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ABORIGINAL HOUSING VICTORIA | Message Stick Newsletter
April-May 2016



Have you time to Teleyarn?

AHV partners with Red Cross to bring our Elders together

GETTING A PHONE CALL FROM SOMEONE who cares can make all the difference when you're on your own. Many Aboriginal people, including some of our tenants, live in isolation from their mobs.

That's why AHV has partnered with the Red Cross to provide the Teleyarn program. Through Teleyarn, Elders as volunteers will call up other Elders and tenants to check in with them and just have a yarn.

Aunty Pat Ockwell has signed up as the first volunteer of our Teleyarn program, which will start in May.

Aunty Pat said it was important to reach out to people who haven't got anyone, or might be getting into trouble.

"A lot of our people are out in the bush, in country towns, and they keep to themselves. Many of our people have been victims of racism and exclusion.

"I think it would help people with problems from getting worse. That's the reason I'm interested in it."

AHV needs more volunteers for the Teleyarn project, and Aunty Pat is encouraging other Elders to join in. "I think it would be a good thing for them to be involved. There are Elders out there who will listen and pass things back."

Teleyarn volunteers will receive training and will be reimbursed for any expenses they incur. AHV



Aunty Pat wants Elders to get involved with Teleyarn

matches tenants with volunteers to help ensure the best possible relationships.

AHV's Life Skills Co-ordinator, Nikki Moss, said that she hoped more Elders would get involved in Teleyarn.

"Teleyarn is about us being more connected to tenants. I would hope that when people get a call, it lifts their spirits, gives them something to look forward to, and maybe gets them back out if they've been stuck at home. If someone's having problems, we're more likely to know about it if there's someone checking on them."

If you'd like to volunteer or be matched up with a volunteer, please call Nikki Moss, AHV's Life Skills Coordinator on 03 9403 2101.

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SAVE THE DATE for our Sorry Day BBQ

This year AHV will again be holding a Sorry Day BBQ near our Office in North Fitzroy on **Thursday, 26th May from 12 noon**. PLEASE JOIN US IF YOU CAN!
Check out our Facebook page or give us a call for details closer to the date.



Royal Commission into Family Violence: what you need to know



ABORIGINAL HOUSING VICTORIA was one of many organisations that made a submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

The report of the Royal Commission has just been released and some of the key recommendations are:

- Establishing highly visible one stop support and safety hubs across the state.
- Supporting the "Safe at Home" approach, where women and children stay in the house, while the perpetrator has to leave.
- Setting up a housing taskforce to ensure crisis and short term housing options are available for victims of violence.
- Greater protection and safety for children.
- More family violence courts.
- More training for all key workers (hospitals, schools) in how to respond to family violence.
- Greater support for Aboriginal communities including a strong focus on wrap-around services to support the first five years of life.
- Expand Child FIRST services to reduce high rates of removal of Aboriginal children.
- Resuming the Koori Family Violence and Victims Support Program.

- Improve culturally appropriate family violence support services for Aboriginal women and children.

Here is the link, if you want to see the full report: www.rcfv.com.au/MediaLibraries/RCFamilyViolence/Reports/RCFV_Full_Report_Interactive.pdf

There are a range of support services available for victims of domestic and family violence, with specialised services for Aboriginal women, men and children.

For help in an emergency call 000. There is no shame in calling the police.

Safe Steps Family Violence Response service: 1800 015 188

The Men's Referral Service: 1300 766 491

VACCA Kids help line: 1800 551 800

VACCA Parents line: 132 289

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service: 1800 105 303

1800RESPECT (National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service): 1800 737 732

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STAR WEAVING WORKSHOPS

Come along to our office and help us weave 10,000 stars as part of the 1 Million Stars to End Violence Project.

Call us on 9403 2100 or visit us on Facebook for session times.

Our star count at time of publication is **1,426**

Win a \$500 Bunnings Gift Voucher in our Spring Gardening Competition!

YOU AND YOUR MOB COULD BE WINNERS of a Bunnings Gift voucher if you get busy gardening this autumn and winter!



AHV is giving away vouchers and other prizes as part of our Spring Gardening Competition.

It doesn't matter what you like to grow – whether it's fruit trees, veggies, herbs, pretty flowers or native plants – we'll have many different categories you can enter. An overall winner will win a \$500 gift

voucher for a prize of their choice at Bunnings ... and there'll be other prizes yet to be revealed.

