



**Community Housing**  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION **VICTORIA**

# 2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT

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# 1 REPORT FROM CHAIR & CEO

July 2020 brought with it Victoria's second wave of the pandemic, which saw coronavirus cases emerge in community housing for the first time. This set the scene for the 2020/21 financial year being one like no other.

While, on a personal level, we were all facing challenges and learning new skills, such as working from home at a time of heightened anxiety, CHIA Vic and the community housing sector were discovering a resilience and agility that would do us proud. 2020 also saw the creation of Homes Victoria and the announcement of a historic \$5.3 billion investment in social housing through the Big Housing Build, something which CHIA Vic and the sector welcomed with open arms.

Throughout the peak of Victoria's terrible second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, CHIA Vic built on its work developing resources and tools for the community housing sector supporting the most vulnerable in our community. As the pandemic drags on, those resources continue to be developed and shared.

CHIA Vic staff continued, off and on, to work from home and our popular training sessions continued to be held online. One of our greatest challenges was the planned joint CHIA and CHIA Vic Big Australian Housing Build conference. There was no doubt that the conference must go ahead – it was imperative that at this time the sector be fully supported – but the question was: how can we deliver an effective event that was well-attended, given the pressure on CHOs?

Happily, being online proved no obstacle to conference attendance, with participants telling us that it enabled greater accessibility and opportunity to interact with other participants and presenters. This was particularly true of participants from regional Victoria who otherwise would not have been able to attend.

As COVID-19 numbers across the state began to dwindle, thoughts turned to Big Housing Build, and in particular the Rapid Round which opened for submissions from the sector in December. CHIA Vic worked closely with Homes Victoria to clarify the requirements for CHOs to participate and ensure that members views were taken into account wherever possible. We also worked with Homes Victoria and members to ensure the sector was in the best possible position to maximise this unique opportunity. CHIA Vic developed and ran a number of bespoke training sessions to skill up and inform CHOs around Big Housing Build requirements.

Social procurement, being such an important part of the Big Housing Build, was a key area of work this year, and we developed resources and held a number of sessions to support the sector in meeting this essential requirement. We have been buoyed by the response of our members, keen to develop new ways of delivering their services.

With the significant reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act pushed back to March 2021, members spent much of this year managing tenancies under the emergency measures introduced instead, and waiting for final details of how the newly reformed RTA would work. While the new RTA provisions came into effect in April 2021 the sector found itself having to adapt their service

delivery in line with the differing requirements of three very different versions of the RTA over a short and turbulent one year period.

In February, we held a dedicated RTA information session, which gave an overview of the RTA reforms and how they impact the community housing sector. These details were expanded on in a new half day course developed for members: "Rental Reforms for Community Housing Workers".

With such great challenges and opportunities, and as we all worked remotely, the prompt and effective communication of information and resources took on particular significance. We continued to develop our digital suite of communications assets as a major vehicle. Our newly established LinkedIn page proved particularly effective, perhaps not unsurprising given it is a peer-to-peer platform, with a weekly acquisition of 5-10 new followers.

The next year is set to be one of unprecedented growth for the community housing sector, and as we have all learned this year, time alone will tell what new challenges arise as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, if this past year has taught us one thing, it's that CHIA Vic and the sector we serve are comprised of amazingly dedicated, skilled and experienced people, more than capable of meeting any challenge, and shining in even the bleakest of situations. And that stands us in very good stead.



***Chair Trudi Ray***



***CEO Lesley Dredge***

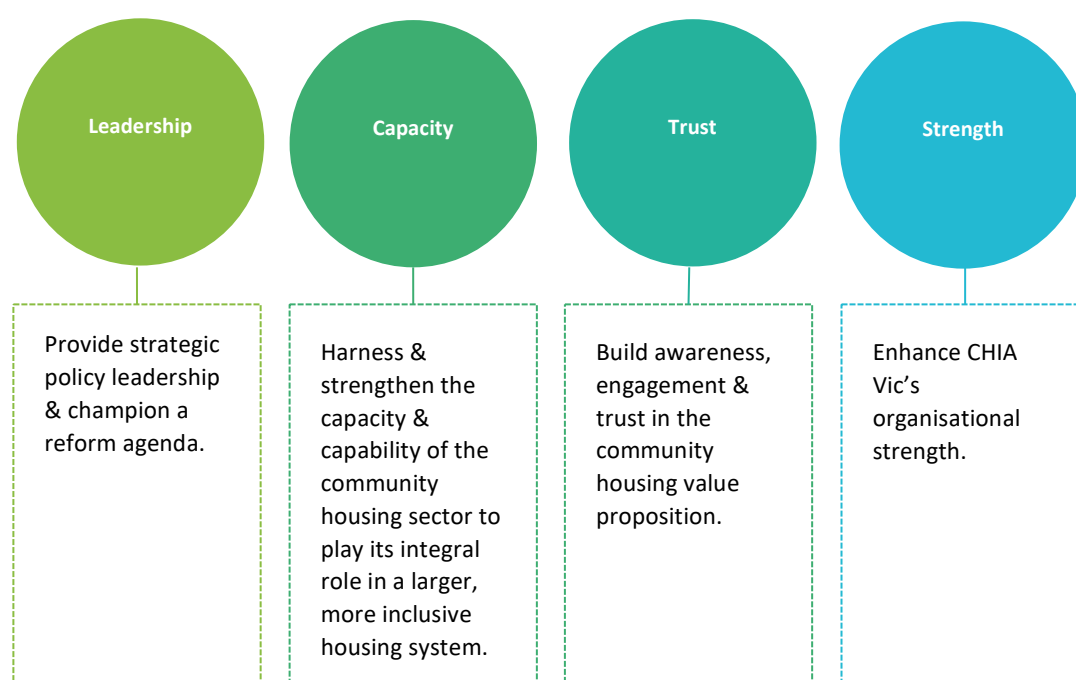
## Our Strategic Plan

CHIA Vic's strategic plan 2019-21 sets out the organisation's vision, mission and key priorities:

**Our vision: 'A thriving Victoria where everyone has the safety, security and dignity of a home – the foundation for opportunity.'**

**Our mission: 'To lead and enable a diverse and dynamic community housing sector that is integral to the housing system.'**

The plan identified four key priorities, which we report against in this 2020/21 annual report:



You can read more about the objectives and outcomes by downloading the four-page Strategic Plan at [chiavvic.com.au/about](http://chiavvic.com.au/about)

## Our Membership

CHIA Vic represents more than 21,646 tenancies with 20,781 of those being units regulated by the Housing Registrar and 865 by non-registered CHOs.

Number of Housing Associations – 10

Number of Housing Providers – 29

Number of Associate Members – 25

Number of Aboriginal Housing Cooperatives affiliated through Aboriginal Housing Victoria – 23

Number of non-registered CHO members – 13

\* as at 14 October 2021

# 2 STRATEGIC POLICY LEADERSHIP AND CHAMPION REFORM AGENDA

## 2.1 Augment CHIA Vic's policy development capability through members, partnerships and networks

CHIA Vic is in constant contact with our membership and stakeholders holding regular forums and meetings, as well as collating surveys and conducting one-on-one phone calls during the year when seeking input into specific issues, such as rent setting or cladding remediation costs, prior to advocating on their behalf. Meetings during the year discussed industry-specific issues such as the Stimulus Maintenance program, the Big Housing Build and COVID-19 related matters.

We facilitate sector group meetings to enable those with specific interests or specialities to share information, expertise and concerns and CHIA Vic ensures our sector's views are clearly represented through submissions to relevant inquiries and commissions



CHIA Vic worked diligently throughout the year to champion our members best interests, including regular liaison with government on the design and roll-out of the Big Housing Build. We have been proactive in communicating regularly with our membership on their needs both in the Big Housing Build and beyond, and have drawn on the sector's views in drafting sector development projects proposed for funding by Homes Victoria. Areas of work and outcomes include:

- The social housing exemption from the cladding levy was finalised, and a process established to notify the VBA of eligible projects.
- CHIA Vic worked with the sector, Homes Victoria, DELWP, DTF and Cladding Safety Vic (CSV) to understand the extent of flammable cladding in the community housing sector. We advocated for sector access to CSV funding for remediation activities on the basis of our renters' vulnerabilities and the need to ensure CHOs could maximise their contributions to the Big Housing Build.
- Legal advice around SHGF funding deed, negotiated changes based on member feedback
- Family Violence toolkit updated to incorporate MARAM
- Social procurement
- Roundtable with UK housing providers on the Homes UK procurement model – DTF and Homes Victoria attended

## Housing Peaks

CHIA Vic is a founding member of the Housing Peaks alliance, which is committed to working with the Victorian Government to deliver practical and sustainable solutions to both the problems of lack of social housing supply and inadequate support services.

Throughout 20/21, the group's discussions focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable renters, the roll out of government support for renters who have negotiated a rent reduction with their landlords, the Big Housing Build, and the Homeless to a Home program which aimed to move clients out of the hotel accommodation and into long-term rentals.

## CHIA National

CHIA Vic works closely with the sector's national peak body, CHIA and other state-based community housing peaks, to provide input and combine knowledge and resources.

CHIA Vic partnered with CHIA National to run a session in August on sustainable design of social housing, featuring the Green Building Council of Australia.

Building on previous joint work, CHIA and CHIA Vic developed and ran a joint conference for the community housing sector in April, the Big Australian Housing Build Conference.

**ONLINE CONFERENCE**  
**27-28 APRIL 2021**  
[www.chiavic.com.au](http://www.chiavic.com.au)

This online event brought to you by CHIA VIC & CHIA National



## Member sessions

CHIA Vic launched a speakers series, Thinking about Growth, in October 2020. Sessions to date have looked at demountables, modular building; Developing in the Middle Suburbs; and NHFIC financing and capacity building grants.

Based on member feedback, CHIA Vic hosted several well attended refresher sessions on how to make allocations in the VHR, and how to best utilise housing demand data from the Housing Reporting Toolbox.

## Sector groups

CHIA Vic fosters networking and collaboration between community housing organisations that face similar opportunities and challenges by hosting regular sector group meetings.



### **Rooming House Sector Group**

It was a particularly challenging year for rooming house managers due to the impact of the pandemic on high-density facilities, increasing issues with allocations and significant changes to the rooming house provisions of the RTA. The group met six times over the year, shared good practice advice and contributed to resource development to meet these challenges. Guest speakers included representatives of Homes Victoria and the Department of Health. The group also provided insights which will inform work planned over coming years to improve approaches to providing social housing for single person households

### **Co-op Sector Group**

The Co-op sector group provides a forum and conduit for information sharing, exploration and discussion of issues of interest to the co-operative housing sector. The group met 11 times over the year, sharing practice advice and discussing issues such as the implementation of the changes to the RTA, opportunities for growth under the Big Housing Build, and how to improve the effectiveness of the VHR in identifying appropriate applicants for co-op vacancies.

