

# Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025)

April 2023

nous



Community Housing  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA

## Foreword from CHIA Victoria

We are pleased to present this Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025).

After decades of stagnation or otherwise slow growth, Victoria's Big Housing Build will see the community housing sector significantly expand the stock it owns and/or manages. To deliver on the scale and pace of growth, CHIA Vic saw a need to develop a Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy. Identifying a series of actions for CHIA Vic and the sector, the Strategy presents a contemporary framework for workforce development. The Strategy outlines a planned and coordinated approach to growing the size, strength, and capabilities of the community housing workforce.

This Strategy is about creating a strong, skilled and supported workforce that enables the sector to meet renters' needs and improve outcomes.

The Strategy reflects the work and insights of a reference group made up of representatives from the community housing sector, education providers, government, and other partners. It is informed by the evolving industrial relations environment, and guided by a clear vision and priorities for the development of our workforce, focusing on providing what renters need, building a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects our communities, and promoting the wellbeing and sustainability of our workers. The Strategy focuses on four key priority areas, identified through our broad consultations. Under each Priority, we have outlined a series of actions that will shape and inform the collective efforts of our sector over the next three years.

This project sits within a wider agenda for growth. At the time this Workforce Strategy is being finalised, CHIA Vic is embarking on consultations with the sector to design a ten-year roadmap for growth, which will identify the work necessary for the sector to double in size.

With this growth will come increased sophistication, as community housing organisations are able to employ specialists in a range of different areas of their business to drive continuous improvements in the delivery of person-centred services and manage increasingly complex businesses.

This Strategy is the outcome of many months of work with our members, partners and stakeholders. We would like to thank the community housing workers and other stakeholders who contributed their time as part of our consultations. CHIA Vic also acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government (Homes Victoria) for its financial support and advice, which has enabled CHIA Vic to develop this Strategy.

The core value of the sector lies in our emphasis on people, not just those we house but those we work with. The Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025) represents a critical investment in both renters and workers. Implementing this Strategy will give the sector the tools it needs to deliver the workforce of the future.

CHIA Vic looks forward to continuing to work with our members, government and other stakeholders in the implementation of this Strategy.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Homes Victoria for funding this work and the many people who contributed their ideas and expertise to the development of this strategy.

We acknowledge all those who participated in the consultation processes and responded to the community housing survey. We would particularly like to acknowledge the contributions of community housing sector leaders who gave their time and consideration as part of the Workforce Reference Group.

# Table of Contents

## 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 2 BACKGROUND

4 [Purpose of the workforce strategy](#)

5 [Current context](#)

10 [Connections with other initiatives](#)

## 12 WORKFORCE ANALYSIS AND PROFILES

13 [Workforce snapshot](#)

15 [Work roles](#)

16 [Workforce data](#)

## 25 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

26 What the evidence tells us

27 Attracting and keeping talent in the sector

28 Developing capability and person-centred practice

30 Building a diverse and inclusive workforce

33 Keeping staff well and engaged

35 Accessing data-based insights on the workforce

## 36 WORKFORCE STRATEGY AND ACTIONS

37 Vision, themes and priorities

38 Actions based on investment and impact

40 Prioritisation principles

40 Priority 1 | broaden talent pipeline and attraction

43 Priority 2 | improve retention

46 Priority 3 | better training and professional development

48 Priority 4 | improve understanding of the workforce

# Executive Summary

## Background

The high need for greater access to affordable housing is driving growth in the community housing sector, as community housing organisations (CHOs) expand their portfolio of housing stock to service an increasing number of renters. More staff is required to manage more stock and tenancies, and those staff must be supported to deliver services in line with leading, person-centred practice.

The Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025) supports the growth and development of the community housing workforce. This means getting the right number of people in with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time. Long-term, it will establish a framework for the strategic development of the sector's workforce.

## Workforce profiles

The community housing workforce has four core role-types, though the size and structure of these differs across organisations.

### 1 Tenancy management

Deliver housing services to renters. Person-centred practice is a feature of service delivery for CHOs; providing flexible, sensitive and responsive services to renters who often have multi-faceted needs.

### 2 Asset management

Maintenance and repairs of housing stock. Increase in stock requires CHOs to develop greater maintenance capabilities to maintain property standards. Sensitivity to the diverse needs of renters in community housing is also key to promoting sustainable tenancies.

### 3 Property development

Responsible for planning and managing property development projects to increase housing stock. These capabilities have become increasingly necessary as the sector grows, so capability may be outsourced depending on the organisation.

### 4 Corporate services

Support delivery of housing services. This can include a broad range of functions, such as finance, legal, marketing, policy and advocacy, and executive management.

## Challenges and opportunities



### Attracting and keeping talent in the sector

CHOs and staff have emphasised the difficulty in attracting and keeping talent in the sector.



