

MEDIA RELEASE

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‘TIKA TIRKA’ ACCOMMODATION FORGING PATHS FOR YOUNG ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS IN ADELAIDE

National not for profit community housing provider, Aboriginal Community Housing Ltd (ACHL) has been selected as service provider by the SA Housing Authority to deliver services at the Tika Tirka Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student accommodation in Adelaide’s CBD.

Jointly Australian funded by the State and Federal Government, ‘Tika Tirka’, means to “stay and learn” in Kurna language, and provides young people from remote and outer regional communities with an affordable, safe and culturally appropriate “home away from home”, studying in Adelaide.

The state-of-the-art accommodation is set up to be home to 20 young people wanting to pursue post-secondary studies in a supportive environment, including vocational training (VET). The SA Housing Authority has run Tika Tirka since it opened in October 2019 and ACHL has taken on the property and tenancy management and resident support from 1 January 2021.

ACHL Chairperson Maureen O’Meara said forging a path of self-determination begins when our basic needs are met, and for young people especially, a stable home in a safe and supported environment is crucial for positive life outcomes.

“Connection to land, family and community plays a very important role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture,” Ms O’Meara said.

“Giving young people access to a community where their values are shared and celebrated is a key ingredient in empowering young people to pursue their goals and aspirations.

“Appropriate housing is vital to overcoming disadvantage, but sadly our major cities are not equipped to cater to the unique and nuanced belief systems and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This can result in barriers to employment and education, which

can impede on an individual's social, economic and emotional wellbeing over the course of their life," Ms O'Meara said. ACHL will work in partnership with cultural service provider Incompro to deliver culturally appropriate support services to residents living at Tika Tirka. .

According to the last census, the employment rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who completed Year 12 or equivalent was around 49 per cent for those aged between 20 - 25, as compared to around 75 per cent for non-Indigenous Australians.

ACHL CEO Steve Bevington said, "There are a multitude of reasons for barriers to employment for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The issues are often complex and are impacted by a range of social, cultural, financial and geographical factors.

"ACHL, with the help of its partners, are proud to be part of the solution to empower more young people to determine their future through the Tika Tirka project. Our aim is that providing young people with secure housing will have positive flow on effects to employment, education, financial security and connection with culture. This will hopefully benefit many generations to come', Steve said.

ACHL will work collaboratively with the SA Housing Authority over the next three and a half years to continue to develop the innovative accommodation program to achieve positive outcomes for residents, service delivery partners and government stakeholders.

Tika Tirka welcomes new student inquiries for the 2021 year – please inquire at tika.tirka@achl.org.au.

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About Aboriginal Community Housing Limited (ACHL)

ACHL is the first independent national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led and managed provider of long-term affordable housing, and property and tenancy management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. It is a Tier 2 community housing provider with a majority Aboriginal Board.

It provides meaningful leadership and influence in undertaking the management of existing portfolios, the development of new housing initiatives, and providing support to Aboriginal housing organisations across the country.

ACHL manages properties around Australia including in the East Kimberley and Goldfields in WA, on the North Coast and in Kempsey in NSW, within Gippsland in Victoria and in various locations in South Australia. ACHL is part of the Community Housing Ltd Group.

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