### **Transitional Housing Sector Group**

Beginning in February 2021 CHIA Vic merged the Transitional Housing managers and tenancy coordinator groups into a single transitional housing sector group. In line with this change the group updated the terms of reference and agreed that members would determine who from their organisation attended, with the sessions being open to all THM managers and tenancy coordinators.

Prior to this change the managers group met six times and the THM tenancy coordinators group met twice. The combined group then met six times.

The THM Review and ongoing issues in requesting maintenance via the call centre and by email were key topics of discussion for the group, along with the implementation of the new RTA and its impacts for the THM model.

Guest speakers joined the group from the Housing Call Centre and the Homelessness area in DFFH managing the THM Review.

### **CHIA Vic Residential Tenancies Act and VCAT Help Line**

The popularity of the RTA and VCAT helpline has more than tripled over the last two years as members have adapted to the recent rounds of RTA changes and we helped members with 615 issues raised via the help line over the year.

While interpretation and implementation of tenancy law reforms formed the bulk of queries, we also helped members with tricky VCAT disputes, procedural matters, and the intersection of tenancy management and COVID restrictions. The issues raised by members via the help line have informed project work, the content of CHIA Vic's training courses and contributed to our feedback via the VCAT Residential Tenancies User's Group.



## RTA Reforms

As the sector prepared for significant reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) which were due for implementation on 1 July 2020, emergency changes to the RTA made in response to the coronavirus pandemic led to a very different set of tenancy laws being rushed into place before the start of the financial year and the planned reforms were pushed back to March 2021. As a result, the sector needed to adapt their service delivery in line with the

differing requirements of three very different versions of the RTA over a short and turbulent one year period.

The temporary changes included a ban on rent increases and on issuing notices to vacate, as well as limiting the grounds a tenancy could be ended. They were aimed at protecting renters in the private sector and were not well suited to the community housing sector where social landlords are already committed to sustaining tenancies and there are existing measures to keep rent affordable. While supporting members to understand and adapt to the changes, we advocated to government for amendments in support of community housing programs and service models. Training, resourcing and advocacy work completed over the year in relation to tenancy law included:

Resources: A comprehensive 62-page guide to the rental reforms was developed by CHIA Vic to assist members to understand and adapt to the tenancy law changes.

The guide was written as a plain language outline of the changes included in this reform package that are relevant to community housing organisations and was subsequently updated based on feedback from members. CHIA Vic received extremely positive feedback on this resource which members advised was useful for professional development of staff, as a reference guide and as a tool to assist in updating policies and procedures.

Advocacy: In the lead up to implementation of the reforms, CHIA Vic continued to advocate for changes to tenancy laws in support of the community housing sector. Legal changes that we advocated strongly for and were pleased to see included in the reforms included: new protections for housing workers to help prevent occupational violence; the ability to gazette community housing owned buildings as rooming houses; and the inclusion of a definition of rebated rent that provides a clear legal framework in support of the social housing rent setting approach. CHIA Vic has continued to advocate throughout the year on behalf of our members for further RTA changes in support of community housing programs and service models.

## RTA training

CHIA Vic held a briefing in February attended by 140 staff from member organisations in which we gave an overview of the RTA reforms most relevant to the community housing sector. These details were expanded on in a new half day course developed for members: “Rental Reforms for Community Housing Workers” which 329 people attended during the year.

## Partnerships

CHIA Vic works with key stakeholders in the broader housing and homelessness sectors to foster closer ties and promote understanding of the community housing sector's business model and capacity, as well as advocating on the sector's behalf. During the year, the groups CHIA Vic actively participates in were:

- The Industry Working Group & Subgroups
- Victorian Housing Register Senior Leadership Group
- The Affordable Housing Industry Advisory Group
- Transitional Housing Management Review Reference Group
- Community Legal Centre and CHIA Vic Working Group
- Human Services and Health Partnership Implementation Committee (HSHPIC)
- VCOSS Peaks and Statewide Network
- Mental Health Vic Policy Network
- VCAT User's Group
- Residential Tenancies Stakeholder Reference Group

CHIA Vic has also worked to build up strong relationships with a wider range of affordable housing stakeholders, including the Municipal Association of Victoria and the UDIA. A key program of work which CHIA Vic expanded this year with the appointment of an affordable housing business development officer is the creation of resources and a program of engagement with local governments, developers, and other key allies involved in the growth and delivery of social and affordable housing. Building strong partnerships in this space is critically important to achieving this work.

## 2.2 Be a true partner of government in solving the housing supply challenge

As the voice of the community housing sector in Victoria, CHIA Vic is involved in providing high-level input to the Victorian Government through submissions, regular meetings and consultations.



### Industry Working Group

The Industry Working Group met regularly through the year. Post the announcement of the Big Housing Build the group was expanded to include all housing associations. The key areas of discussion centred around the following themes

- BHB requirements such as social procurement and capacity building
- Future facing work in the areas of the 10-year plan; social housing market design; program-based commissioning; workforce and institutional investment
- Operational issues such as the Compact and reviewing the terms of reference.

## Describing Social Housing project

CHIA Vic has continued to work in collaboration with the Housing Registrar and DHHS on a project to provide a shared understanding of all aspects of social housing, which will include a detailed analysis of the similarities and differences between public and community housing.

The project aims to examine the systems and modes of service delivery to produce a consolidated and concise paper that describes both public and community housing models, which can be used to inform sector and government discussions. It will also assist in external messaging about community housing, including to VHR applicants.

The mission, size, diversity of stock, funding sources and operational models of the two sectors is being documented, along with their tenancy management policies and housing services. It will also provide a description of the legislative environment within which the two sectors operate, as well as the legal protections available to tenants in both public and community housing. The majority of work for this project was completed over the year with the project to be finalised in the coming year.

