insecurity. For some young people, insecure housing and involvement in the youth justice system are directly linked. Supported accommodation can assist these young people to stay out of the youth justice system." Of all the home seekers appearing in the SHS system young singles are amongst the least likely to be able to be assisted. There are many reasons for this:

- a) They usually lack employment (the second highest need after housing identified by carers in the surveys cited above is a job).
- b) Neither Jobseeker payment nor Youth Allowance provide income capable of buying rental accommodation anywhere in Victoria.
- c) There is a shortfall in the provision of 1-bedroom units in the profile of social housing because these are the most expensive to build and subject to the highest demand.
- d) Mothers with dependent children leaving family violence are given priority over single young people in social housing.
- e) Few models are funded in Victoria where sufficient wraparound support can be provided to a young person lacking life skills to maintain a tenancy – the Housing First Model which has proven successful in many jurisdictions is largely non-existent in Victoria.
- f) These young people, in addition to lacking adequate income, often have no rental history to compete in the private market.
- g) Few niche models are available to young singles – Youth Foyers for example only provide for 236 beds statewide (tenure is for a maximum of 2 years) and some care leavers and ex young offenders are disqualified even from these limited offerings.
- h) These young people often have few adult advocates despite the ACCOs, which work heroically to assist them against great odds.

However, it is not just young people in contact with tertiary institutions who are at risk. Those young people not fully engaged in education and training in the 15-24 age group are at risk of long-term unemployment and attendant poverty. The new National Agreement on Closing the Gap specifies a target to increase the proportion of Indigenous Australians aged 15–24 engaged in employment or education to 67% by 2031. The baseline data for this new target was derived from the 2016 Census, and the 2016 Indigenous rate was 57% compared with 80% for non-Indigenous 15–24 year-olds. Providing safe, stable housing for young people in this age cohort is critical to achieving this target.

MANA-NA WOORN-TYEEN MAAR-TAKOORT POLICY FRAMEWORK: PROPOSED ACTIONS AND STATUS

Action 1.2.2 of the Framework proposed that “Intensive, culturally appropriate structured case managed approaches drawing in relevant specialist service supports must be sustained and based on need. “Those at high risk must receive specialist and intensive housing, community support and pathways, including those experiencing:

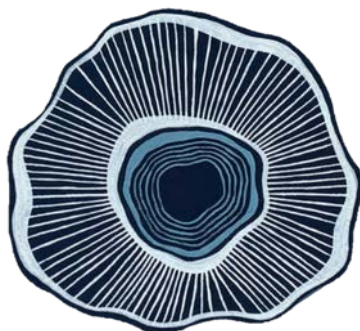
- a) Mental health
- b) Drug and alcohol
- c) Family violence – victims and people who choose violence
- d) Leaving out of home care (at least 5 years) and/or
- e) Contact with and leaving the justice system

Action item 4.2.2 of the Framework proposed that the Government “Provide tailored and targeted support for those at high risk– provide housing, support and pathways for leaving out of home care and leaving justice system.” This kind of housing underpinned by intensive support services has not been put in place for vulnerable young Aboriginal people, despite AHV’s strong advocacy through relevant commissions and inquiries.

Future Directions

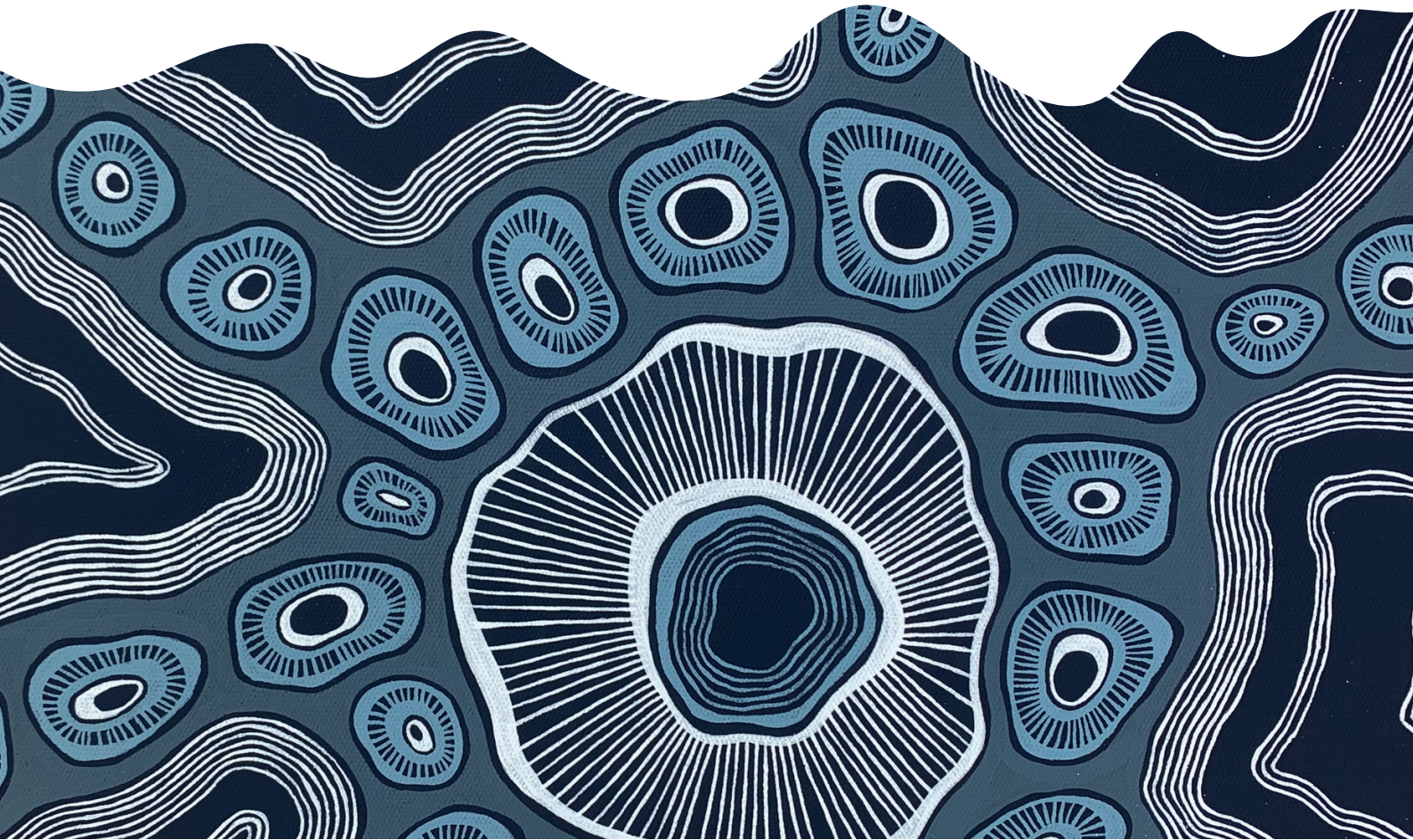
In response to current policy settings, the following Future Directions were proposed by Summit participants:


1. Implement the two accommodation related recommendations of the Aboriginal Youth Justice Commissioner’s Our Youth Our Way Report.
 - a. That the Victorian Government establish Aboriginal community-controlled crisis accommodation for Aboriginal children and young people in every region, informed by the model provided by Nungurra Youth Accommodation Services. (Recommendation 43)
 - b. That the Victorian Government establish at least 4 Aboriginal community-controlled youth foyers across the state, with consideration given to 3 regional locations and one metropolitan location. (Recommendation 44)
2. Make available the option to support care leavers to age 21 (The Final Stretch) for all young Aboriginal people who seek this option.
3. Extend existing small scale programs with potential to assist young people leaving care, using those identified in the summit discussion paper as a starting point for exploration (noting most are transitional).
4. Advocate for an increase in Commonwealth Youth Allowance and rent assistance in recognition that no rental properties in Victoria are affordable to a single on Youth Allowance (see Anglicare March 2022 Rental Snapshot).
5. Provide adequate support to Aboriginal organisations delivering the Aboriginal Leaving Care program and assist them to make connections with housing providers who can meet the accommodation needs of the young people they are attempting to assist.





6. Consider the following Principles in working with young people leaving care:

- a) All young people leaving care or youth justice and protective services facilities should have a leaving care plan.
 - b) Affordable, long-term housing should be at the apex of all leaving care plans.
 - c) Support services must be ongoing for young people as they leave care.
 - d) Family – Culture – Community: these are what keep Aboriginal people strong. If family is missing, culture and community must step in.
 - e) Young people should not be “turfed out” of care early and extended care should be pursued wherever possible.
 - f) It is essential for the community to create relationships with young people before they leave care. The system should support and facilitate this.
 - g) Getting young people back home before they reach the age of 18 should be an aspiration.
 - h) Leaving care plans should include a cultural component, including returning to country.
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Summit Recommendations

Housing as a base for Life

1. Advocate that Government formally adopt a Housing First principle for assisting homeless people stabilise their lives, underpinned by wraparound support services.
2. Propose additional targets within CtG and the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework to align them with the VAHHF targets, starting with the headline target to reduce homelessness in Victoria by 10% per annum over ten years.
3. Implement the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homeless System in Victoria, ensuring case management is in place for homeless service clients who require it.
4. Advocate for a major investment to bring the More Than A Landlord (MTAL) Program to scale so that it can benefit all AHV social housing tenants
5. Establish an Aboriginal-specific Housing Advisory Service to assist Aboriginal people navigate their housing options in a complex housing market.
6. Maintain or increase the 10% target of Government social housing investment directed to the Aboriginal community.
7. Make social housing an integrated program delivery platform from which we can reduce Aboriginal inequality and disadvantage.
8. Provide greater resources for ACCOs to deliver integrated, trauma-informed services to Aboriginal people in culturally safe ways, integrated with secure housing.
9. Measure and quantify the financial cost of homelessness, including the cost on other service systems to strengthen the benefit cost argument for more effective intervention. Increase accountability by linking housing, education, health and intergenerational poverty data and demonstrate savings from investment in housing.
10. Incorporate housing security into the Commonwealth Wellbeing Budget.
11. Use the Melbourne University findings of MTAL to inform better support practices in mainstream housing providers.
12. Support RMIT and the Government in undertaking workforce development for the homelessness sector for better recognition, attraction, retention and professionalisation.
13. Engage more skilled case managers to work with people with complex needs. In other states this is happening with some success.
14. Build on the successful elements of the Homelessness to the Home initiative with housing and support packages. Participants believe this program “had the will, the funding, and levers in the systems to actually create change for the chronically homeless (included 290 Aboriginal people)”.
15. Reform housing registration needs to provide access for Aboriginal providers. The links to Treaty gives Aboriginal community a stronger basis for renegotiating differently in this housing provision space.
16. Assist more ACCOs to explore options for accreditation and expand their service offering of supported housing, linked to culturally safe, trauma-informed services.
17. Explore new models of partnership between ACCOs and mainstream social housing providers that enable ACCOs to maintain ownership of social housing stock, piggybacking on mainstream agency tenancy regulation.

