



06 September 2024

The Treasury (of the Commonwealth of Australia)  
Langton Crescent  
PARKES ACT 2600

Sent via e-mail: [housing@treasury.gov.au](mailto:housing@treasury.gov.au)

### **Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (VAHMF) Submission to Exposure Draft of Housing Australia Investment Mandate Amendment (2024 Measures No. 2) Direction 2024**

The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum (VAHMF) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft investment Mandate Amendment.

By way of background, the VAHMF is a consortium of 38 Aboriginal community-controlled organisations ('ACCOs'), Traditional Owner groups ('TOs') and Aboriginal Trusts who either provide housing and homelessness services to the Aboriginal community or have an interest in housing and homelessness.

In February 2020, the Victorian Aboriginal community, alongside the Victorian Government, launched [Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home - The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework](#) ('Framework') in Queens Hall in the Victorian Parliament.

VAHMF members operate collectively to implement *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* (the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework, which has been endorsed by the Victorian Government) which outlines a 20-year roadmap to achieving quality housing outcomes for Aboriginal Victorians in a generation. Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV) also provides secretariat support to this forum, with the Victorian State Government providing support as a partner member.

*Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort* is crucial to delivering a culturally safe housing and homelessness system which addresses the housing challenges that Aboriginal people face. It also:

- Supports the implementation of Victoria's \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build **10% net additional Aboriginal dwelling target**
- Strengthens the housing sector for Victorian Aboriginal communities
- Provides strong governance
- Enhances the capacity of Aboriginal communities in the housing and homelessness sector.

Being Aboriginal in Victoria today means that:

- We are 15 times more likely to access support from specialist homelessness services than non-Aboriginal Victorians.
- Nearly 19% of our community sought support from a specialist homelessness service in the last year and these numbers are even higher for women, with 22.4% seeking support.



- The number of us seeking support from specialist homelessness services has **increased** by 14% over the last five years while there has been a corresponding 14% **decrease** for non-Aboriginal Victorians over the same period.
- We are far less likely to own or be purchasing our own home; 42% of Aboriginal Victorians own or are purchasing their own home compared to 67% of the general community.
- A greater reliance on private rentals than non-Aboriginal Victorians but face racism and discrimination when we try to rent privately.
- We are overly reliant on social housing with 20% of us living in social housing compared to 2% of the general population and a further 20% (or over **6,000** Aboriginal households) are waiting for social housing through the Victorian Housing Register, of which 4,470 are on the priority list.

**VAHMF's key points, including desired amendments and queries, relating to the subject exposure draft:**

The VAHMF supports the objective of the amendment, which provides for a significant increase in the funding available to provide more social housing at a time of an unprecedented housing crisis. We also support the focus on women and children, impacted by family violence, and young people as key groups who are disproportionately impacted by the housing and homelessness crisis.

However, we feel that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should also be listed as a priority given the level of disadvantage experienced by our community, and in recognition that Government has failed to close the gap for First Nations people. We believe that Government should at every opportunity include support for First Nations people.

Generally (and increasingly), the practice in Victoria is that a **minimum of 10%** of all new funding is set aside specifically for Aboriginal housing and homelessness; we would like to see this practice rolled out across the country, including for all Commonwealth funding.

**In summary, based on the above, the VAHMF strongly urges Treasury to:**

1. Directly reference Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as a priority group to be supported through the investment mandate amendment.
2. Commit a minimum of 10% of the available fund to Aboriginal housing.

If you wish to discuss this matter, please contact me at [darren.smith@ahvic.org.au](mailto:darren.smith@ahvic.org.au) or on 0477 997 944.

Your sincerely

Darren Smith  
**Chair, Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Forum**