



Aboriginal
Housing
Office

What We Heard

Results from the Listen and Yarn Engagements



Strong Family, Strong Communities

Strong Family, Strong Communities is a ten-year plan to improve the well-being of NSW Aboriginal families and communities through housing.

Putting Families First:

- Improving housing services with a focus on families
- Partnering with human services so families thrive in their homes and communities.

Better Understanding

- Improving data collection, analysis and evaluation to better understand needs for the future.
- Using evidence to improve services and client experience.

Strengthening the Aboriginal Housing Sector:

- Working with Aboriginal community housing providers so they are well-regulated
- Supporting providers to build their capacity and capability to provide better services for the future.

Our journey so far

Over the last 20 years, the AHO has delivered more than 5,900 homes for Aboriginal families and will continue to invest in providing high quality culturally appropriate services.

Central to the new strategy is our commitment to work together with communities to co-design solutions that meet their needs and aspirations.

Our journey so far under the new strategy has been one taken alongside communities and the sector and it will continue to be so.



What We Heard

Since late 2017, the AHO has been talking with communities and the Aboriginal social housing sector.

We've been asking what is important to you when it comes to social housing? What makes a positive experience, what could we do better and what are your aspirations for the future?

This discussion has happened in different places across NSW. It happened at workshops, family BBQs, through surveys and online.

We've spent time to think about what you told us and what it means. This document summarizes what we heard.

This document is What We Heard.

What you said

We collected hundreds of pages of feedback through the different conversations we had. We've grouped what we heard into themes which we'll respond to in our strategy.

You can read a more in-depth analysis of the feedback at www.aho.nsw.gov.au/WhatWeHeard. This includes what was said in each of our five Listen and Yarn locations.

Our strategy will be underpinned by three guiding principles you told us were important to you.

A: Culture at the centre of all we do

We recognise the need to always place Aboriginal culture at the heart of all we do. An understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture (and diversity) will be central to activity under Strong Family, Strong Communities.

B: Clarity of role and how we can help

People support the existence of a government agency dedicated to housing for Aboriginal people. That said many people didn't understand what our role was or what we could do to help. We plan to improve on this.

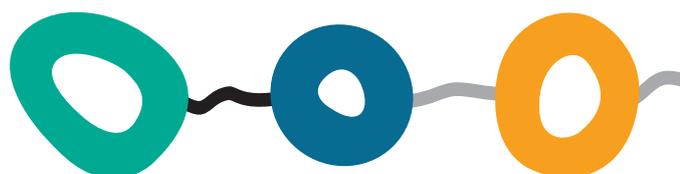
C: Community voice and active participation

People told us they want ways to influence AHO policy. We need to carry on the conversation we started when we came to Listen and Yarn. As a commissioner all we do needs to be informed by what our community is saying.

The Four Pillars

The four pillars of Strong Family, Strong Communities were developed with our stakeholders. They provide the framework for the AHOs direction over the next ten years.

Strong Family,
Strong Communities
Launched



Pillar 1 Housing Solutions

Deliver housing solutions with Aboriginal people. Solutions will be informed by evidence of demand for social and affordable housing.

Repairs & Maintenance

We received lots of feedback about repairs and maintenance. You told us about issues with the quality of repairs, time taken, communication and overdue housing upgrades.

New Supply of Properties

Demand is growing and we need more houses. Houses need to be culturally appropriate and co-designed with communities. Aboriginal community housing providers want to manage more houses so they can be more resilient and suggested more properties should be transferred to them.

Home ownership

Many people have aspirations to own their own home. This could be achieved through support to buy from the private housing market or through sale of social housing.

Asset Management

Best practice policies and procedures for asset management will lead to improved outcomes and better homes.

Pillar 2 Client Outcomes

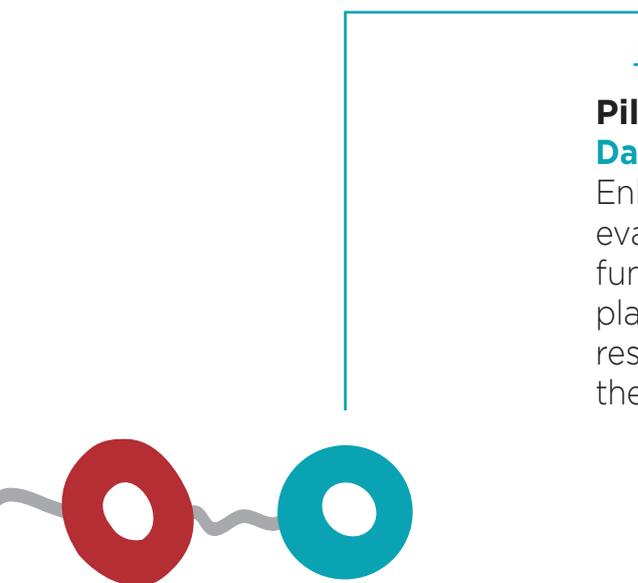
Achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal tenants through partnerships across human services agencies and Aboriginal organisations. Create opportunities for economic participation.

A culturally responsive sector

Services being culturally appropriate was a very strong theme. Specialist services (eg. Domestic and Family Violence) need to be culturally appropriate. Mainstream services need better cultural awareness and accountability.

Access to Housing

Many people find applying for housing too complex and too long. Better support is needed for priority groups. The process needs to be simpler and more transparent.



Pillar 4 **Data and Evidence**

Enhance data collection, evaluation and analysis functions. This will ensure planning is robust and resources are targeted where they are needed the most.