Social Housing Supply

1. Seek to secure a new pipeline of investment in social housing on a scale to arrest rising homelessness.
 - a. Increase the percentage of social housing investment for Aboriginal people ("a minimum 300 houses a year for a decade" was suggested)
2. Establish additional supply-related targets for Closing the Gap, such as:
 - a. Reducing the number of Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness by 10 per cent per annum
 - b. Increase housing stock owned and managed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.
3. Lobby the Commonwealth to create actionable National Homeless and Housing supply targets in the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and add a schedule for outcomes with timelines to drive change for Aboriginal people.
 - a. Target that a minimum of 10% of all new investment in housing and homelessness should be directed to Aboriginal outcomes
 - b. That a minimum of 10% investments in new housing should result in Aboriginal ownership of new housing
4. Lobby the Commonwealth to better target Commonwealth Rental Assistance to those low income households experiencing rental stress.
5. Secure funding through the Commonwealth to prioritise Aged Care accommodation for our community.
6. Step up efforts to secure a larger share of mainstream community housing units for Aboriginal families
 - Develop models for true, respectful, equitable and trusting partnerships between Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and Community Housing Providers.
7. Explore joint housing development ventures with mainstream social and private providers.
8. Secure increased funding commitments from the Victorian government for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to build housing linked to a community employment strategy.
9. Deliver a management transfer of Aboriginal public housing, based on choice, to Aboriginal community housing providers to accelerate growth and scale in the Aboriginal community housing sector.
10. Pursue council rate relief on a Council by Council basis (rebates are allowable under the Local Government Act) and invest savings in more Aboriginal controlled social housing.
11. Governments to treat social and affordable housing as essential social infrastructure and adopt a regular, reliable revenue stream to provide long term funding certainty for new Aboriginal housing supply matched to need.
 - a. State Government to invest 2.1% of Land Tax into community housing stock owned and managed by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, in recognition that sovereignty of the land was never relinquished.
12. Pursue opportunities to build social housing on unused Aboriginal land through partnership ventures with philanthropy.
13. Persuade the Government to agree to designate a proportion of Aboriginal social housing when selling vacant land to developers.
14. Advocate for returned soldier settlements for Aboriginal people and their families to be negotiated to right historic wrongs as part of Treaty
15. Pursue a new investment deal in social housing as an arm of Treaty negotiations.
16. Remove disincentives for people (especially Elders caring for grandchildren) in social housing to work and lift their incomes.

Private Rental

1. Fund the expansion of the APRAP pilot program ongoing, state wide, at scale. Roles must be properly resourced.
2. Propose that the Government implement recommendations from the Residential Tenancies Commissioner to tackle discrimination in the private rental market, based on findings from the Excluded from the Start Report.
3. Support a significant increase in Commonwealth income support payments and rent assistance (30-50%) to restore capacity to achieve CRA's policy objective of making rental housing affordable to people on benefits.
4. Create sustainable incentives for ethical investment in affordable build to rent schemes to rapidly increase supply. This includes income and land tax concessions for affordable rental investment, addressing impediments for institutional investors.
5. Seek Government support to provide training opportunities for more Aboriginal real estate agents to reduce racial discrimination in the private rental market and offer cultural safety training with existing agents to help with early intervention to resolve issues which may place a tenancy at risk.
6. Reform legislation to provide greater legal protection for tenants who are vulnerable to eviction.
7. Build capacity in the private rental market to support Aboriginal Victorian's accessing private rental through brokerage and head leasing arrangements.
8. Adopt the Framework proposal for a Koori-list at VCAT for tenancy dispute hearings, noting around 40% of people seeking homeless assistance are facing a housing crisis often resulting from eviction and few evictions are contested, and continue to build on existing VCAT practice to support Aboriginal renters.
9. Build in greater opportunity for VCAT to stand matters down, to give more time for resolution and to link to wraparound supports to tenancies at risk to prevent avoidable homelessness.
10. Improve information for tenants across the entire renting journey, including on their legal rights and responsibilities in forms they can easily access and understand. For example, the Aboriginal Tenants at Risk program could be expanded beyond the Northern and Western regions of Melbourne to support people wherever they live in Victoria.
11. Work with the VEOHRC to ensure there are consequences for real estate agents engaging in discriminatory action.
12. Consider incentives for home owners to put pressure on private rental estate agents to support tenancy applications from our vulnerable community members.
13. Advocate the establishment of a mechanism to intercede in Centrepay cancellation to argue for suspension instead as a first response to a breach.
14. Other Framework proposals not yet adopted by Government should also inform next steps.

Treaty Outcomes and Housing

1. Create overarching policy for investment into housing and homelessness that can be secured through Treaty. Treaties must assert greater power and control over our housing both as individuals and community – First Peoples in the drivers seat for First Peoples housing and homelessness.
2. Explore the application of Treaty for land acquisition, land transfer as part of Treaty agreements. First Peoples have always associated land as home, so any discussion about securing Country must consider infrastructure for houses to enable First Peoples to live on Country.
3. Engage with Aboriginal people / Aboriginal community outside of Traditional Owners groups for input to the Treaty process on achieving housing outcomes.
4. Propose that the Assembly participate, along with AHV, in discussions with local government on Treaty and housing to establish a framework for trilateral agreements to deal with planning, land tax exemptions for rates and more as part of Statewide Treaty.
5. Engage Treaty to support introduction of an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system based on the Blueprint developed by the community.

6. Explore the use of Treaty to reinforce accountability to the Aboriginal community for housing programs, services and human outcomes.
7. The community must initiate and lead the conversations for what could be done now on housing in the context of the Treaty, rather than passively letting the process evolve.
8. The concept of “home” be a central pillar for treaty reform encapsulating housing, family supports, education and wealth generation.

Housing Sector Capacity Building

1. Summit participants discussed and endorsed a 20 year vision for the Aboriginal community housing sector.

The Aboriginal community housing sector is comprised of a diverse range of Aboriginal organisations providing community housing to their communities. First and foremost, this includes registered Aboriginal housing agencies formally providing community housing. It also includes ACCOs and Traditional Owner organisations that own housing managing it as community housing for Aboriginal Victorians.

20-year vision for a unified and vibrant Victorian Aboriginal community housing sector delivering high quality services and housing equity within a generation.

Our vision is for a unified, strong, financially viable, self-determining Aboriginal housing sector that, over the next 20 years, is a significant contributor to ensuring every Aboriginal Victorian has a home. This will be achieved through providing community housing as part of a pipeline out of homelessness and towards private rental and home ownership for all Aboriginal Victorians.

Over the next 20 years, our aim is for Aboriginal community housing agencies to become self-determining, financially viable, independent organisations that deliver high-quality affordable housing to low-income Aboriginal Victorians.

As experts in the delivery of culturally responsive tenancy and property services to the Aboriginal community, these housing agencies will be resourced to provide case management support to sustain tenancies for vulnerable families and individuals and to ensure tenants are provided with wraparound supports when needed. They will also be resourced to provide support and assistance to tenants on their pathway to building better lives, including those who choose housing independence through private rental and home ownership.

These sophisticated organisations will be capable of meeting community housing regulatory requirements and performance standards commensurate with the level of complexity of their business activities and operational risks. They will also demonstrate high levels of governance with strong skills-based Boards and experienced executives with the requisite legal, financial, asset management, and tenancy and community housing skills.

As accomplished innovators in the delivery of housing to the Aboriginal community, these housing agencies will be able to leverage their core community housing capabilities and assets to deliver growth in housing supply for the Aboriginal community. They will also be adept at accessing funding and developing and delivering unique community housing models that encompass individual and collective community home ownership, as well as programs that improve Aboriginal Victorians' access to private rental and individual home ownership.

Aboriginal community housing agencies aim to be responsive to the housing needs and aspirations of Victoria's Aboriginal communities. They are individually connected both to their clients and their communities, and are collectively united as powerful and effective advocates providing high-quality and actionable advice on Aboriginal housing policy reform and implementation. They are also strategic in their partnerships with each other, local councils, mainstream housing and service agencies, philanthropic organisations, developers, builders and financiers – all of which bring in additional value to advance Aboriginal housing objectives and outcomes.



2. The high level directions of an Aboriginal community housing capacity building plan to achieve the long term Aboriginal community housing sector vision were discussed and agreed.

1. Supporting Aboriginal community housing owners self-determination
 - Building Boards and senior managers awareness and understanding of housing markets and the community housing regulatory system
2. Pathways to registration - Supporting Aboriginal housing providers to register
 - Support through the registration process
3. Building organisational capacity, supporting Aboriginal housing providers to build housing governance capacity
 - Building governance capacities
 - Building property and tenancy management capacity
4. Building capacity to grow housing. Informing, educating and supporting decision making and choices on how to build housing
 - Building capacity to partner in developments
 - Building development capacity of organisations
5. Strengthening the Aboriginal housing workforce
6. Strong Partnerships
 - Building strength through collaboration
 - Partnering with local government to strengthen local housing delivery
7. Shaping the Aboriginal community housing sector
 - Improve communication and access to information across the Aboriginal community housing sector
 - Strengthen Aboriginal community housing leadership
 - A strong Aboriginal voice: advocacy and policy
 - Leading Aboriginal community housing capacity building

3. Develop and fund the delivery of an Aboriginal community housing capacity building plan, including fully resourcing the AHHF Secretariat to maintain the AHHF's strong Aboriginal policy and advocacy voice and leadership in strengthening the sector.

4. Fund the development of an Aboriginal work force training and development plan. The plan would address the need to reshape the role of housing workers to incorporate skills beyond tenancy management, including proactive life coaching and intensive case management of high risk clients in sustaining tenancies. This program would build the capacity for Aboriginal providers (ACCOs) to become entry and referral points into the housing and homeless service system.

5. Explore the transfer of ownership of public housing stock to ACCOs as a critical platform for the development of a viable, scaled up Aboriginal housing sector in our state. To achieve this requires the Government to engage with interested ACCOs to achieve registration and begin to trade in the market and build their portfolios.

6. Consider grants to enable partnerships with mainstream housing agencies: ACCOs require assistance to put in place the organisational conditions required to partner with Housing Agencies (both AHV and mainstream providers) to provide the social housing required by their communities more immediately. The funding of grants administered by Government could pair ACCOs with mainstream housing providers to build cultural safety in mainstream providers and develop housing management and development capability in ACCOs with established housing portfolios. Partnerships must give primacy to self-determination.

7. Extend the timeline for ACCOs interested in exploring feasibility studies and business cases for expanding housing services or partnership opportunities to share land for social housing.

8. The Housing Regulator and Homes Victoria to put in place supports to assist ACCOs with an interest in achieving housing registration within existing policy settings to do so. This should include removing of unnecessary compliance barriers to registration and recognize the range of other compliance required from ACCOs as part of their wider service offering.

9. Housing Registrar to consider fit-for-purpose registration for smaller scale ACCOs, such as exists in other jurisdictions, in keeping with recommendations of the Social Housing Regulatory Review Interim Report of late 2021. Compliance, viability and the capacity to maintain registration are all considerations for smaller services. Work is required to streamline compliance requirements across total provision: family violence, housing, health etc.

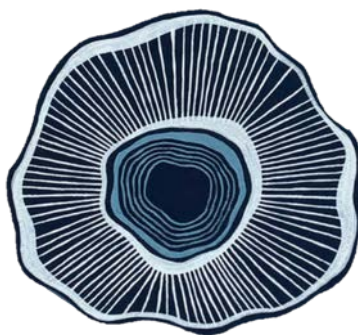
10. Investigate whether there are ways in which ACCOs without registration can provide effective housing services.

11. Explore the development of a modest funding stream for ACCOs to slowly build scale until full registration becomes viable.

12. Build cultural safety conditions into housing registration for mainstream providers. In keeping with advice from AHV and ACCOs, the Social Housing Regulatory Review Panel has recommended, in its first Interim Report, that all social housing providers should satisfy cultural safety criteria as a condition of accreditation. The Government should revise the Regulations to implement this recommendation.

13. Work with CHIA Vic to develop a communication and engagement plan to enable us to work in partnership with the mainstream community housing sector to build our respective capabilities.

Homelessness



1. Adopt the Blueprint for an Aboriginal-specific Homeless System in Victoria to implement the system reforms developed by the AHHF and articulated in the Blueprint.

2. Implement a new approach to screening: A 'no wrong door' approach distributes entry into the homelessness system amongst various front-line stakeholders, including other social services.

3. Establish Open Entry Points: Resource a network of ACCOs across Victoria to be 'front doors' into an Aboriginal-specific homelessness system. Work should begin immediately to identify ACCOs to lead this work and to upskill them. Adopt the proposed IAP tools immediately to confer cultural safety.

4. Provide culturally safe support services, which are linked to properties, to Aboriginal people experiencing homelessness. Provide support to navigate the complexities of the system, including housing, mental health, justice, child protection, Centrelink and so on. The best way to deliver this may be through healing, wraparound services delivered by ACCOs that are strengths based and resilience focused.