## Submissions

During the year CHIA Vic developed a number of submissions, including a budget submission arguing for the reimagining of rooming houses, given the risks associated with high density housing.

We provided a submission to Homes Victoria's Discussion Paper on a 10-year strategy for social and affordable housing which articulated CHIA Vic's vision for the social housing system, and highlighted a need for growth targets, systemic reform, and what would be required to deliver a person-centred system.

CHIA Vic lodged submissions and represented the sector at regular meetings with DFFH, Homes Victoria and DJCS to outline sector needs and advocate for amendments to temporary and ongoing changes to tenancy law. These representations resulted in changes to the RTA and supporting regulations and CHIA Vic continues to advocate for amendments in support of community housing operations.

CHIA Vic held workshops to guide our first submission to the Social Housing Regulation Review Panel. As the only sector being regulated by the current Social Housing Regulations, the community housing sector is in a unique position to identify what works well under the current system and what can be improved upon and CHIA Vic will continue to collate member feedback and advocate for the sector throughout the ongoing review of social housing regulation.

CHIA Vic also provided a range of submissions to Homes Victoria throughout the year to assist with the design and delivery of the Big Housing Build.

## Input and representation

It would be difficult to imagine a time when CHIA Vic's representation of the sector has been more essential or impactful. The Big Housing Build was announced in November 20, with calls for shovel-ready projects made the following month and applications for the Rapid Round required to be submitted by March 21.

CHIA Vic worked with the newly formed Homes Victoria on shaping the BHB and the design of the first Rapid Round. We obtained legal advice on the Funding deed (and all side deeds) and held member meetings to examine and discuss the documents. We were then able to collate the feedback, which we provided to Homes Victoria as a single sector response.

CHIA Vic then worked with Homes Victoria to negotiate changes to ensure the contracts were suitable for both Homes Victoria and for CHOs.

CHIA Vic spent a significant amount of time this year working with and advocating to Homes Victoria regarding the details of the roll out of the Big Housing Build. This included reviewing and providing input into the social procurement expectations based on member consultation; seeking clarity around the design requirements and thresholds of the BHB, particularly relating to environmentally sustainable design; and working to ensure that the timelines of the Big Housing Build could be met by the sector.

A critical element of the Big Housing Build activities this year was the need for further information on how the sector could access streamlined planning provisions for the Big Housing Build, and CHIA Vic worked closely with Homes Victoria and the sector to develop guidelines around community consultation requirements and criteria for delivering housing 'on behalf of the Director of Housing'. CHIA Vic kept in regular contact with Homes Victoria to push for the release of these documents as quickly as possible, since proposals to the Rapid Round required this detail to proceed.

With the approval of some additional funding, CHIA Vic was able to appoint a new resource to undertake broader engagement with the local government and development sectors. Partnerships are a critical element of delivering the scale of new social housing set out in the Big Housing Build, and augmenting CHIA Vic's capacity to engage with these partners has been very well received. A reference group involving representatives from the MAV, local government, state government and the community housing sector was convened, supported by CHIA Vic's new Affordable Housing Business Development Officer, Stephanie Ng. Work has already begun on several projects to develop resources around securing local government contributions to affordable housing projects, and developing a better understanding of developments on leased land.

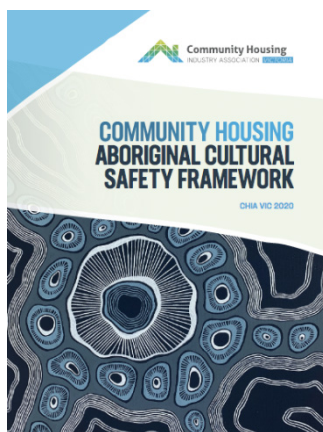
Amongst other activities, CHIA Vic also actively participated in roundtables and other consultations with DHHS and DELWP regarding new energy efficiency upgrade programs.



# 3 HARNESS & STRENGTHEN CAPACITY

Equipping and expanding the capacity of the community housing sector to fully embrace the opportunities presented in the Big Housing Build was a key theme during the financial year.

## 3.1 Participate in the development of the Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework and respond to the needs of members who house Aboriginal people in Victoria



Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework was launched virtually via a Zoom event by the Victorian Housing Minister Richard Wynne and Aboriginal Affairs Minister Gabrielle Williams. The event was chaired by Aboriginal Housing Victoria's CEO Darren Smith.

At the launch we heard from a community housing tenant and employee about the importance of community housing being culturally safe. Consultant Jenny Samms, who was commissioned to write the framework, talked through the first steps organisations need to take. The event was well attended, with 56 people on the line, and also received coverage in the Herald Sun.

Understanding that the sector would require support in adopting the Framework, CHIA Vic complemented the Framework with training sessions focussed on cultural awareness and dedicated consultancy funds to kick start adoption.

In June, we followed up the launch with a session hosted by Jenny Samms, featuring presentations from Nicole Cassar, an AHV tenant, and Professor Kerry Arabena, about implementing the Cultural Safety Framework.

## 3.2 Review and adopt current training and development offering to meet the needs and priorities of a growing sector

Drawing on information and data from CHIA Vic's training and development review, which included current and emerging workforce training needs based on national and international trends, we created a suite of courses designed to address particular training needs and bolster the sector's capability.

