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Contracts signed for \$12.7 million Aboriginal Elders Village project in Adelaide's south

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A computer-generated image of the Aboriginal Elders Village planned for Bedford Park, near the Stuart River. Photo: ILSC.

The construction of Purrkanaitya, the Aboriginal Elders Village in Bedford Park (Warriparinga), will finally begin in August after contracts for the \$12.7 million project were signed at the end of January.

The social housing development was announced in the South Australian Housing Authority's Aboriginal Housing Strategy 2021-2031, with the aim of reducing homelessness among First Nations people in Adelaide's south where housing is much needed.

Funding for the project came from the State Government (\$4 million), Federal Government (\$3 million), and Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) (\$5.17 million). ILSC donated the 1.5-hectare site for the collaboration between Aboriginal Community Housing (ACHL), ILSC, Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation (KYAC), SA Housing Authority and Housing Australia.

SA Housing Authority Head of Aboriginal Housing Cheryl Axleby-Keeffe said the significant milestone proved how great outcomes could be achieved by working in a collaborative partnership with Aboriginal communities.

“Congratulations to the Kurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation, who have achieved their aspiration to create a safe and supportive independent elder living environment called ‘Purrkanaitya’, Kurna meaning ‘for all elders,’ to live together on Country,” Ms Axleby-Keeffe said.



Ministers Julie Collins, Louise Miller-Frost, Sarah Andrews and Erin Thompson attended the announcement of Purrkanaitya's construction beginning. Photo: Facebook/Nat Cook MP.

Although construction was supposed to begin in 2022, the project is now expected to have residents moving in by the end of 2025.

The 40 homes set to be built near the Living Kurna Cultural Centre have been designed for elders to live independently on Country in safe, affordable and culturally appropriate conditions. Features include bathroom grabrails for residents with mobility issues, communal areas and culturally significant outdoor firepits.

Minister for Human Services Nat Cook said elders would be able to live on the Adelaide Plains where Kurna people had gathered for thousands of years.

“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,” Ms Cook said.

ACHL will manage the properties and tenants moving in, who will be more than 50 years old and either at risk of homelessness or already living in social housing. Housing SA homes vacated by tenants moving to the village will be reallocated to Indigenous clients in the most urgent category for those seeking public housing.

KYAC Chair Tim Agius said they were proud to be involved in the development.

“Our elders have needed a place like this for a long time; their needs can’t be met at a typical aged-care facility, and this village starts to fill the gap,” said Mr Agius. “Our elders deserve nothing less.”