5. Provide adequate quantity and quality of housing specifically for Aboriginal Victorians through the Big Housing Build to enable choice and culturally safe living arrangements, including social and affordable, crisis and transitional accommodation.

6. Leverage leased and rented properties in the private market to reduce time in transitional or crisis accommodation.

7. Build on and extend duration of existing post-exit supports to ensure transitions into longer term social housing, private rental or home ownership is well-managed and supported.
8. Support Aboriginal Victorians in approaching and engaging with the service of their choice and in culturally safe ways.
9. Institute a single or integrated Aboriginal controlled steward for the system; to oversee, monitor and ensure integration of housing and support consistent with self-determination as the guiding principle.
10. Embed a local commissioning approach, and create a devolved model of shared decision-making between community and government.
11. Establish flexible support packages, which can be allocated through local level commissioning based on the needs of individual communities.
12. Establish cross-sectoral cooperation with organisations engaged in an alliance or network of organisations at a regional or community level across the state.
13. Capacity Building: Implement an ongoing program for cultural safety, to ensure all services are culturally safe. This could include a program for co-location of staff to ensure reciprocal capacity building on-the-job with the mainstream to mirror ACCO wraparound services and actively eradicate systemic racism; and an ACCO-specific capacity building program or network to build ACCO capacity.
14. Implement an effective data and CRM system that supports a single view of the client to prevent re-telling of their story, and enables system-wide performance improvement, leveraging the existing work being undertaken by Homes Vic.
15. Redesign and recommission Aboriginal hostels and partner with an Aboriginal organisation to develop properties to ensure Aboriginal Victorians have culturally safe housing options.
16. Partner with VACCA and other mainstream organisation to implement an Aboriginal youth foyer model in two agreed locations to determine demand and uptake for wider roll out.

Home Ownership

1. Develop an Aboriginal Home Ownership Hub that can be a resource to individuals and ACCOs to:
 - Increase understanding of how to get into the housing market
 - Build skills to manage & maintain homes & finances
 - Develop new home ownership models
 - Develop a panel of culturally safe experts to advise on and support Aboriginal home ownership.
2. Pilot and establish a scalable Aboriginal Rent to Buy program where Aboriginal people can build equity in a property, initially through renting (based on existing models) that would incorporate:
 - A five year rental period
 - Assistance with saving for a deposit, low interest loan & reducing debt
 - Opportunity to enter into shared equity at the end of 5 years or purchase outright.
3. Establish an Aboriginal-specific shared equity program or provide strong pathways to mainstream programs where the Government pays part of the deposit and retains a share of equity in homes owned by Aboriginal Victorians.



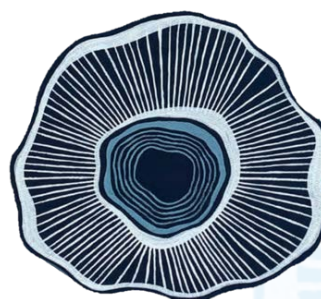
4. Explore Home Ownership options using Aboriginal-owned land to meet a share of equity and offset costs, including community land trusts.
5. Review recommended actions from the Framework that have not been progressed to test viability.
6. Advocate for an end to negative gearing on residential property, which allows investors an unfair competitive advantage over owner-occupiers in being able to offset net rental loss against other income earned in a way not available to people seeking to buy a home for shelter.
7. Advocate to introduce a tax offset on borrowing costs for owner-occupiers on low incomes, based on the US taxation model.

Family Violence

1. Fund and build more long-term supported accommodation for women and children leaving violent relationships, with housing that is well designed and flexible to meet the safety and family needs of these women and children. A number of models were identified as having potential:
 - a. The Safe Haven Rapid Housing Approach – this involves a head lease support for 12 months, then women take on the tenancy – support is provided in obtaining employment and with wraparound services (participants believe it has a 90% success rate)
 - b. Kids Undercover adds units to the back of properties (but this requires a designated maintenance authority)
 - c. Housing options for Grandparents who care for children are required.
2. Fund and build more Aboriginal-run refuges auspiced by ACCOs where safe, culturally embedded, holistic healing is the primary goal. Wraparound health, mental health and family related services would be provided. This would reduce the risk of Aboriginal women returning to violent relationships.
3. Direct Orange door funding back to ACCO's so that funding can be exercised consistent with self-determination and made available to meet need.
4. Audit Family Violence models across the state and identify best practice that can be deployed as a basis for wider application. Document case studies of 'above and beyond' ACCO led work. Create networks for sharing best practice for providing refuge and supporting families experiencing violence.
5. Review the allocation of flexible family violence funding packages to enable safe relocation from dangerous relationships and assess whether they are equitably allocated and whether further or better allocation is required.
6. Extend effective private rental assistance programs to assist people leaving violent relationships.
7. Consider outcomes of trials of existing models by Dhelk Dja (including a trial in St Kilda) addressing the housing needs of men who use violence. Many of these men require support to deal with complex issues that contribute to their violent behaviour.
8. Embed cultural safety in mainstream family violence services to mirror ACCO service cultural safety
9. Investigate solutions to current inequities in the system, including:
 - Women being required to pay for damage caused by men
 - Racism as a barrier to services
 - Break up of families in circumstances where this is not needed and causes further trauma
 - Lack of support options for families with older boys (12+).
 - Provide more services with wraparound support for people with mental illness and disabilities to reduce rates of family violence.
 - Assist family violence survivors with letters of support to advocate their access to private tenancies and explain poor rental records owing to violence victimisation. Build on new protections available in the revised Residential Tenancy Act for non-discrimination.

Housing People in contact with the Justice System

1. Increase access to housing for people trying to exit the justice system.
2. Reassign part of the corrections asset budget to provisions of post-release housing stock (to be managed by ACCOs and the wider community housing sector).
3. Require that each exiting prisoner has a plan in place providing for 3 months of transitional accommodation.
4. Consult families of people in contact with the justice system on their transition needs.
5. Improve holistic services while in prison in preparation for managing the transition out, including access to housing.
6. Institute a housing first approach for post-release prisoners with support services to enable viable tenancy. Without housing, other support services have limited long-term traction.
7. Put in place integrated, wraparound supports for those trying to put their experience of incarceration behind them.
8. Employ Aboriginal case managers to assist Aboriginal people with the transition from prison and build on the success of ACCOs who have provided this continuity and had good outcomes for community members. In addition to accommodation, this includes:
 - a. Ensuring people have identification papers and some money when they exit
 - b. Connecting them to their mob
 - c. Addressing health issues.
9. Design new investment models, which bring together capital investment in accommodation and culturally appropriate, structured service supports that can make the accommodation for people with complex needs sustainable.
10. Fund and implement new transitional and emergency housing options to respond to the immediate deficit in housing which is driving people back into youth justice and prison settings. Consideration could be given to a DTF Social Impact Bond model of housing people after prison, which participants expect to operate over the coming 2-3 years at a cost of \$30m.
11. Reform Bail laws that incarcerate as a first rather than last resort.
12. Advocate for prisons to be run by Government not private companies from overseas who may have no long-term interest in or accountability for the wellbeing of people in prison or the wider Victorian community.
13. Provide living skills for young Aboriginal people while in youth justice and prison through Youth Justice Care Teams.
14. Embed homelessness of exiting prisoners in the metrics of performance on recidivism of the state's justice agencies given its proven link with re-offending.
15. Make Intake Assessment and Planning culturally safe, and ensure it includes an exit plan with secure housing central to transition.
16. Evaluate and expand on successful models such as:
 - a) the H2H program of housing with intensive care packages (5-6 clients with chronic homelessness and recidivism from across their lives since coming into contact with OOHHC systems have now maintained their properties for a year with great success, they're working and some are out of prison for the longest period in their adult lives).
 - b) Dardi Munwurro is operating in the housing and justice space (limited to urban and regional centres: 12 weeks for 8x males)
 - c) Other models identified by the Aboriginal Justice Forum.

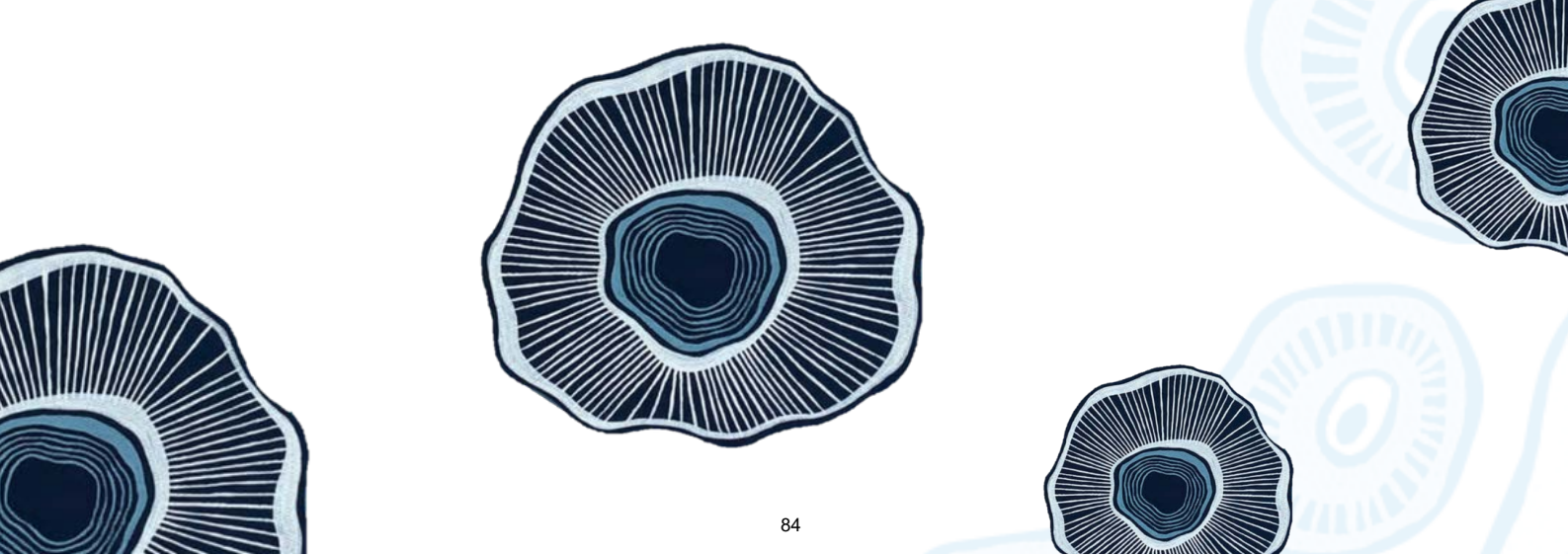


Elders

1. Document the integrated Aboriginal livable housing aged care concept based on the Rumbalara and ACES models to replicate and expand across the state.
2. Provide special purpose developments of Aboriginal owned and managed aged care facilities where Elders can be assured of a culturally safe level of care, consistent with Chapter 7 of the Aged Care Royal Commission (March 2021).
 - a.Undertake feasibility assessments in 2 communities to implement the Aboriginal integrated livable housing aged care concept based on the Rumbalara and ACES model.
3. Support the development of an Elders Engagement Framework that increases communications across stakeholders.
4. Explore options of capacity and capability for transfer of state government aged care facilities to ACCOs to deliver culturally safe services.
5. Support the development of a review to undertake a stocktake of Elder services and support by mainstream services; review the definition of Elder in legislation; scope existing assets; improve data sharing of existing services; scope best practice for housing Elders.
6. Improve promotion and investment for ACCOS of existing Elder services, including the increasing of support hours for ACCOs Services existing and new.
7. Outline a transitional plan between social housing and Aboriginal aged care at both individual and policy making levels.
8. Establish a dedicated allocation of Victorian Housing Register (VHR) housing for Elders and Stolen Generations.
9. Establish cultural safety for Stolen Generations in Elder housing, including in mainstream agencies.
10. Government to commit to funding investment for Elder specific services and wraparound support for Elders housing and improve funding for modification of existing properties to enable Elders to use them for as long as possible.
 - a.Undertake a review of properties of Aboriginal social housing renters to identify the need for disability and aged care modifications (and develop a funded works program).
11. Implement recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission (March 2021) in Victoria, where these pertain to Elders, with particular reference to Chapter 7 -“Aged Care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People”. In particular that:
 - a. A guiding Principle of the administration of the Aged Care Act should be that “Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are entitled to receive support and care that is culturally safe and recognises the importance of their personal connection to community and Country” (Reco 3bxii).
 - b. The Aged Care Commission should have as a core responsibility “ensuring that appropriate aged care services are widely available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples” (Reco 3, cvi).
 - c. The Aged Care Commission should include an Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Commissioner (Reco 4f).
 - d. All recommendations (47-53) of Chapter 7 should be actioned as reforms to create an effective Aboriginal Aged Care system in Australia, enabling ACCOs to become aged care providers, establishing training and employment opportunities, creating discrete funding streams for ACCOs and building safe, accessible pathways into care for Elders.
 - e. If implemented, the Aged Care recommendations would address the need for state and local trained Aboriginal advocates who can facilitate aged care assessments and overcome threshold, gate-keeping barriers to aged care services.
 - f. All Aboriginal & mainstream aged care facilities should have cultural safety plans in place to ensure they have the skills to care for Elders, particularly Stolen Generations (Reco 3bxii).
12. Review household income assessments as part of social housing rental policies to obviate the risk of financially disadvantage Aboriginal Elders who have employed children or grandchildren living with them.