## Training

CHIA Vic recognised that a highly skilled and knowledgeable sector is essential to delivering the surge of projects under the Big Housing Build, and developed a number of training courses aimed specifically at making sure the sector was equal to the task, including:

- An introduction to customer journey mapping
- Understanding the big social housing picture
- Introduction to property development

Conducting all training sessions online was no barrier to delivery or participation. Over the year we conducted 135 training courses, which were attended by 1,487 participants which far exceeds delivery levels in previous years.

New courses included:

- Housing First: principles and practice for H2H tenancy workers
- Goods left behind
- Trauma Informed Training
- RTA reformed for Rooming Houses only
- Child safe standard update
- Community Housing Explained update
- Having money conversations with tenants



### Attendee feedback:

“Thanks for your support with this training. I look forward to being including in future training options via CHIAVIC.”

“Our tenancy teams have never participated in training like this and it was so valuable and practical. The data, videos, conversations and information were all very relevant.”

If your organisation would like to book an in-house training session, or suggest a new training topic, please [contact Holly](#)

View our training schedule at <https://chiavic.com.au/all-training-and-events/>

### Community housing Explained Training

We adapted our Community Housing Explained training for delivery to key, new Homes Victoria staff to build an understanding of the sector. An appropriately tailored version was run for developers in partnership with the UDIA.



### 3.3 Engage with and support the sector to identify and implement leading practice and understand industry reforms and developments

#### Leading Practice Sector Group

A Leading Practice Sector Group was established to support continual quality improvement in community housing practice and assist in increasing the shared knowledge base, reputation and professionalism of the sector. The group met five times over the year and shared knowledge on difficult practice issues and advice that guided the development of resources. Resources developed based on the work of this group included guides for managing risks and issues related to the coronavirus pandemic as well as template policies on assignment of tenancies and dealing with goods left behind. The group also provided input into the Describing Social Housing project by helping to document the current policies and practices of the community housing sector.



#### Our support for social procurement activities

Homes Victoria allocated funding from the Sector Development Fund for CHIA Vic to assist members understand and comply with the new funding requirements of the build housing build in Social Procurement, Local Jobs First, and Working for Victoria. Since April 2021 we have:

- Developed information sheets on Local Jobs First, Working for Victoria, and BHB requirements
- Worked with the sector to understand their social procurement objectives, and the types of supports they need to deliver on them
- Run an information session on Gender equality and Safety
- Shared resources to assist members to assess and improve gender equality in their organisations, develop a sexual harassment policy, and establish family violence leave policies.
- Mapped out a workplan to build the sectors capacity in working with the key groups of focus in Homes Victoria's social procurement strategy: women in construction; Aboriginal Victorians; disadvantaged Victorians, including those with disabilities and social housing tenants.

Our first online session: Gender Equality & Safety featured Tanja Kovac, CEO, Gender Equality Victoria who outlined the current legislative landscape, and HCA's James Henry CHO, who outlined his organisations approach to gender equality and safety, including the prevention of sexual harassment.

CHIA Vic's growing social procurement resources can be found on our website at <https://chiavic.com.au/resources/social-procurement/>



## Energy efficiency

CHIA Vic ran an info session for members in July 2020 on low-cost energy efficiency upgrades members could consider as part of their maintenance stimulus projects. Members of BOOMPower presented an overview of different upgrades, their impacts and likely costs.

Best practice case studies of the VPF and Solar Homes upgrades were published in February 2021 and shared with members and key government stakeholders. They have been very positively received and have been useful in informing current and future work by the sector and government on solar and energy efficiency upgrades for the sector.

Solar Vic launched a heating and cooling rebate in May 2021, and CHIA Vic is a member of the reference group guiding its development. Currently the rebate is available for CHOs and homeowners, and there is a renters stream that will be launched soon.

## 3.4 Understand and respond to the needs of members in regional and rural Victoria

CHIA Vic supports members in regional Victoria through extensive communications, the RTA/VCAT Help Line, the Employee Assistance Program and training. A happy consequence of all our training courses being conducted online was that they were more easily accessed by rural member organisations.

## 3.5 Support members to explore opportunities for shared procurement and service opportunities

CHIA Vic was funded by the State Government to employ 12 workers for six months through the Working for Victoria Program, one of the Victorian Government's initiatives to reboot the state's economy and address unemployment due to COVID-19. CHIA Vic partnered with members and 11 of these positions were placed in CHOs to assist with the rollout of the Maintenance Stimulus Program.

## 3.6 Develop a digital capabilities framework that meets the needs of members.

In November 2020, CHIA Vic held a national workshop with community housing organisations and captured data on the current use of information systems, taking into account the community housing sector's future information needs posed by the introduction of a potential stimulus package by the Victorian Government.

The report from this consultation identified a range of sector needs to support IT strategy development and digital transformation. To assist in meeting these needs, CHIA Vic successfully applied for funding from NHFIC to support CHOs to improve their business planning for IT infrastructure through the creation of a technology strategy template and supporting resources that will provide a stepped-out process for the development of IT strategies.

CHIA Vic has partnered with CHIA NSW and is seeking additional funding in the hopes that this work can be complimented by broader research and project work to support digital transformation across the sector.



Unison Footscray property.

# 4 BUILD AWARENESS & TRUST

CHIA Vic is in regular communication with the sector, with a number of communication assets that support our work, events and trainings, as well as keep members up-to-date with the sector news and development.

Our communication tools include our website, social media channels, magazines, monthly eBulletins and other email updates as required. Our online communications were especially employed to deliver breaking news and opportunities within hours of them happening.

A key piece of our communication work this year was developing our major communication tools to increase the scope, accessibility and reach.

## CHIA Vic Big Australian Housing Build Conference 2021

The first virtual conference Big Australian Housing Build took place over two afternoons on April 27 and 28, preceded by a networking event held at the Zinc Fed Square on April 26.

