

Call for Membership Applications/Renewals

Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association (ACHIA) NSW has been established as the peak body for Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs) in NSW. ACHIA has developed a service model designed to address the gaps and challenges faced by ACHPs and pursue opportunities for the sector to grow, evolve and learn in accordance with the needs and aspirations expressed by the Aboriginal communities they work in.

BACKGROUND

The need for a strong, state-based peak body for ACHPs arose directly from ACHPs. Supported by the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO), a Management Committee was formed in 2017. All members of the Management Committee were Aboriginal people in governance and senior management positions within various types of ACHPs: large and small, National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) registered and non-NRSCH registered, with urban and regional operations. Members were from Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) including Managing Providers, Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and Aboriginal Corporations (ACs) across NSW.

The Management Committee did the following during 2017 - 2020:

1. Considered what form an independent peak body for ACHPs should take in terms of its governance structure, and developed a Constitution that responded to this structure with pro bono legal assistance;
2. Co-designed its Advocacy Model with the ACHP sector; and
3. Developed and issued ACHIA NSW's inaugural Strategic Plan 2019 to 2022.

ACHIA NSW was incorporated in November 2020 adopting its own Constitution and an all-Aboriginal Board.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTS OF ACHIA NSW

ACHIA NSW's objects are to relieve the poverty, suffering and disadvantage of Aboriginal people in NSW, and to advance their welfare, by supporting NSW Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to provide decent, affordable, and safe housing for their tenants.

ACHIA NSW looks to achieve its objects by, among other things:

- (i) providing information, training and research to build and maintain the capacity of NSW Aboriginal Community Housing Providers;
- (ii) sharing information amongst, and facilitating communication between, Aboriginal Community Housing Providers to support and promote best practice;
- (iii) raising awareness of the need of NSW Aboriginal Community Housing Providers within the general community, other community housing providers and governments;
- (iv) contributing to the development of law and policy on community housing for Aboriginal people in NSW;
- (v) representing the interests of NSW Aboriginal Community Housing Providers in the community and with governments; and
- (vi) collaborating with stakeholders including tenants, community housing providers and their representative bodies.

WHAT WE DO

ACHIA NSW employ a range of strategies to achieve its objects. We:

- collaborate with the ACHP sector to collectively evolve its capabilities, strengths and opportunities in line with emergent needs identified with and by local communities;
- advocate for culturally sound, evidence based policy, strategy and practice frameworks;
- lobby for the delivery of more housing (across the housing continuum) and related goods and services through effective partnerships between ACHPs, government and private industry;

- provide information and support to the ACHP sector through regular forums, conferences, seminars, workshops, guidance documents and alerts;
- grow ACHP expertise through facilitated relationships with Subject Matter Experts that are apprised of sector context, latent opportunities for growth and barriers that need to be overcome by ACHPs through the application of expert intervention, advice and support;
- probe sector and related stakeholder perspectives on recurrent and emerging gaps and challenges;
- develop innovative program solutions that meet the needs of Aboriginal tenants and their families that factor in urban, regional and remote operating contexts;
- deliver consistent, high-level support to ACHPs as they move through the NRSCH process and associated registration requirements; and
- tell the story of Aboriginal housing - its history and value – using a broad-based media strategy.

HOW WE ACCOMPLISH OUR WORK

In mid 2020, ACHIA NSW started conducting in-depth interviews across the ACHP sector to collect data on the current status of ACHPs. Keeping culture at the centre of our practice, the in-depth interviews were accomplished through a series of yarns with deep and respectful listening. Our first round of listening and learning enabled ACHIA NSW to build a detailed picture of the gaps and challenges being faced by the diverse range of ACHPs operating in NSW. Synthesising these results to develop a blueprint of how, what and where to focus in helping build ACHP capability and developing its workforce, ACHIA NSW developed an Incubator-Accelerator service model christened **The Coolamon Project** by the Board.

The Coolamon Project was initially launched with the ACHP sector in December 2021 at the annual Aboriginal Housing Caucus we host (held virtually because of COVID 19 concerns). Through additional feedback obtained through time sensitive advocacy efforts on critical issues arising in the next few months (e.g. continuing to manage risks to vulnerable communities by COVID-19 and the Northern NSW Floods), **The Coolamon Project's** multi-year Program of Activities was further refined in early 2022 and re-issued at the May 2022 Aboriginal Housing Caucus (held in Dubbo).

We regularly circle back to ACHPs to ask more questions and continue listening to what has changed and what issues they're currently facing. We analyse these results along with the results of other forums (e.g. ACHP CEO Forums and consultations on various projects we roll out through which other concerns are often aired) to evolve the offerings of **The Coolamon Project**.

MEMBERSHIP CONDITIONS

For an organisation to be a Member, it must be a not-for-profit Aboriginal Community Housing Provider that provides Community Housing in NSW to a material extent and:

- (i) is a registered Community Housing Provider under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing;
- or
- (ii) whose core activity is the direct provision of community housing to Aboriginal people.

Whilst ACHIA NSW supports ACHPs to seek and maintain NRSCH registration if they wish to do so, membership of ACHIA NSW is NOT restricted to NRSCH registered ACHPs. We recognise that ACHPs are Aboriginal community-controlled organisations (ACCOs) and that each organisation evolves and grows as the community to which it is accountable sees fit. Therefore, ACHIA NSW encourages all ACHPs to hold and pursue their own distinct Vision and Purpose in line with the needs, desires and ambitions of the communities they serve.

Members agree to provide evidence of their Aboriginal community-controlled status, if requested.

ACHIA NSW's OFFER TO EVERY ACHP IN NSW

ACHIA NSW encourages every ACHP in NSW to join as a Member organisation.

Membership is currently free. Membership costs will be reviewed by the Board on an annual basis. Any fee structure introduced will take into account a provider's NRSCH status and the ability of an ACHP to pay.

All Members of ACHIA NSW are equal. Each Member organisation will have one (1) vote at Annual General Meetings and other relevant meetings convened by ACHIA NSW in line with the provisions of its Constitution.

Join us and have your voice heard to shape a brighter housing future for Aboriginal communities around NSW.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- ✓ Nomination and voting rights at Annual General Meetings and meetings convened under the Constitution
- ✓ Exclusive access to working groups which co-design the industry's approach to key issues
- ✓ Policy development, research and advocacy
- ✓ Regular communications (alerts, newsletters)
- ✓ Access to free and discounted professional development training
- ✓ Free resources to support business-as-usual activities across key areas of operation
- ✓ Free attendance at the annual Aboriginal Housing Caucus
- ✓ Exclusive access to regular members' meetings and consultation events
- ✓ Exclusive access to networking events
- ✓ Free access to support, information and advice through the ACHIA NSW Team
- ✓ Membership of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association (NATSIHA), the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community housing organisations
- ✓ Reciprocal rights to resources and opportunities offered by CHIA NSW (access to these resources is as a non-voting member of CHIA NSW; Membership of CHIA NSW involves completing a CHIA NSW Membership Application Form and paying a fee to CHIA NSW)

Data you share with ACHIA NSW remains private and confidential. ACHIA NSW does NOT share ACHP data with other organisations.

ACHIA NSW does analyse trends and patterns and shares non-identifying information with other parties that can help advance the interests of ACHPs. If an issue that requires resolution requires disclosure of private and confidential information/data belonging to an ACHP to another organisation, ACHIA NSW will seek the permission of that ACHP before sharing the information/data with that party.

**Charlie Trindall
Chairperson**