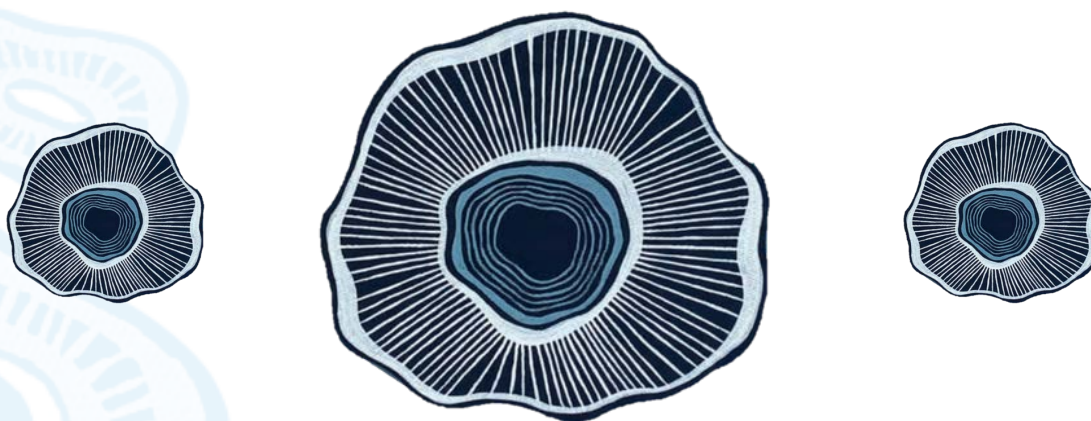


National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

1. Explore NDIS Pathway solutions for Aboriginal people to remain living independently at home, with support.
 2. Create an ACCO NDIS Business Model that includes pathways to becoming a registered Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) provider.
 3. Follow up discussions with Homes Victoria CEO regarding First Nations NDIS funding where services are unmet by mainstream providers. This needs to occur through IWG discussion in the first instance to deliver a briefing paper as a basis for action.
 4. Undertake an evidence-based gap analysis of Aboriginal Victorians who are eligible to access NDIS and SDA against those actually accessing services and accommodation.
 5. Adopt a preliminary target of 300 eligible NDIS Aboriginal Victorians to have an SDA and support package by 2030.
 6. Support Victorian ACCOs with an interest to become SDA providers to meet registration requirements.
 7. Build a list of NDIS experts that can work with ACCOs to become SDA registered, help develop their business model, asset plan and strategic plan to ensure financial viability.
 8. Support the recruitment and training of a significant expansion of Aboriginal NDIS workers and set targets to extend packages to Aboriginal users based on gap analysis. This may require funding for capacity building specifically for this purpose.
 9. Explore the potential to create a kinship model based on Aboriginal cultural values and self-determination as part of the NDIS Independent Living Option.
 10. Commit to a target of Aboriginal Victorians eligible for NDIS SDAs and create pathways for these people to access appropriate specialist disability housing.
 11. Provide ACCO access to the NDIS Data Dashboard as it relates to Aboriginal Victorians to assist in accountability, design, planning and implementation of new service access, consistent with data sovereignty commitments in the current Closing the Gap Agreement.
 12. Advocate for other structural reforms to make the NDIS and SDAs culturally safe as required.
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Housing Young People at Risk

1. Implement the two accommodation related recommendations of the Aboriginal Youth Justice Commissioner's Our Youth Our Way Report.
 - a. That the Victorian Government establish Aboriginal community-controlled crisis accommodation for Aboriginal children and young people in every region, informed by the model provided by Nungurra Youth Accommodation Services. (Recommendation 43)
 - b. That the Victorian Government establish at least 4 Aboriginal community-controlled youth foyers across the state, with consideration given to 3 regional locations and one metropolitan location. (Recommendation 44)
2. Make available the option to support care leavers to age 21 (The Final Stretch) for all young Aboriginal people who seek this option.
3. Extend existing small scale programs with potential to assist young people leaving care, using those identified in the summit discussion paper as a starting point for exploration (noting most are transitional).



4. Advocate for an increase in Commonwealth Youth Allowance and rent assistance in recognition that no rental properties in Victoria are affordable to a single on Youth Allowance (see Anglicare March 2022 Rental Snapshot).
5. Provide adequate support to Aboriginal organisations delivering the Aboriginal Leaving Care program and assist them to make connections with housing providers who can meet the accommodation needs of the young people they are attempting to assist.
6. Consider the following Principles in working with young people leaving care:
 - a. All young people leaving care or youth justice and protective services facilities should have a leaving care plan.
 - b. Affordable, long-term housing should be at the apex of all leaving care plans.
 - c. Support services must be ongoing for young people as they leave care.
 - d. Family – Culture – Community: these are what keep Aboriginal people strong. If family is missing, culture and community must step in.
 - e. Young people should not be “turfed out” of care early and extended care should be pursued wherever possible.
 - f. It is essential for the community to create relationships with young people before they leave care. The system should support and facilitate this.
 - g. Getting young people back home before they reach the age of 18 should be an aspiration.
 - h. Leaving care plans should include a cultural component, including returning to country.
7. Explore provision of rental brokerage programs for Aboriginal young people, in which an adult advocate or support worker brokers a private rental for the young person and supports them to maintain the repayments liaising with the landlord. This model could be expanded and coupled with greater interpersonal support and coaching provided to the young tenant but is contingent on increased Commonwealth income support.



Appendix

Appendix 1: Detailed Discussion Points from Workshops

Housing as a Base for Life

How do we embed housing goals and targets in major Government strategic frameworks for Aboriginal people? What needs to be done to have state government commit to join up housing and human services funding?

- Lobbying for adequate and direct funding for Aboriginal people (6000 Aboriginal people + who require social housing). Do we need to increase the 10% target?
- Do we need to join housing and human services funding for government?

How do we establish stable and affordable housing as the foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness?

- Is there data available related to the cost of homelessness on the other services (e.g. hospitals, justice services), to demonstrate how you can decrease the costing across other systems by funding housing?
- Framing: Housing is often seen as a commodity, the NFP sector sees housing as a right. Make it a capability for government with the links to education, health, intergenerational poverty. This could be taken to the Commonwealth around their Wellbeing Budget to incorporate housing.
- Funding for support side of housing, and programs like More than a Landlord available to all tenants to sustain tenancies (University of Melbourne evaluation findings relevant to mainstream providers also).

How do we embed intensive, culturally appropriate case management support for Aboriginal people presenting to homeless services with complex needs?

- Elders in Aged Care with grandchildren who live with them and seek employment, but rental policy means family is financially disadvantaged by this income.
- We need to increase intensive case management to ACCOs for vulnerable families. It is the same families that are intersecting at each of our services, and they're being serviced by the same ACCOs that we silo off funding to. ACCOs provide nuanced services to different cohorts of our community.
- Increasing cultural capacity of mainstream providers is underway; we need the private real estate agents, with regulatory frameworks/annual professional development to increase competency.
- We struggle with workforce due to vicarious trauma in the work (ACCOs and mainstream). RMIT and Government are undertaking workforce development for homelessness sector for better recognition, attraction, retention and professionalisation.
- We need more skilled case managers to support Aboriginal Communities. Other states are paying providers to allocate experienced workers to people with complex needs and have evidence of success. This creates less need for other support services, if you have a skilled tenancy manager.
- Recognition that when people have experienced disadvantage, a home in itself is not enough, they also require support. From a Social Landlord perspective, you need to reduce portfolio sizes for support officers/tenancy manager (5:70 rather than 100).
- Case management in Family Violence: witness the lack of holistic referrals that happen. It is difficult to find housing for victim-survivors and almost all experience homelessness.
- Catchment-based funding vs state-wide funding makes it difficult. Increased trauma of having to retell stories to receive services.
- Sydney example, 142 properties to house homeless people during COVID. Piloted and now being rolled out more permanently was a place-based approach. We were on-site to have wraparound services for tenants on-site to the Hub, including visiting services (GPs, employment services etc.). Tenants were required to engage with the services to maintain their home, which did have challenges.



How do we ensure integrated and wraparound support to meet the renter needs at particular life stages?

Social housing

- Increased funding for both support and housing, if we grow both we have much more likelihood to provide timely services. Housing with support is the goal at the end of the rainbow. But sometimes you have the house and no support, or you have support and no house. Aligning those is a really important goal to advocate for to change structurally as is accepted best practice.
- Some initiatives have been recently funded during the pandemic Homelessness to the Home initiative with housing and support packages, had the will, the funding, and levers in the systems to actually create change for the chronically homeless (included 290 Aboriginal people).
- The government has a broad brief around Family Violence (FV) and Child Protection (CP), so we need to help Departments push back to fit this model into their systems.
- Aboriginal Community Elders Services many people are in Aboriginal housing. Most houses are very run down and need a lot of maintenance, often requiring these tenants to move out. This also adds to the load of houses required.

Private market

- Target realestate.com and domain.com to encourage those who list on their websites that they're committed and use their market power.
- There are serious demand issues in private rental markets in regional areas particularly. The incredible cost and very low vacancy rates of private rentals, as well as discrimination. It may not even go to market e.g. Airbnb. Often brokerage is supplied but private rental providers will not support those with complex needs (e.g. those exiting prisons) and the obvious racial discrimination.
- Head leasing the private market is different in the neighbourhood and support for longevity issues.
- Need home owners to also put pressure on private rental estate agents, for supporting our vulnerable community members – could we set targets or incentives?
- Developers and corporate owners of private property, with interest in profit.
- FV survivors require letters of support to advocate why they have a poor rental record. There is some protection in the revised Tenancy Act for non-discrimination.
- Opportunity for VCAT to stand matters down, give time for resolution and to link to wraparound supports.

What more needs to be done to assist more ACCOs become registered for the delivery of housing in a culturally safe way that addresses complex needs such as family violence, youth, and elders?

- Should we be looking at how ACCOs can house people, without being registered? Is there opportunity to advocate for different ways of doing this, without so many hoops?
- In Victoria, registration becomes the ticket to being funded by Government. The links to Treaty gives Aboriginal community a stronger basis for renegotiating differently in this housing provision space.
- We are looking at the housing aspirations of ACCOs under the Big Build and whether there are different models e.g. ACCOs maintain ownership, partner with mainstream agency to do tenancy regulation. We are seeking innovative partnership models to advocate to Government.
- There was a Youth round that did not require registered housing providers, as a precedent.
- Consortia mixing skills is difficult to put together in a rush, and requires long lead times for partnership and co-design.