The networking event, sponsored by Community Housing Limited, attracted over 113 delegates that included local government officials, peak bodies, member and non-member organisations and sector developers. Keynote speaker, Treasurer and Minister for Economic Development, Tim Pallas MP, addressed the crowd on the opportunities around the Housing Build.

The virtual conference, run in partnership with CHIA, attracted 245 unique conference registrations including 44 speakers. The delegates and the speakers came from mixed backgrounds that included academic, sector experts, CHIA board members, local government, and developers, giving the conference a highly professional profile and significance attracting local and international representatives.

With over eight plenary and 12 concurrent sessions, the program focused heavily towards recovery but also building better and stronger pathways and gave opportunities for both delegates and speakers to discourse on improving service delivery and Big Housing Build. The online conference platform was designed and structured to foster discussion between delegates in meeting hubs.

The most viewed concurrent session was Housing Regulation: Embedding a role for tenants, and according to our participant survey, the Plenary session featuring Uncle Jack telling his personal story was the most popular.



## Sponsors

Without the sponsors and partners, the virtual conference would not have been able to feature such impressive international and local housing experts. The following organisations contributed to the funding: HomesVic, Community Housing Ltd, Moores, Everyone: a division of Metricon, Housing Choices Australia, Bank Australia, SPM Assets, South East Housing Co-Operatives, Karndean, Aboriginal Housing Victoria, Indigenous Business Australia, Savills Australia, HousingFirst, Development Victoria, Chintaro MDB Consulting, SDM and tenant delegate partners including HR Dept, Affordable Development Outcomes, Hornsby & Co and Unison Housing.

## Magazine

We produced a spring and summer edition of our 16-page, full-colour magazine CHIA Vic News, detailing industry news, views and innovations. In a move towards greater sustainability and accessibility, the magazine was produced in a digital format, which was able to be consumed and shared more widely.

Further work is being done to move towards a new format based on user-experience, which we anticipate will significantly increase the reach and impact of the magazine.



## eBulletin

We distributed 10 monthly eBulletins during the year containing news, events, resources, policy changes and career opportunities.

During the first half of 2021, we sent additional newsletters that contained time-sensitive news about the Big Housing Build, and information specific to the RTA and rebate/funding opportunities. Our newsletters were a key driver for registrations for the CHIA Vic Big Australian Housing Build Conference and networking event.

## Media

With an increased public conversation about community housing due to the Big Housing Build, CHIA Vic continued to be a strong voice in the public conversation. As the Big Housing Build began to be rolled out, our CEO Lesley Dredge, supported the sector, quoted on a number of occasions by journalists in metropolitan and regional Victoria, on homelessness and the need for more social and affordable housing.

## Website

Use of our website hit a new high during the year, attracting 27,500 users, up from the 21,000 the previous year. The number of page visits also jumped from 29,000 to 39,500.

The Big Housing Build and Affordable Housing Toolkits were consistently among the most popular pages.

The increased reliance on the website for information and resources was the driver for the decision to develop a new website, and online development firm, All or Nothing, was engaged to begin work on creating a new website based on their expertise in user behaviour and engagement, with the aim

of making sure visitors to the website are able to find the information they require quickly and efficiently.

### Social media

Social media as a driver to news, information and resources proved increasingly effective this year, reflecting an overall increase in the number of people using the platforms as their source of news.

Our social media strategy was platform-specific yielding tangible results. During the CHIA Vic Big Housing Build Conference, highlights and key information from the speakers was tweeted out in real time, seeing a surge in engagement of over 700 per cent on the same time the previous year.

Our newly-created LinkedIn profile proved effective as a peer-to-peer platform, with an increased 188 per cent of views in one month alone.



### Community Housing Industry Association Vi...

Representing and supporting Victoria's community housing industry  
Non-profit Organization Management · Melbourne, Victoria · [659 followers](#)

## 4.1 Clearly articulate the value proposition and build brand recognition at a state and national level by developing a communications strategy that is tailored to key audiences and resourced appropriately

This year, CHIA Vic's communication strategy was firmly fixed on increasing awareness of our brand proposition and understanding of the community housing sector and the services we provide to the community.

The community housing messaging guide that was developed for us by Essential Media was introduced to about 20 communications staff from organisations around the country. The aim was to see whether the messaging based on Homes for Renters was supported and it was well received. The next step is to find resources to roll it out.

CHIA Vic's national conference was held online, making it accessible to those who might otherwise have missed out on attending. Recordings of the sessions are being rolled out incrementally with the view of extending the reach of the information and resources and making them available for all time, not just the two days of the conference.

A strategic move to digital allowed us to communicate with an increasing number of stakeholders and the wider community.

As the Rapid Round got underway, CHIA Vic engaged with Homes Victoria, and began work on a communications strategy to elevate and strengthen the positioning of the community housing sector.

## 4.2 Enabling strong and respectful relationships that leverage the full potential of the community housing sector

### Securing affordable housing contributions

Building on our previous work with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to develop the Affordable Housing Agreement Toolkit, we have joined forces for a second joint project to examine the various ways local government can secure and manage affordable housing contributions over time.

Guided by a diverse advisory group, comprising representatives from community housing organisations, local government, Homes Victoria, MAV and CHIA Vic, the project will produce resources aimed at enhancing the local government and community housing sectors' understanding of the available mechanisms to secure affordable housing. These resources will step through available legal arrangements that protect the interests of the parties involved and ensure the longevity of the affordable housing that is built.