Winter is a good time for many types of planting. Visiting your local garden store is

a great way to get advice about what to plant in winter, and tips like starting a compost to reduce your kitchen waste and feed your garden at the same time.

If you'd like to get gardening but you're finding it hard to make a start, we can help with seedlings and soil. Call the office on 9403 2100 if you'd like a hand with your garden.



Come celebrate NAIDOC Week with us

MAKE SURE YOU LOCK in the date for our annual NAIDOC Family Day into your diaries - Wednesday, July 6th at the Collingwood Children's Farm in Abbotsford.

We invite you to join us for a fun filled family day of music, dance, cultural and children's



activities as we celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture during NAIDOC Week.

The theme for NAIDOC Week this year is Songlines: the living narrative of our nation.

Check out the NAIDOC website for more information: www.naidoc.org.au

03-10
JULY
2016



Songlines:
The living narrative
of our nation



Annual Rent Review

WE ARE IN THE PROCESS of conducting the Annual Rent Review for 2016.

Thank you to everyone who has responded to AHV's requests for documentation. If you have not responded and think you may be entitled to subsidised rent, please contact

your Housing Officer or Head Office to obtain an Application for Subsidised Rent form so we can assess your eligibility.

If you have responded then you will be notified of the new rent charge by mail in the first week of August. New rent charges are applied to your rental account from the 15th August, 2016.

How we calculate your rent

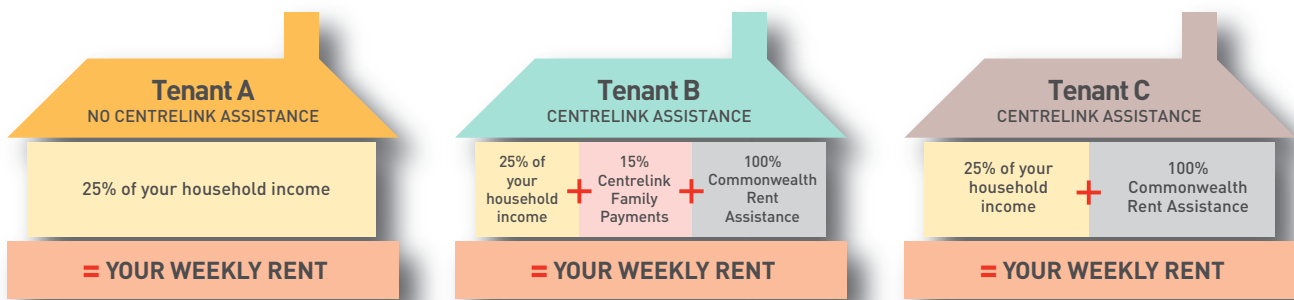
The rent you pay AHV is calculated on specific percentages of your income, Centrelink Family Payments and Commonwealth Rent Assistance - depending on your particular circumstances.

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

Commonwealth Rent Assistance, 100% of that payment is added to your AHV rent.

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

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



This diagram illustrates how we calculate rent for each of our tenant types, depending on their household situation.

How does your Fixed Rent Review work?

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

Changes to your rent can have a major impact on the amount of money your household has left to pay for utilities, food, clothing, health care and other expenses. With that in mind, in 2012, AHV changed the frequency of rent reviews from 6 to 12 months and moved to Fixed Rent Reviews - this means your rent is fixed for that period.

If household income increases during this fixed rent period, this additional income WILL NOT be used for assessment of rent UNTIL the next Fixed Rent Review.

All tenants are given a minimum of sixty days notice of an increase in rent (following your Fixed Rent Review). At this point you can lodge an

application for a rent subsidy for the next 12 months.

Eligibility for a subsidy is based upon household income and the current maximum rent of the property.

Please note: if there are any changes in your household circumstances you must advise AHV, providing us with a completed application for subsidised rent and all supporting documentation within 28 days. Forms for subsidised rent are available from any AHV office or from our website.

If you have any further queries about Fixed Rent Reviews, please contact your Housing Officer.

For all your repairs and maintenance needs please call one of the following AHV Maintenance Lines:

General metro: (03) 9403 2166

Regional: 1300 664 392 (cost of local call)

Emergency after hours: (03) 9403 2171