Social Housing Supply

What can the Commonwealth Government do to grow Aboriginal community housing supply?

- With the Future fund for housing opportunity (30,000) how many do we want in Victoria?
- The Big Housing Build: We need 27000 houses and 5000 social housing – we have received 800+ over 4 years with 5000 on the waitlist.
- Veterans were excluded from economic stimulus soldier settlement – can the Commonwealth acknowledge that descendants of returned soldiers should have settlement?
- Closing the Gap does not include measurements for reducing homelessness or increasing stock.
- We should have ATSIC National Homeless and Housing targets for Victoria in the partnership agreement.
- Key groups - Aboriginal people are an ageing group, young people with young families too.
- There are no pathways for buying housing – when houses are sold the money does not return into Aboriginal stock (AHV does own the properties and money will return).

What can the Victorian Government do to grow Aboriginal community housing supply?

- How can the unregistered Traditional Owner Corporations get involved in housing?
- How do we action the Victorian Plan?
- Crown and/or underutilised land can be reallocated for Aboriginal housing. Can we use Treaty to put a proposal to the Government for use of crown/public land and give it to Aboriginal housing?
- Understanding the need for regulatory systems for standards to protect people / tenant what alternate options can be considered rather than registered housing providers status for ACCOs (this is a restorative justice outcome).
- Can we think outside the system for housing registration for ACCOs? Can we do something that is self-determining? Can there be a better way? Is there a review in place? There are many challenges and barriers that need to be reduced.
- Currently, we have separate funding rounds — how can Aboriginal / mainstream work together, respectfully and equitably, to purchase land together and build together and have the houses given to ACCOs?
- We need a whole of government approach with contributions from various departments e.g. working with DELWP.
- We need to explore land taxes for minerals coming out of the land, water taxes – compensation for community e.g. % of taxes - look at NSW Aboriginal Lands right for example.

What can be done at a Local Government level to grow Aboriginal community housing supply?

- As above (time restricted).

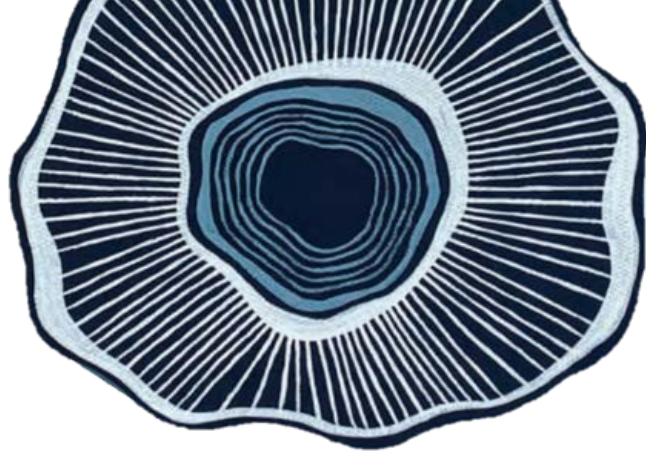
Private Rental

The work done so far has been about access into private rental. How can you assist to implement these 14 recommendations?

- Need to get Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program (APRAP) expansion and related roles properly resourced. Fund 0.5EFT to 1.0EFT to expand the program.
- Need to stabilise resourcing for existing roles and regions before we add new positions. Some regions are not resourced at all.
- APRAP Plus intensive support program
- Question about DFFH bond loans
- What about CP/community education? Some problems with literacy. Information is too wordy and lots of jargon, and is sometimes inaccurate. Perhaps a liaison person in CAV. Is there a more summary statement available that is easy to understand? A lot of people put off by affordability, basic information might be useful. Is CAV the right author for that kind of information?
- Small peripherals like magnets that give people an indication of who to call if there is a problem
- CAV is currently reviewing how its website works.

Support for integrating Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk (ATAR) and APRAP.

- Problems with patchiness of support programs (for example Eastern metro).
- Minimise requirements to contact multiple agencies.
- ATAR resourcing is an issue.
- CRT recommendations were more ambitious about integrating support across the whole renting journey.



What would help people who are already in private rental with the other pressure points? For example, high and rising rents, notices to vacate for property sales, getting repairs done and bond return.

- Community doesn't feel confident going into private rental market.
- Often need to prioritise other payments other than rent, and ignore arrears.
- Relationships are important for creating a safe environment for Aboriginal renters: Need to encourage good communication between tenants and agents. Help tenants build up skills.
- Using support workers as intermediaries: Build relationships with estate agents to ensure they notify the APRAP if problems arise. Hard to get this to work in the city.
- Utilising Centrepay: maybe need some adjustments about how Centrepay works like temporary suspension rather than just cancelling.
- Different approach to the Private Rental Assistance Program (PRAP) and APRAP: not sure why PRAP waits until a notice to vacate is issued. Better to intervene early in problems, than to leave them until notice is served.
- VCAT is coding things for Aboriginal renters and needs to promote what they are doing e.g. it is possible to get adjournments with Aboriginal renters and to have a different process, modelled on Koori Court processes.
- Cultural safety training for real estate agents: VACCs will do it all. More work required with the VEOHRC about the consequences for real estate agents doing discriminatory.

Treaty

Statewide and local treaties will be setting the foundation for the Treaty process across Victoria. Traditional owners will continue to access land and ceremony and will start considering service delivery in the future.

- As part of Treaty, Gunai Kurnai will provide support for Elders and training for emerging generations to provide legal courses and how to understand and engage with the Treaty process.
- The Treaty authority will transfer knowledge to communities, giving community the ability to have a voice; centering what we bring as Aboriginal people. There are 38 TOs groups and there are still questions around those who are not recognised as Traditional Owner peoples.
- Self-determination is about empowering our communities. The role and knowledge(s) of Elders, Elder Assembly members must be part of the authorising environment for Treaty.



What are the barriers and problems within the current government systems and process that Treaty could address?

- Lack of funding.
- Lack of government commitment.
- Structural reforms.
- Government has a lack of understanding of Aboriginal people and our ideology of how we live. We need government to come together and to come and sit down with Aboriginal people, not in an office, in an Aboriginal environment so they can understand and meet our requirements. Government also needs to be a key partner to facilitate the partnership and architecture of such a process.

Treaty is the voice of authority: We all need a seat at this table to think high level. This can be the architecture of agreement making and can provide a voice that can align to policy and strengthen policies at all levels – that are practical for us and can fix some of these (housing and homelessness) problems. We need to focus on using for:

- Structural reform.
- Land acquisition – treaty provides for public land transfers.
- Policy level reform and incentives.
- Influencing the private sector / real estate agents who provide housing where there is overt systemic racism and to activate wider community's responsibility.
- Land exemptions negotiated through treaties with local government and changes to the act as churches to enable exceptions.
- Identifying where local government sits in the treaty process i.e. engagement in Trilateral agreements; helping the ACCO's developing local properties and homes.
- Using TOs and statewide groups to facilitate relationships and support positive responses.



How would treaties build upon and advance the reforms within the VAHMF?

- Treaties can advance self-determination, equal standing and Aboriginal-led decision making.
- Treaty puts everything on the table.
- Support the establishment of relationships – gives an opportunity to come into key spaces and table demands with the required authority.
- Can support reporting and accountability through the legislative process of the Assembly including cultural and public accountability.
- Treaties are based on legislative powers so that no matter what government is in power they have a responsibility.
- Support in building wealth and prosperity.
- Water rights, Land rights and Housing rights.
- Cultural prosperity to plan our future.

How could treaties build up and advance the reform of the Blueprint for an Aboriginal specific homelessness system?

- Address the lack of resources in the sector.
- Work with the department and fix the balance of power (is the Victorian government open this way?).
- The opportunity for real authority capability and real partnership.
- We can begin the conversations for what we could do now, not just wait for the treaty, with community leading the process.
- Need to make sure treaty is relevant and make sure we get the targets and housing and support to those who need it most.
- Applaud treaty in the room as it is for all of us.
- Look to what worked well and what didn't with NSW Housing and Native Title.
- National agreement can look upwards and not downwards in decision making.
- This can help us come up with a different model that is for us including holistic services with family support workers to keep families strong and refers them to services they need.

Housing Sector Capacity Building

A strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector is fundamental to delivering on the goals of Manana worn-tyeen maar-takoort. How do we build the capacity of Traditional Owner and ACCO housing providers and shape the sector to deliver on the collective sector vision?

Why do we need a strong Aboriginal community housing sector?

- AHV can't do it alone, the number required each year to meet demand exceeds AHV capacity. How do we get the funding?
- Crisis accommodation is now often hotels, without wraparound services. Homelessness and lack of supply are huge issue, this puts a lot of pressure on ACCOs and Traditional Owners (TOs).
- Aboriginal people are locked out of other types of housing, how to we get access to affordable housing?
- Should mainstream stock housing Aboriginal people be transferred to Aboriginal ownership?
- Eligibility is a new form of discrimination, mainstream have to support Aboriginal communities.

What is the Aboriginal Community Housing Sectors Vision? Read Vision Statement and seek endorsement

- Self-determining, sector vision developed through community consultation.

What capacities do we need to build?

- Mainstream: Genuine and true partnerships, CHIA Vic has developed Cultural Safety standards.
- Competencies. Blended models.
- Property maintenance.
- Tenancy management.
- What are the dynamics, where do we get the data from, not building houses for big families now? Foundation stuff, self-assessment, about readiness. This is forensic accreditation, have to get things right, go in informed.
- Is ACCO housing just not viable anymore? Has it been a band aid? Going to need funding, grants to do this.
- Housing Registrar also needs understanding of ACCOs, understanding of partnership agreements
- There are positives – some achievements.

What does the capacity building journey of Aboriginal housing providers look like?

- ACCOs have a diversity of ambitions in relation to becoming registered providers.
- ACCOs require registration to get funding. ACCOs don't want to be large scale, being asked to jump through hoops for what?
- Where is the funding stream to slowly build while growing until we are ready to register?
- Trust an issue partnering with mainstream CHAs. Partnership is a negotiation. Don't want to go into partnership, having to submit to an agreement with mainstream.
- New Zealand small Indigenous organisations don't have to have the same level, but do have the access. Having access to 2 streams (associations and providers) was not considered necessarily a good thing.
- Wouldn't want to be at a lower standard anyway, deserve better than that. Others say why should we have to jump through same hoops, would have to shift objective of the ACCO.
- Homes Vic have done some feasibility studies, is that helpful process? The other conversation is that self-determination and Treaty is this the right way to go. Building ACCO wealth is part of this. Are some of the requirements not fit for purpose in relation to self-determination and do they need review?
- If not registered can't get funding, this is the old colonised way.
- ACCOs have grown stock through using equity to borrow money to purchase by themselves.
- Needs to be a mechanism for community to use to be able to realise ambition and have resources to go to, perhaps through AHHF.

Barriers to registration for ACCOs who are interested

- Positive feedback from ACCOs about feasibility, very comprehensive, informs to be able to map out where they need to be. Should be available to all that are interested, currently only a pilot.
- Need the infrastructure in the first place and how do they build if worry they will go under.
- As the Regulator, haven't received many applications, why not, what are the barriers and how can they be addressed?
- Have to know if it is financially viable, what long term aspirations are?
- Housing Registrar there to ask if need to be registered, how do they make it easier?
- Two tiers, association and provider same requirements for both.
- What scope for registration is there to streamline it. Housing Registrar open to that, there may be some double up. The main issue is maintaining registration, different to register if not at that point to go through that.
- Compliance only one part, about viability and capacity and smaller scale organisations don't need to walk down this pathway.
- Is the October the last funding round, will that be extended? Update will be provided via the AHHF.
- ACCOs worry about what they are taking on: with family violence, justice, health they are overwhelmed by compliance. Should bring it all together and streamline compliance.
- Creating equity across Victoria for Aboriginal people. Consider bringing houses and services together. If ACCOs don't want to, who misses out? Principle framework is to have everyone housed by an Aboriginal org, supported with Aboriginal services etc. It is in AHV's model, expand AHV, they are the peak, nobody else is funded to do it.
- Some orgs don't want to work in spaces, have to ensure that community have access. Need to make sure no wrong door approach. Don't have programs running at capacity and on a journey.
- Need to put in protections about housing Aboriginal people and ensuring that Aboriginal people on VHR.