The project will focus on mechanisms where there is an intersection between local government and community housing. For each mechanism the project will analyse implications and considerations for the parties involved, including legal considerations, risks and resourcing impacts. The resources developed through this project will assist local councils to work through which mechanism will best suit their needs, and to understand the implications of their choice for project partners such as community housing organisations. We aim for the resources to be finalised by the end of November 2021.

Funding for the project has been provided by the Homes Victoria Sector Development Fund, and the work will be undertaken by Kate Breen, of Affordable Development Outcomes, and the legal team at Moores.

### Developments on leased land project

CHIA Vic has received funding through the NHFIC capacity building program to engage Moores Legal to produce resources that consider and document the legal, contractual and accounting requirements and implications of developing on leased land. The project is aimed at increasing the amount of land made available by a third party to CHOs for the development of social and affordable housing. The project will develop template lease agreements and guidance notes for use by CHOs when constructing housing on land owned by a third party. These resources would assist parties to negotiate an agreed and fair outcome, that would address all the critical issues and save on legal costs as much of the thinking would already have been done and provide confidence to the parties to proceed.



### Local government initiatives

CHIA Vic worked with Judith Stubbs and Associates to adapt the CHIA NSW building support for community housing toolkit for the Victorian context. The toolkit will be launched in October 2021 and will include:

- Resources to distribute to local councils and the community to help build their understanding and support for affordable housing, such as an affordable housing fact sheet, renter case studies, and affordable housing development project case studies;
- Resources to help organisations better understand how to build support for affordable housing, such as a fact sheet that examines factors which increase the risk of community resistance and analyses objections to affordable housing development projects in Victoria and NSW.

CHIA Vic provided feedback to Bayside City Council on their Draft Affordable Housing Strategy and Hume City Council on their Draft Affordable Housing Policy. We also presented at the Charter Council CEOs and Housing Agencies Forum in May and the Planning Institute of Australia PLANET social and affordable housing training in May.

### Private sector initiatives

CHIA Vic continues to work with private sector stakeholders such as developers, builders and architects, to support partnership development with community housing. We partnered with the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) to facilitate a community housing explained training course for their members in March, and shared a number of development partnership opportunities with members throughout the year.

# 5 ENHANCE CHIA VIC'S ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTH

## 5.1 Skilled, supported, resourced and engaged workforce with the right people in the right job at the right time

CHIA Vic engaged an Affordable Housing Business Development Officer, Stephanie Ng, to work with the private and local government sectors to increase their understanding of the community housing sector and facilitate partnerships.

Kate Robertson decided to look for other challenges and Margie Ambrose joined the team as Communications Co-ordinator. We also welcomed Eggie Jadamba in our Working for Victoria position and she has become the administrative support we have been missing. Bernie Fernando joined as our bookkeeper two days per week.

CHIA Vic worked closely with DHHS and the community housing sector to address issues and mitigate risks for tenants and staff arising due to COVID. This work included conducting preventative assessments on 18 high risk community housing facilities. Based on the findings of these assessments CHIA Vic was funded to employ an Infection Prevention Project Worker for a six-month period to improve the management of these risks with a particular focus on improving the readiness of high-risk community housing facilities for an outbreak.

There were over 100 enquiries to the Project Worker on COVID issues from CHOs as well as additional enquiries from other organisations and regulatory bodies. The most common questions related to control measures and advice on adapting services to manage infection risks. Assistance was provided in response to these queries via phone calls, emails and site visits, and informed the proactive communication and resources developed by the Project Worker.

## 5.2 Conduct a review of CHIA Vic's governance model

A governance review has been commenced by the Board and should be completed by the end of 2021.



# 6 TREASURER'S REPORT

The 2021 financial year presented a challenging environment for CHIA Vic and the community housing sector more generally. The COVID-19 virus was present for the entire period and forced our small, dedicated team to manage the organisation in a manner not previously expected (or experienced) and focus on aiding member organisations with resources and guidance as they tirelessly worked to support vulnerable clients.

To respond to COVID and successfully embrace the opportunities presented by the pandemic is a testament to the commitment of the entire team, capably led by CEO Lesley Dredge. It also highlights the high regard to which CHIA Vic is held by both member organisations and our primary funding partner, the Victorian government. As noted in our financial report, this is evidenced through the significant project funding awarded by Homes Victoria, the very successful biennial State conference and significant growth in training revenue.

Revenue for the 2021 financial year was \$1,501,118; growth of \$391,906 (35%) when compared to the prior year. It also represented a record level of revenue for the organisation. The increase was primarily driven by project funding secured from the State government (up \$203,854), conference income of \$121,831 (an outstanding event considering it was delivered on-line after being deferred in 2020) and 30% growth in training income, with the excellent RTA reform course very well received by member organisations.

Our organisational mission is to support and advocate on behalf of members, and we do this by investing all available resources in a manner that we hope will directly or indirectly benefit them. The result is expenditure levels that align with revenue and this again occurred in 2021. Total expenditure was \$1,487,603; 34% higher than the previous year. Administration, office and general overhead expenditure remained tightly managed for the year, with combined expenditure of \$133,975; down 9% from \$148,017 in the prior period.

The outcome was a small surplus for the year of \$13,515 compared to a loss of \$2,088 for 2020. In an extremely challenging and fast-changing environment, the Board is extremely pleased with the result.

Project opportunities will carry-over into the 2022 financial year. At year-end CHIA Vic held \$691,149 in cash and a further \$255,792 as trade receivables, however of these balances \$460,228 represents monies received / receivable for projects and services to be delivered in the 2022 financial year. An assessment of relative financial health can be achieved by considering the current ratio (current assets less current liabilities) and this has increased from \$212,028 to \$236,375 over the year.

