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Online

30 January

New \$12m Aboriginal Elders social housing project to be built at Bedford Park

A new southern suburbs development has been announced for vulnerable First Nations Elders, as SA moves toward its own Voice to Parliament.



[Emily Olle](#)

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@emilyolle

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January 30, 2024 - 3:41PM



Plans for a new \$12.17m Aboriginal Elders Village at Warriparinga (Bedford Park). Picture: Supplied

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A \$12.7 million new social housing development for at-risk Aboriginal Elders is set for construction in the southern suburbs, with the centre to be built and managed by First Nations people.

The Aboriginal Elders Village, named Purrkanaitya – Kurna for “for all Elders” – will deliver 40 homes for tenants over 50, who are at risk of homelessness or already living in social housing.

Located near the Living Kurna Cultural Centre at Warriparinga (Bedford Park), the accessibly designed housing will include communal areas and culturally significant fire pits.

The project is a joint effort between the state and federal governments, who will contribute \$4 million and \$3 million respectively, with an additional \$5.17 million and the 1.5 hectare site donated by the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC).



Plans for a new \$12.17m Aboriginal Elders Village at Warriparinga (Bedford Park). Picture: Supplied

Human Services Minister Nat Cook said the development would free up existing housing trust homes for Aboriginal clients seeking public housing and the most urgent at-risk category one applicants.

Purrkanaitya would allow Elders to live on country in secure and safe housing, Ms Cook said.

“This new village at Warriparinga, a culturally significant place, will be home to so many and shows what can be achieved when governments work in genuine partnership with Aboriginal people and organisations,” she said.

“As we move toward the election of South Australia’s First Nations Voice, this new village is an example of the journey that our whole community is taking together.”

The project is supported by the federal government’s National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF) as part of a push to accelerate the construction of social housing across the country through the \$10bn Housing Australia Future Fund.

“Our ambitious housing reform agenda is working across the board - with more help for homebuyers, more help for renters and more help for South Australians needing a safe place for the night,” Federal Housing Minister Julie Collins said.

The village is a collaboration between not-for-profit housing provider Aboriginal Community Housing (ACHL), ILSC, Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC), SA Housing Authority and Housing Australia.

KYAC Chair Tim Agius said Aboriginal Elders’ needs could not be met at typical aged-care facilities and hoped the village would begin to fill the gap for older First Nations people.

“Our Elders have needed a place like this for a long time,” Mr Agius said.

“KYAC is proud to be involved in the development that will include homes and shared spaces that are culturally appropriate and close to an important Dreaming story.

“Our Elders deserve nothing less.”

Construction is set to begin in August 2024, with first residents expected to move in by the end of 2025.

The announcement [comes after nominations opened for SA’s Voice to Parliament](#), with six local Voices to make up the historic body which will give First Nations people a direct line of communication with the cabinet, state parliament and government agencies.

Legislation to create the body was passed early last year but its enactment was delayed until after the federal Voice to Parliament referendum.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Kyam Maher said South Australia’s First Nations Voice was about listening.

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“I would urge all South Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with a passion for their communities and a desire to see better outcomes to stand up and nominate for these important roles,” he said.