Homelessness

What steps can be taken in the year prior to the funding being released in 2022/23 financial year?

- Strengths – self-determination, rights based cultural safety – key values for thinking about homelessness.
- There is not enough investment to make a real difference for homelessness. The service system does not end homelessness (it is the tail end).
- Homelessness – there are longer term structural and spiritual issues.
- The right service is critical for us – how can it work better – what is our future design? We want more, plus our own design for services and packages! Stop government controlling funding – ask the people on the ground what we need.
- 17% of Aboriginal people seeking assistance homelessness – we are worse off than most States – this would not be tolerated in the mainstream community, there would be an outcry!
- Our community members keep on telling our stories repeatedly – there is a great dissatisfaction of having to share with mainstream services.
- With no long term housing options Aboriginal people exhaust the services available to them through this cycle of “entry exit entry exit” – this makes it so difficult to house people.
- Aboriginal people enter mainstream services as a result of trauma and not accessing ACCO's so culturally safe alternatives are required.
- Intergenerational post-traumatic stress disorder – we need healing that is directed by us.
- There is a cycle of re-entering prison.
- We need to identify ACCO's to lead the “no Wrong Door” – start training and upskilling staff to proceed when the funding becomes available – support ACCO Governance and structure for this ASAP.
- IAP Tool can go out to community now!

How do we move forward without the required funding?

- Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) / Trauma / re-entering the prison system we need simple processes.
- Private rental for Aboriginal people is impossible – systemic racism is rife.
- We need holistic wraparound services and a skilled ACCO workforce to deliver it with an allocated case worker.
- We need “no wrong door” “no run around” “culturally safe” services.
- We need to support people as they make mistakes.

What aspects of the plan can be implemented without funding?

- Utilise existing wraparound services.
- Mainstream can mirror culturally safe ACCO service delivery.
- Stop the need to retell stories.

What capacity does the sector have to implement the first phase?

- Identify ACCO's to lead the “No Wrong Door” – start training and upskilling staff to proceed when the funding – support ACCO Governance and structure for this.
- IAP Tool can go out to community now!
- Build on existing wraparound services for homelessness.
- Build culturally safe practice across mainstream services that is actioned in everyday – this is absent.
- Develop a shared understanding of history and culture through Elders stories.
- Put investment into our communities.
- ACCO's need to review how we do business.

What steps can be taken to seek funding from other sources outside Vic Gov?

- There needs to be a mirror of the ACCO wraparound services for Aboriginal people in the mainstream.
- Homelessness must be everyone's business.

If we did have the funding required, what would the system look like in 5 years?

- Let's build a new system that learns from the mistakes of the current one and keeps what is good and throws out what is harmful and cruel.
- We need so much cultural awareness / trauma informed care / intergenerational PTSD – we need real life cultural safety training (including anti-racism).
- It must be strength based.



Home Ownership



How do we continue to support increased rates of Aboriginal home ownership?

- Build aspirations around home ownership within Community.
- Historically, ownership may not have been an aspiration as it was thought to be out of reach.
- Previous generations may not have been home owners.
- Peers in the community may be the inspiration.
- Education about what is involved in home ownership is needed.

What types of programs are required?

- Community lead programs.
- Rent to buy schemes.
- IBA loans schemes.
- Shared equity programs.
- Life skills/ Education – budgeting, savings, debt management, maintenance.

Would a rent-to buy program be supported by the community? Why?

- Yes.
- Eliminates barriers to home ownership entry.

What support do applicants and new home owners need to participate in these new programs?

- They must be community led.
- They must be in a HUB: All supports in one location via ACCO.
- Education / Life Skills Support – budgeting, debt management, maintenance costs are needed.
- Possibility of a co-op – you may contribute to build community properties to reduce your mortgage.
- IBA / Similar programmes.
- Lower cost affordable home ownership.

Should homeownership on Aboriginal owned land be considered?

- Yes
- Community Land Trusts could do this.

Family Violence

What is required to develop long-term supported accommodation for women and children leaving violent relationships, with housing that is well designed and flexible to meet the safety and family needs of these women and children?

- Family actively supports family so how can the system be more flexible and financially support family to be the solution?
- Grandmothers are often supporting children so solutions must be found for housing options that accommodate that.
- Priority should be keeping families together at all costs – the system often gets in the way of innovative solutions for this.
- There is a need for healing which is critical for families that are traumatized and re-traumatized.
- We must allocate housing supply to need immediate crisis support housing is a first response that can lead to long-term solutions. Our Women and children need an ongoing solution.
- We need to stop women having to pay for men who use violence and damage houses.
- Kids undercover (units in back yards) can provide additional housing solutions.
- Address racism in the system – individual and systemic; Racism impacts on families' access to services.

What is required to develop long-term supported accommodation for women and children leaving violent relationships, with housing that is well designed and flexible to meet the safety and family needs of these women and children?

- We need Aboriginal run refugees, they are essential – our community would access this (concerns with CP involvement when women do leave and become homeless).
- Wraparound support that is trauma informed – a healing model.
- We need support options for families with boys aged 12+.
- Look at supported apartment style model- great success for Women's Housing.
- Look at the Sidney Myer Gated Homes Bendigo with wraparound services including child care (Safe Haven).

What needs to be included for flexible family violence funding package to enable safe relocation from dangerous relationships?

- Review the inflexible restrictive funding packages, sit them with ACCO's and help families access packages through a self-determination lens.
- Women are being forced into Orange door and it is not culturally safe and does not understand culturally safe practice or options. Its criteria limits access to funding and the ACCO end up picking up the additional costs.
- Provide more short term properties to be allocated for family violence and refugees.

People who choose to use violence also require housing when they must leave the family home. How do we create a system that supports increased housing?

- There are very limited regional models for this and the department must stop dictating service models – they are not culturally safe nor appropriate.
- Trials will be shared of existing models for this by Dhelk Dja including St Kilda – all with wraparound and counseling.
- How do systems work with each other – if Aboriginal communities want to keep men out of the justice system how do we keep women and children safe?
- Mainstream needs to be accountable and must address systemic racism and deficit discourse around Aboriginal families.

What additional supports are required to ensure families remain safe?

- Grandparents (mothers) often care for children and have housing and funding should be more flexible.
- Families should be able to inherit homes – 25 years + in properties.
- We must apply trauma informed care and practice.
- Wraparound services with Supported accommodation for mental health and disabilities are needed.

What investments can be made into early intervention of family violence to keep families safe and together if they choose to stay?

- Create communities of practice for services and the new refugees to share practice.
- Fund the cost of repairs when perpetrator damages house.
- Fund ACCO's to provide outcomes for families.



People who have contact with the justice system

What are the major housing related issues and challenges your clients face and how do they hamper your ability to resolve their problems? What are the biggest housing related service gaps or system failures you see and what are the results for the people affected?

- Housing gaps
- There's really no place for them. They are only given a night or two in motels and then no structure is in place to help them find housing or accommodation. Long and medium shared accommodation/rooming housing are often a worse environment than being on the street. People have sometimes been blacklisted. Two days in a hotel is inadequate accommodation after leaving prison.
- When they go back to community they face the drug and alcohol, the stressors that cause family violence, causing stress and trauma on their kids, and then they feel 'I may as well be back in gaol.'
- There is also a stigma from coming out of gaol, but there is no true examination of them individually to see how they got into their situations. In most cases their situation has been bought on by intergenerational PTSD and the cruxes (D&A addiction, domestic violence etc.). The failure of the government to understand this, causes the problems. They are a product of the society we live in and because society looks down upon them. This has been bought down upon us.
- Access to education and employment is missing.
- People leave prison with greater mental health, drug and trauma issues.
- We must recognise the link with Out of Home Care as a first experience of homelessness.
- Identity and confirmation of Aboriginality / Confirmation of Aboriginality is a barrier to access.
- Homelessness and recidivism are linked.
- You cannot succeed in getting your children back if you don't have a home. Reconnecting men and their children is so important for the wellbeing of children.
- Local Justice Worker programs – the limitation that you could only work with those on Orders – this is part of the review of Justice and Women's Diversion programs.
- During Court proceedings, reading of priors of people is not matched with the priors of the system that are relevant (e.g. Stolen Generations, language and cultural annihilation) that cause intergenerational PTSD. The system needs to be accountability for itself.

Lack of support while in prison and justice system

- Advocacy for prisons to be run by government, not private or overseas companies.
- Prison is meant to be about rehabilitation to help people contribute to society, so it is their role to provide these first steps. Support people to gain their identification (e.g. proof of age care). There is not currently accountability and oversight of this being provided.
- Youth Justice has Care Teams, local Justice is neglected and the care teams do not work together, less seeing community members in prisons to support living skills before leaving prison. Every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person should have access to these supports while in prison.
- DJCS Corrections have not been made to feel that homelessness / housing is part of their performance review, and reducing rate of recidivism.
- Organisations say they deliver services such as Housing Officers but they do not always deliver or turn up.
- Corrections needs to take more accountability for healing from their system, and talk more with community.
- What supports from community do people receive to reintegrate after prison? Without support, it becomes a 'merry go round' of recidivism and returning to prison.
- Put pressure and establish accountability mechanisms for DJCS responsibility to give access to support services to all Aboriginal people in prisons / Justice system, including gaining identification.
- 11x IAP (Intake Assessment and Planning) funding in prisons, there should be additional Aboriginal specific positions held by ACCOs. Early access for all their needs and refers out that link out to case management and reduce siloes. Build on current project to ensure IAP is culturally safe, appropriate and accessible.



Are you aware of any existing models here or in other places that might provide a better way of housing the people you work with?

- ACCOs are great at finding solutions outside of the systems. We found the earlier we follow the journey of someone going into prison and coming out, in partnership with ALOs in prisons, we have experienced better outcomes. We have pushback from the system for taking this role and as we continue to advocate. A new ACCO is being built for those coming out of Fullham Prison to be supported, develop as a space to manage their lives and reconnect with family and community.
- Dardi Munwurro operating in the housing and justice space (limited to urban and regional centres): 12 weeks for 8x males.
- H2H program of housing with intensive packages. 5-6 clients with chronic homelessness and recidivism from across their lives since coming into contact with OoHC systems. They have now maintained their properties for a year with great success, they're working and are out of prison for the longest time across their lives for some. Having an address and property makes a big difference with the Magistrates. Their issue may be overcrowding as families also need housing. It is an ongoing joy to see these outcomes.
- Housing as a health response to manage COVID Victoria-wide for 2 years only. 1800 households from homelessness to long-term social housing with wraparound support. Only has 1x more year of funding, limited to metro/regional centres.
- We need guaranteed funding to supply fit-for-purpose housing units (not shared accommodation) designated for those leaving prison (men and women, youth). Choice of accommodation: H2H allowed the choice for two-bedroom accommodation to allow them to have children for weekend visitation that grew to every second week and to be a Dad, rather than Victorian/Aboriginal Housing Register where he would not have had that choice. We need to allow people to assert their needs.
- So many organisations working in this space should be linked up to coordinate and achieve best outcomes of people coming out of prison.
- We need to support families to support young people. Youth Justice prison can be seen as a "badge of honour." Family and community are where the badges of honour are noticed.
- What is the consultation with local community in this space, so that families can tell us what the problems are for them? 3x a year is not enough for Justice Forum. Why do we need to justify our needs and requirements, and our cultural needs are not taken into account? We need to be able to do things our way, without explaining this to anyone. We need Government to come and sit in the dirt and listen to us. We should not have to fear anybody in moving forward and accessing what they need. We know who we are.