Whilst we are pleased with an increase on this measure, our net asset level of \$227,242 highlights that the organisation does not hold significant financial reserves, and our success continues to rely on the support of all stakeholders.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Lesley Dredge for her financial stewardship of CHIA Vic over the last 9-years; I continue to be amazed (and grateful) that she has achieved so much with limited financial resources.



***Michael Deschepper,  
Treasurer***

# 7 BOARD MEMBERS 2020/2021

CHIA Vic's board members play a vital role in driving the strategic direction of the organisation and providing oversight of our governance and financial management, as well as being a sounding board for sector issues.

We would like to thank our Chair, Trudi Ray; Deputy Chair Jeanette Large; Secretary Roberta Buchanan; Treasurer Michael Deschepper; and, Ordinary Board Members Bevan Warner (Launch Housing), Darren Smith (Aboriginal Housing Victoria), Grant McNeill (Community Housing Victoria), Chris Karagiannis (Salvation Army), James King (Unison), and Stephen Nash (CEHL).

In November 2020, Swinburne Prof Terry Burke and Giovanna Savini (Housing First) were appointed to the Board.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank those members who retired at the 2020 AGM: David Hayward and Steven Morrissey.

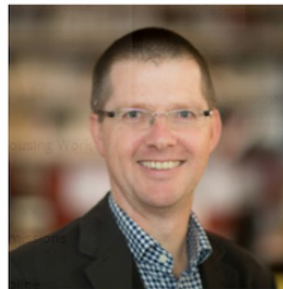
## And thank our entire 2020/21 Board Members:



Trudi Ray  
Chair



Jeanette Large  
Deputy Chair



Michael Deschepper  
Treasurer



Roberta Buchanan  
Secretary



Bevan Warner  
Board Member



Darren Smith  
Board Member



Grant McNeill  
Board Member



Chris Karagiannis  
Board Member



James King  
Board Member



Stephen Nash  
Board Member



Giovanna Savini  
Board Member



Prof Terry Burke  
Board Member

**Board Members who retired during the financial year:**



David Hayward



Steven Morrissey

**You can view all our Board members at [chiavic.com.au/about](https://chiavic.com.au/about)**

# 8 INCOME & EXPENDITURE

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Funding	340,622	336,680
Projects	614,266	410,412
Training Income	294,472	227,229
Member Fees	81,029	78,913
Sponsorship	12,192	11,667
Conference Income	121,831	-
Interest received	4,748	9,476
COVID-19 Government Assistance Payments	31,958	34,835
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b><u>1,501,118</u></b>	<b><u>1,109,212</u></b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Administration Expense	27,448	26,132
Communications	3,613	7,649
Conference Expenses	99,880	-
Consultancy	67,679	16,536
Depreciation	6,884	8,731
Employment Expenses	648,287	459,813
Marketing & Promotion	7,698	10,317
Office Expenses	4,473	6,561
Rent	73,125	71,061
Repair and Maintenance	5,125	3,601
Seminars, Training & Projects	537,782	486,934
Staff Development	5,499	4,205
Travel & Accommodation	110	9,760
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>1,487,603</u></b>	<b><u>1,111,300</u></b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit) Attributable to the Association</b>	<b><u>13,515</u></b>	<b><u>(2,088)</u></b>

# 9 ASSETS & LIABILITIES

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	691,149	663,483
Trade and Other Receivables	255,792	80,446
Prepayments	<u>18,790</u>	<u>18,450</u>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b><u>965,731</u></b>	<b><u>762,379</u></b>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Plant and Equipment	<u>-</u>	<u>9,532</u>
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>9,532</u></b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>965,731</u></b>	<b><u>771,911</u></b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and Other Payables	159,482	99,619
Income Received in Advance	460,228	382,479
Provisions	<u>109,646</u>	<u>68,253</u>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>729,356</u></b>	<b><u>550,351</u></b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	<u>9,133</u>	<u>7,833</u>
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>9,133</u></b>	<b><u>7,833</u></b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>738,489</u></b>	<b><u>558,184</u></b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b><u>227,242</u></b>	<b><u>213,727</u></b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Accumulated Funds	227,242	213,727
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b><u>227,242</u></b>	<b><u>213,727</u></b>

# 10 INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

## 10.1.1 Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Community Housing Federation Of Victoria Incorporated (the Association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2021, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the statement by the members of the Board.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Association is in accordance with *the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its performance for the year ended; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards as per Note 1, *the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

## 10.1.2 Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. I am independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

## 10.1.3 Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Community Housing Federation of Victoria Incorporated to meet the requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and *the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

## 10.1.4 Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the registered entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the responsible entities.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the responsible entities use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the registered entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the registered entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.



I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal controls that I identify during my audit.

**Auditor: Frederik Ryk Ludolf Eksteen**

**ASIC Registration Number:**

**421448Address:**

**Collins & Co Audit Pty Ltd,**

**127 Paisley Street, FOOTSCRAY VIC 3011**



**Signature:**

**Date: 7 October 2021**

# 11 THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

As a not-for-profit peak body, CHIA Vic relies on our strong membership base and the financial support of our major sponsors to be able to provide the vital services, support, training, advocacy and project work required by our sector. We would like to thank the following organisations for their assistance in 2019/20.

## OUR 2020/21 SPONSORS



Bank Australia  
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Go to [bankaust.com.au](http://bankaust.com.au)

moores

Go to [moores.com.au](http://moores.com.au)



CHIA Vic acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.