

Media release

Embargoed until Tuesday, July 21

What: Community Housing Industry draws line in sand on Aboriginal disadvantage

When: Tuesday, July 21 at 3pm

Who: Housing Minister Richard Wynne, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Gabrielle Williams, CHIA Vic CEO Lesley Dredge, Aboriginal Housing Victoria CEO Darren Smith

Where: Zoom - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89095702458>

Community housing tackles Aboriginal Cultural Safety

Taken from her mum at age 11, and moved from foster home to foster home, Nicole Cassar always longed for a safe and stable house of her own. Like a disproportionate number of Aboriginal Victorians, the proud Gunditjmara and Wotjobulak woman experienced prolonged housing disadvantage for many years, before securing a home with Aboriginal Housing Victoria.

‘When you are in foster care you have a level of vulnerability that makes you wary of showing you need help. I didn’t want people to know I was struggling,’ Nicole says.

In addition to making up a significant proportion of social housing tenancies, a staggering 17 per cent of Aboriginal Victorians require the assistance of specialist homelessness services.

Today, the community housing industry is prioritising the need for its services to be provided to Aboriginal tenants in a culturally safe way, with Victorian Housing Minister Richard Wynne and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Gabrielle Williams to launch the Community Housing Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework.

The Community Housing Industry Association Victoria (CHIA Vic) developed the framework after extensive consultation with tenants and its member organisations. It sets out the steps community housing organisations can take to become culturally safe and will be backed by training and consultancy services to provide further assistance.

Organisations that commit to the framework will begin to integrate an understanding of the impact of intergenerational trauma has had on Aboriginal tenants, and employees, and work to create services that are appropriate and welcoming. One aim is to increase the number of Aboriginal people taking up housing in the community housing sector and have sustained successful tenancies.

Nicole has now lived in her AHV home for 16 years and is a self-employed consultant, working with organisations to build culturally safe, capable and competent services. She also assists AHV as a Tenant Advocate, representing tenants’ views at various forums and projects.

‘What I’d like to hear is hope for the future generations.’