How can we bring together capital investment for housing with the service supports you can provide to create models that will deliver sustainable, stable housing solutions for people with high needs?

- We need reinvestment in our communities: There has been so much removed from country and we don't see a drop of the money.
- Reinvest funding from prisons to ACCOs to really achieve the aim of rehabilitation and keeping community safe. Incarceration costs \$125k men, \$115k women and more for Youth each year.
- Debt financing models to grow exponentially into housing stock. Government funds capital and running costs of prisons that is 'dead money' and if it was public reinvestment in post-release accommodation it would grow exponentially in the housing market. It is siloed thinking of Housing vs Corrections of who manages the person in community (parole or post release) vs 'securing' them inside the prison. Part of how government is structurally divided up into a pie. Head leasing is not as flexible as ownership that allows reinvestment.
- Funding to AHV to get crews in to look after and maintain community housing (there is a current crisis in building industry)

There is a committed budget \$30 million Social Impact Bond for people leaving justice into homelessness (Dept Treasury and Finance for 2-3 years) to demonstrate the cost effectiveness to house people properly after prison. Government pays when it works. Currently in negotiation including representation of Aboriginal people.

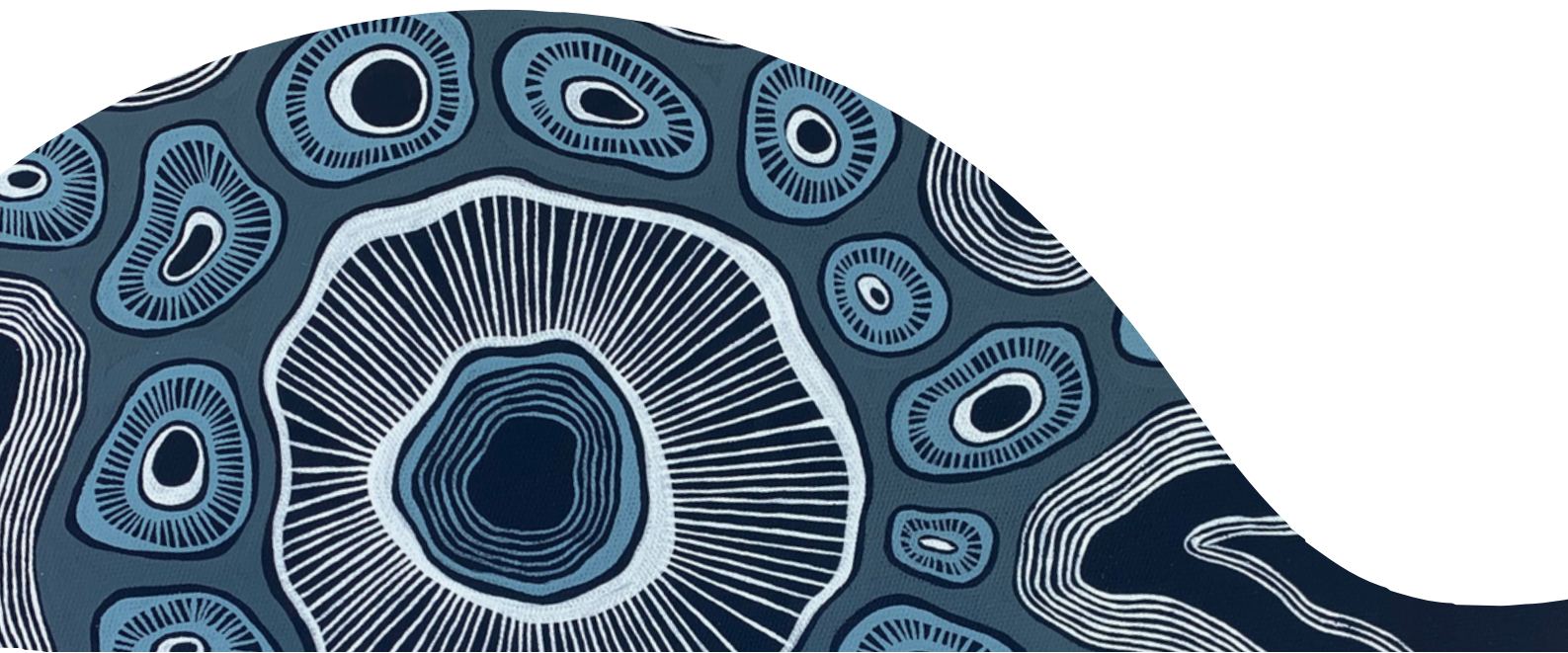
People with a disability

What are the major housing related issues and challenges your clients face and how do they hamper your ability to resolve their problems?

- Knowledge and understanding by the ACCOs on how to maximise NDIS , steps to becoming a SDA provider or support provider.
- No Victorian ACCOs registered as SDA housing providers.
- Not enough Aboriginal specific NDIS workforce to navigate clients culturally through the NDIS system.
- Lack of spend within approved NDIS support packages due to lack of culturally appropriate providers.
- It is estimated that 15% of NDIS participants are Aboriginal but only 5% of service providers.
- The Aboriginal service system operates on a Kinship model of care where NDIS doesn't. The new Independent Living Option is ripe to be shaped to fit the Kinship model.
- Self-determination is an Aboriginal cultural principle required for the NDIS model.
- Genuine partnerships with other SDA providers with ACCOs are needed.
- Explore how SDA can be used for Home Ownership and perhaps incorporated with DTF Shared Equity model or expansion of Home Ownership.
- Explore how Family Violence and Justice Social Housing can be included as part of SDA housing.
- Expansion of MTAL to assist the shortage of Aboriginal workforce for ACCOs (RIAN on model).
- Service Mapping exercise to be undertaken with IUHI Brisbane and roll out across Victoria.
- Capacity building funding required to support pathway to SDA/support registration for ACCOs.
- Capacity building funding for infrastructure grants to support registration for ACCOs.
- Building a list of NDIS experts that can work with ACCOs to become SDA registered, develop their business model, asset plan and strategic plan to ensure financial viability.
- Advocacy for structural reforms at NDIA to enable self determination.

Are there statistical data sources that you recommend we examine to provide evidence to Government of the extent of these problems?

- NDIS data shows there are 177 participants who are registered and entitled to SDA in Victoria. This is expected to be about half the true number.
- Homes Victoria has over 3000 SDA clients but it is unknown how many participants are Aboriginal.
- Housing Choices has over 500 SDA participants but it is unknown how many participants are Aboriginal.
- Commit to a target of 300 Aboriginal Victorians eligible for NDIS SDAs with no appropriate pathways or access to services (Data dashboard 2022).
- Data sovereignty of Aboriginal NDIS accommodation needs is required.
- Access to NDIS Data Dashboard specifically for Aboriginal Victorians to assist in design, planning and implementation.



20 Year Vision for the Aboriginal Community Housing Sector



20-year Vision:

For a unified and vibrant Victorian Aboriginal community housing sector delivering quality services and housing equity within a generation.

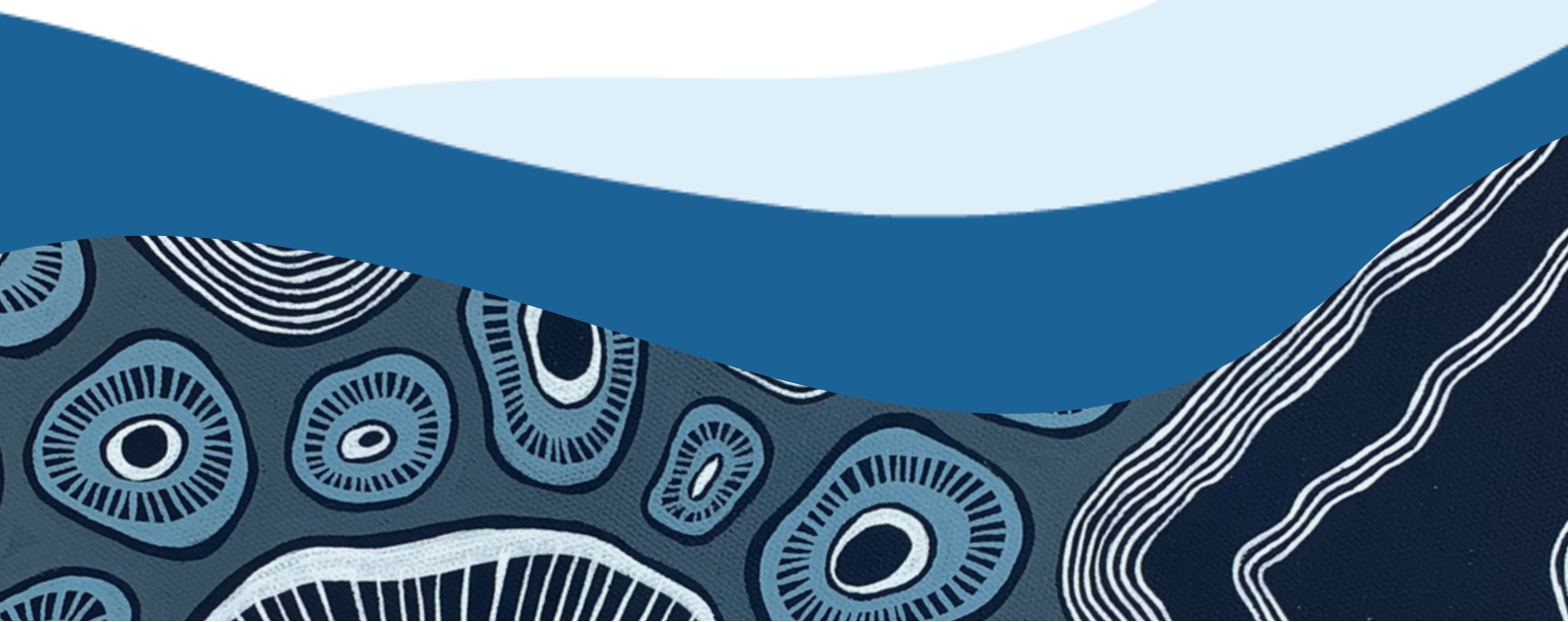


Our vision is for a unified, strong, financially viable, self-determining Aboriginal housing sector that, over the next 20 years, is a significant contributor to ensuring every Aboriginal Victorian has a home. This will be achieved through providing community housing as part of a pipeline out of homelessness and towards private rental and home ownership for all Aboriginal Victorians.

Purpose

The purpose of the Aboriginal community housing sector's Vision is to outline the role of Aboriginal community housing organisations in delivering appropriate accommodation outcomes for Victoria's Aboriginal people over the next 20 years.

It is intended to guide the transformation of the Aboriginal community housing sector from being loosely organised, under-resourced and straining to cope with a burgeoning Aboriginal homelessness and housing crisis into a platform that advances Aboriginal self-determination and ensures every Aboriginal Victorian has a home that supports their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.



Glossary

- The term **Aboriginal peoples** when used in a Victorian context generally includes Torres Strait Islanders.
- An **Aboriginal community-controlled organisation (ACCO)** is one initiated by, based in, governed by elected representatives from, and serves an Aboriginal community.
- ACCOs are vehicles for self-determination. In international law, Indigenous peoples whose lands are now majority occupied by non-Indigenous people enjoy this collective right in all matters that significantly impact on their social, economic, civil, political and cultural lives.
- No Victorian Aboriginal Nation's sovereignty has been ceded, and this remains the basis for ongoing State Treaty negotiations including as vehicles for restorative and reparative justice measures intended to help repair harm from colonisation.
- **Social housing** is rental property for which costs are subsidised to ensure they are affordable for eligible households. Social housing owned and managed by the State is public housing; that which is owned and run by other registered housing agencies is community housing. Social housing provides a safety net for households unable to access the private rental market.
- **Aboriginal community housing** is that owned and managed by ACCOs, Traditional Owner Bodies and other Aboriginal organisations for Aboriginal tenants. Collectively, these ACCOs, and with the potential addition of support agencies, form an emerging Aboriginal community housing sector.
- **Social housing** is located on a housing needs continuum that can also be imagined as a pipeline. This continuum might start with homelessness (maximal needs/support required), which leads to transitional housing, to social housing, to private rental housing, and to home ownership (minimal needs/support). This process is not necessarily linear and varies with the experience and circumstances of each individual.
- **Affordable housing** is broadly defined as that which costs less than 30 per cent of household income. Technically, it is housing made available to very low-, low- and moderate-income households as determined by the State's Planning and Environmental Act 1987. Affordable housing includes social housing, rent-controlled private tenancies, and price-controlled housing for purchase.