Ongoing need assessments and evaluation

Evidence is vital to planning Aboriginal social housing for the future. Ongoing evaluation should be built into program design.

Better reporting to improve quality

ACHPs want easier reporting. Data should be available to the sector and should help improve performance.



Pillar 3 **Growing the Sector**

Strengthen and grow Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHPs). Do this through capacity building, regulation and transfer of housing and asset management.

Community Housing Regulation

Adoption of national registration is vital for the sector. The AHO should provide support to ACHPs at all stages of registration and compliance.

Growth Providers

In order for the sector to thrive a certain amount of consolidation needs to occur. ACHPs need to achieve a critical mass of properties to be sustainable.

Fair Rent, Collected Reliably

Tenants need to understand how their rent is calculated and what it is used for. ACHPs need strategies to ensure timely rent collection.

Homelessness

Emergency accommodation needs to be better and be culturally appropriate. Tenancy management needs to support sustaining tenancy. Government at all levels needs to be joined up.

Services Working Together

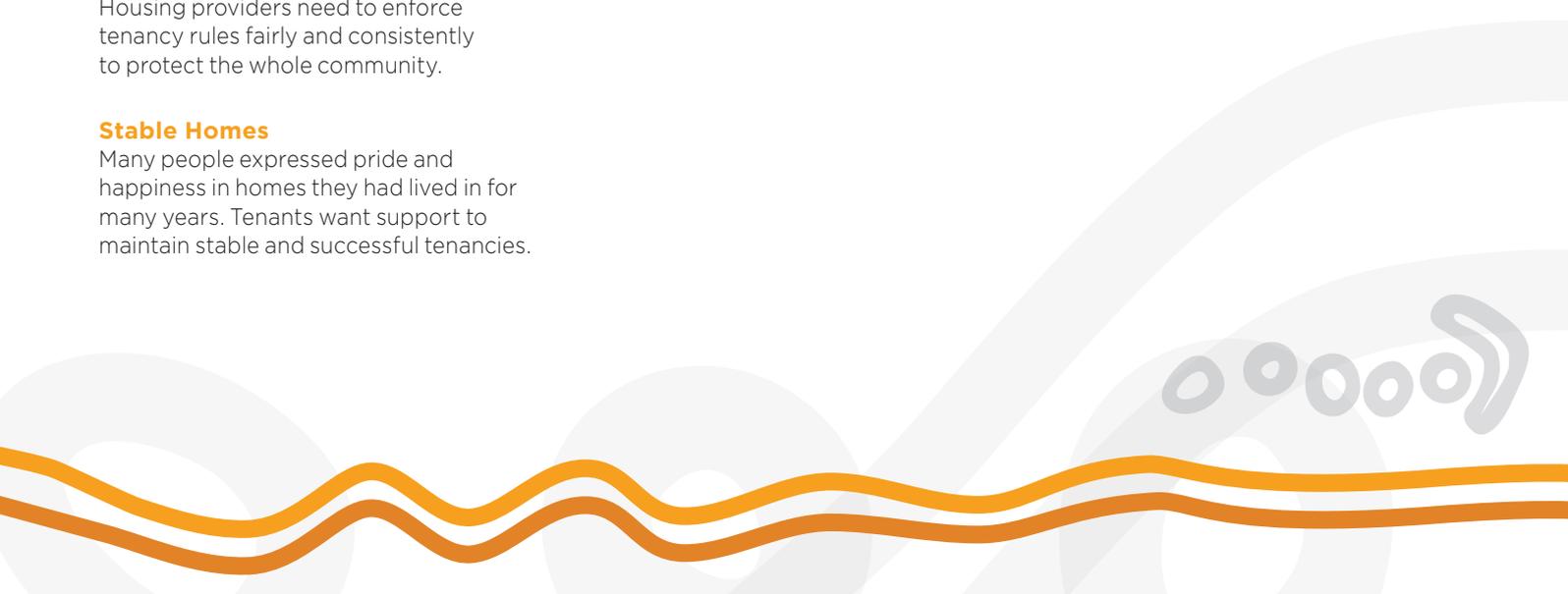
Services need to work better together to support tenants. Housing services are well placed to co-ordinate this. Some people need extra help to get support.

Neighbourhood Safety

Tenants want to feel safe in their communities. Social housing shouldn't be clustered together. Housing providers need to enforce tenancy rules fairly and consistently to protect the whole community.

Stable Homes

Many people expressed pride and happiness in homes they had lived in for many years. Tenants want support to maintain stable and successful tenancies.





Thank you

At the AHO we are very grateful to everyone who gave up their time and effort to share their views on our new strategy. We have been overwhelmed by the passion and insight of those who have contributed.

Our heartfelt thanks goes out to;

- Attendees at the Minister's round table
- Communities in Dubbo, Moree, Nowra, Penrith and Tamworth who took part in the Listen and Yarn workshops, BBQ and home stories
- Everyone who took part in the AHO Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Contributors to the Build and Grow evaluation
- Individuals and organisations who took time to respond to the online consultation including;
- The Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association (ACHIA)
- The Law Society of NSW
- SEARMS Aboriginal Corporation
- Aboriginal Community Housing Ltd
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council (NSWALC)
- Community members at the Koori Knockout, Yabun Festival and Cooee Festival who took the time to talk to us at the AHO stall and answer our surveys
- People who got social with us over Facebook and Instagram.



What happens next?

We will publish our Strategy Implementation Plan.

This plan will say what we will do, when we will start work and how you can get involved in co-design opportunities.

Join the conversation

As we move forwards into the future your voice is as important to us as ever. We need to hear how we're doing and want to hear your ideas and aspirations for the future.

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