Acronyms

- AHV – Aboriginal Housing Victoria
- AHHF – Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum
- AIHW – Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- AOD – Alcohol and Other Drugs
- APRAP – Aboriginal Private Rental Assistance Program
- ATAR – Aboriginal Tenancies at Risk
- CAV – Consumer Affairs Victoria
- CHIA – Community Housing Industry Association
- CP – Child Protection
- CRA – Commonwealth Rent Assistance
- CtG – Closing the Gap
- DFFH – Department of Family Fairness and Housing
- FV – Family Violence
- H2H – Homelessness to a home
- HAFF – Housing Australia Future Fund
- IAP – Initial Assessment and Planning
- IWG – Implementation Working Group
- MTAL – More Than A Landlord
- NDIS – National Disability Insurance Scheme
- NHHA – National Housing and Homelessness Agreement
- OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- OoHC – Out-of-home Care
- PRAP – Private Rental Assistance Program
- SDA – Specialist Disability Accommodation
- SHGF – Social Housing Growth Fund
- TO – Traditional Owner
- VACCA – Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- VACCHO – Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
- VAHMF – Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework
- VCAT – Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal
- VEOHRC – Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
- VHR – Victorian Housing Register

Purpose

The purpose of the Aboriginal community housing sector's Vision is to outline the role of Aboriginal community housing organisations in delivering appropriate accommodation outcomes for Victoria's Aboriginal people over the next 20 years.

It is intended to guide the transformation of the Aboriginal community housing sector from being loosely organised, under-resourced and straining to cope with a burgeoning Aboriginal homelessness and housing crisis into a platform that advances Aboriginal self-determination and ensures every Aboriginal Victorian has a home that supports their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.

Context

In the area now corresponding to Victoria, and for at least 50,000 years prior to European settlement, every Aboriginal person had a home. Shelters – ranging from stone to temporary structures – were a part of the home concept along with wellbeing – promoting connection to place, Country, family, clan, Nation, culture, lore and economy.

After Melbourne's establishment in 1835, every Aboriginal person in Victoria would become homeless.

Traditional Owner dispossession, denial of self-determination, cultural suppression, detainment on reserves, dire living conditions and child removals followed disease and frontier violence. Further to this, many non-Victorian Aboriginal people who faced similar challenges on their lands and waters were forced to move to Victoria, with both groups reporting high rates of intergenerationally transmitted trauma.

Yet despite significant advances in addressing Aboriginal disadvantage in other areas, for example in health and education, a housing and homelessness crisis continues to grow as a result of colonisation's legacy of intergenerational poverty, trauma and structural racism. This crisis impacts the lives of thousands of Aboriginal people and families living in Victoria in the following ways:

- Lower income, higher unemployment and less intergenerational wealth accumulation are disproportionately affecting access to affordable housing, which is causing increased reliance on already overstretched social housing and the Aboriginal community housing sector.
- Trauma-associated family violence and breakdown, compounded by people transitioning in and out of institutional settings and a large young adult population leaving home to seek their own places to live are adding to housing supply demands.
- Most Aboriginal households in social housing in Victoria are with public housing and mainstream agencies (~2,999 and ~413 households respectively), which are often culturally unresponsive.

In particular, the scale of inequality between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians across the housing continuum (with a particularly enormous differential between people accessing homelessness services) is shocking and discussed at length in, *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort*, the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (VAHHF).

Efforts to organise the sector for greater collective impact gained momentum in June 2018 after A initiated and was funded to host Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forums, which have since become the drivers of a system response to the Aboriginal housing and homelessness crisis. This was ultimately encapsulated in *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort* – Every Aboriginal person has a home.

Led by AHV and developed by and for the Aboriginal community, *Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort* articulates:

- Our Vision: Every Aboriginal person has a home.
- Our Purpose: Aboriginal Victorians achieve quality housing outcomes in a generation.
- Our Challenge: To meet the demand for 27,000 new Aboriginal households by 2036.

Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort provides a long-term vision and a roadmap on how to achieve these, which is headlined by five key strategic directions:

- Secure housing improves life outcomes.
- Building supply to meet the needs of a growing Aboriginal population.
- Open doors to home ownership and private rental.
- An Aboriginal-focused homelessness system.
- A capable system that delivers Aboriginal housing needs.

Mana-na woom-tyeen maar-takoort acknowledges a strong self-determining Aboriginal community housing sector as one of the critical components in delivering on its implementation outcomes. It includes an overarching action to create a strong and viable Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector while at the same time acknowledging the need to build Aboriginal-focused homelessness services 'from the ground up' – this remains a work in progress.

The Victorian Government and AHV established a VAHHF Implementation Working Group (IWG) in 2020. This is underpinned by an Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (AHHF) from which an IWG Koori Caucus is drawn. The other half of the IWG is an Action Group comprising AHV and key government agencies. The AHHF is the Aboriginal housing and homelessness sector's governance mechanism for implementing the Framework. All Victorian Aboriginal organisations delivering housing and homelessness services are, or have been invited to be, members of the AHHF.

A summary of the AHHF's Aboriginal community housing sector agenda

- Working effectively with government and otherwise providing leadership in implementing all elements of the VAHMF.
- Helping to meet anticipated State-wide demand for 27,000 additional Aboriginal household dwellings by 2036, of which 5000 are social/community housing. This includes through Victoria's mainstream Big Housing Build which promises \$5.3 billion of social and affordable housing (12,000 new dwellings) and that includes a focus on increasing ACCO community housing.
- Transforming community housing into a foundation for breaking cycles of disadvantage and homelessness (including person-centred intensive, culturally appropriate, structured case management), a platform to deliver wraparound social and economic programs, and one that also supports education and employment opportunities.
- Transforming community housing into a pathway to housing independence that includes private rental and home ownership.
- Otherwise shaping the sector to maximise social benefit from its housing pool through engaging continuous quality improvement cycles.
- Working in partnership with mainstream social housing to ensure it is culturally safe for, and otherwise contributes effectively to meeting the housing needs of, Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal community housing sector

From the 1970s onwards, Aboriginal community housing was self-initiated by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and then supported by governments. The Aboriginal Housing Board of Victoria (ABHV) was established by Aboriginal community leaders and Elders in the early 1980s as the peak advocacy body for responding to the housing needs and issues of Victoria's Aboriginal communities and achieving their housing aspirations.

Today, the ABHV's successor, AHV, is by far the largest Aboriginal housing agency in Australia, with its ownership of more than 1560 properties. A total of 18 other ACCOs hold a further 444 properties between them, while a small number of ACCOs are also funded to deliver homelessness services. Traditional Owner groups, through native title settlements, are on the rise and are also providing housing to Aboriginal communities. These groups are anticipated to become a far more significant housing player as many have expressed an interest in using land and capital, which will be made available to them under Victoria's Treaty process, to provide housing to their community members, whether as community rentals or through home ownership.

With the exception of AHV, together, these Aboriginal organisations form an emerging Aboriginal community housing sector characterised by member organisations with small housing portfolios that are not part of the regulatory system. A key challenge for the sector is how to build both scale in housing portfolios so they are financially independent and viable, as well as housing capability so that organisations can meet registration and ongoing regulatory requirements.

Giving voice to the sector

The prime purpose of this Vision document is to articulate the role of the sector in implementing Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort and to be a lodestar for the Aboriginal community housing sector over a transformative two decades. It also provides an opportunity for the sector's voice and aspirations to be heard, and to establish further common ground and sector cohesion in implementing the VAHMF.

This Vision was developed through dedicated sector group consultations, one-on-one interviews and surveys informed by papers and co-design principles, with a series of drafts then refined with sectoral representatives until the final Vision was agreed upon.

It is built on a bedrock of Aboriginal values that do not change regardless of context. These values, which underpin both this *Vision and Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort*, are as follows:

- That self-determination is a non-negotiable foundation for effective change.
- That supporting culture and respect for cultural differences are key to effective change.
- That Aboriginal people should be empowered both to participate in processes that affect them and to benefit from these processes.

That restorative and reparative justice should inform responses to challenges resulting from colonisation and what are now recognised as genocidal-in-impact human rights violations. The ongoing Treaty and truth-telling processes in Victoria are likely vehicles for this, and should include investment in community housing.

Finally, as noted, the AHHF intends for an Aboriginal system addressing homelessness to be developed 'from the ground up'. Although some of this Vision will inevitably overlap with that space, and while the long-term AHHF goal remains a strong and united Aboriginal homelessness and housing sector, this Vision is not intended to guide the development of a system addressing Aboriginal homelessness.

*20-year Vision:
For a unified and vibrant Victorian Aboriginal
community housing sector delivering quality services
and housing equity within a generation.*

Our vision is for a unified, strong, financially viable, self-determining Aboriginal housing sector that, over the next 20 years, is a significant contributor to ensuring every Aboriginal Victorian has a home. This will be achieved through providing community housing as part of a pipeline out of homelessness and towards private rental and home ownership for all Aboriginal Victorians.

Vision statement

The Aboriginal community housing sector is comprised of a diverse range of Aboriginal organisations providing community housing to their communities. First and foremost, this includes registered Aboriginal housing agencies formally providing community housing. It also includes ACCOs and Traditional Owner organisations that own housing managing it as community housing for Aboriginal Victorians.

Over the next 20 years, our aim is for Aboriginal community housing agencies to become self-determining, financially viable, independent organisations that deliver high-quality affordable housing to low-income Aboriginal Victorians.

As experts in the delivery of culturally responsive tenancy and property services to the Aboriginal community, these housing agencies will be resourced to provide case management support to sustain tenancies for vulnerable families and individuals and to ensure tenants are provided with wraparound supports when needed. They will also be resourced to provide support and assistance to tenants on their pathway to building better lives, including those who choose housing independence through private rental and home ownership.

These sophisticated organisations will be capable of meeting community housing regulatory requirements and performance standards commensurate with the level of complexity of their business activities and operational risks. They will also demonstrate high levels of governance with strong skills-based Boards and experienced executives with the requisite legal, financial, asset management, and tenancy and community housing skills.

As accomplished innovators in the delivery of housing to the Aboriginal community, these housing agencies will be able to leverage their core community housing capabilities and assets to deliver growth in housing supply for the Aboriginal community. They will also be adept at accessing funding and developing and delivering unique community housing models that encompass individual and collective community home ownership, as well as programs that improve Aboriginal Victorians' access to private rental and individual home ownership.

Aboriginal community housing agencies aim to be responsive to the housing needs and aspirations of Victoria's Aboriginal communities. They are individually connected both to their clients and their communities, and are collectively united as powerful and effective advocates providing high-quality and actionable advice on Aboriginal housing policy reform and implementation. They are also strategic in their partnerships with each other, local councils, mainstream housing and service agencies, philanthropic organisations, developers, builders and financiers – all of which bring in additional value to advance Aboriginal housing objectives and outcomes.

Implementing the Vision

Achieving the Aboriginal community housing sector's Vision will require focus and sustained effort by Aboriginal sectoral members and government over the next 20 years. It will also require a joint commitment to shared values and goals, cooperation and collaboration in determining and delivering capacity building, sector-shaping strategies and actions, and resources to deliver them. Key actions, with a particular focus on leveraging future capability growth in the first five years, will be outlined in an Aboriginal Community Housing Sector Capacity Building Plan scheduled to be finalised in 2023.