### Developing capability and person-centred service

Community housing staff require the knowledge, skill and desire to deliver high quality, person-centred housing services and sustain tenancies.



### Data-based insights on the workforce

Data-based insights on the workforce will improve decision-making and drive positive outcomes for renters.



### A diverse and inclusive workforce

A diverse and inclusive workforce will broaden skills, experience and perspectives and help ensure housing services are delivered in a culturally safe way, promoting positive housing outcomes for vulnerable cohorts of renters.



### Keeping staff well and engaged

Provide training and support for workers to protect their wellbeing and ensure they can deliver high quality housing services and remain working in the sector.

# The strategy is guided by a clear vision and priority areas for action

Three cross-cutting themes underpin all elements of the strategy:

## Provide what renters need

“[Everyone] can see the difference a home can make for people’s lives.”

– Community housing stakeholder

## Build a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities the sector serves

“[We need an] inclusive and diverse workforce that presents opportunities to enable everyone who wants to work in it to work in it.”

– Community housing stakeholder

## Promote workforce wellbeing and sustainability

“We need to be making sure that staff are supported and cared for.”

– Community housing stakeholder

## VISION

A strong, skilled, and supported workforce that meets renters needs and delivers high quality housing services

## ● Broaden talent pipeline and attraction

Strategies to attract, recruit and retain against critical capabilities and gaps

## ● Improve retention

Employee experience, career pathing, wellbeing initiatives

## PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

## ● Better training and professional development

Establish professional development pathways, improve availability of accredited training programs that address future critical capabilities

## ● Improve understanding of the workforce

Establish Victorian community housing workforce dataset to improve understanding of sector workforce composition and key issues

# Background to the strategy

nous



Community Housing  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA

# Purpose of the workforce strategy

## Context

Underinvestment in the Victorian social housing system has resulted in insufficient housing stock to meet demand. Governments are acknowledging the need for greater investment in affordable housing supply, accelerating growth in the community housing sector.

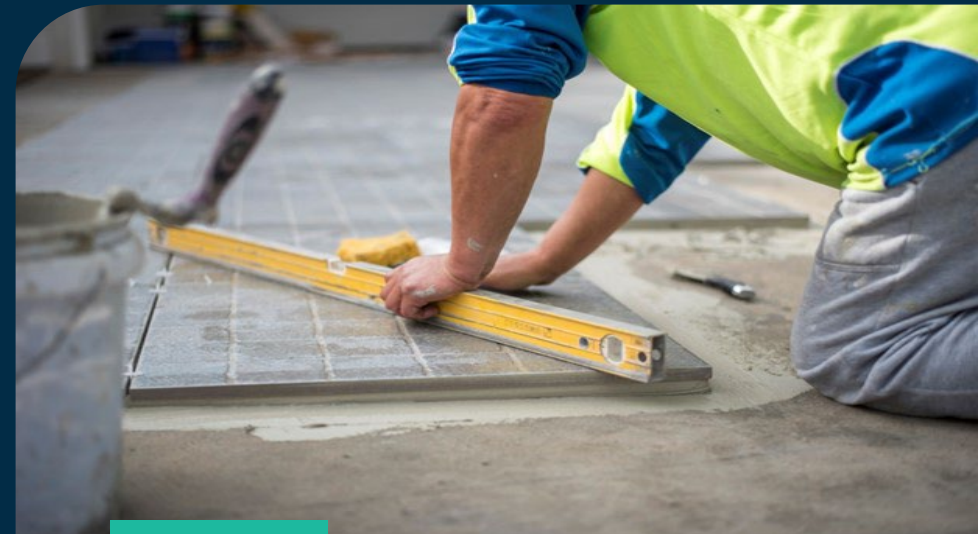
Increasing undersupply and narrow access criteria to social housing underpins the increasing importance of a more person-centred delivery model. Many renters have complex needs and therefore require support to sustain their housing and access to other services. To promote positive outcomes for renters, community housing staff must develop their knowledge and capability to respond to diverse and complex renter needs, engage with wider support services, and work with new housing models and products.

## Purpose

CHIA Victoria has partnered with community housing sector representatives to develop the Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025), as part of the Community Housing Workforce Development project. The project has been supported by funding from Homes Victoria.

In the immediate term, the Strategy identifies actions to enable the community housing sector to grow and develop the workforce to deliver the Big Housing Build and other housing growth opportunities. This means getting the right number of people in with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time.

In the longer-term, the Strategy will establish a framework for the ongoing strategic development of the community housing workforce.



**The community housing workforce must have the capacity, skills and knowledge to support the sector through this evolutionary period**

# Driven by increasing levels of need, substantially more social housing is required to meet demand

Unmet social and affordable housing need in Victoria<sup>1</sup>

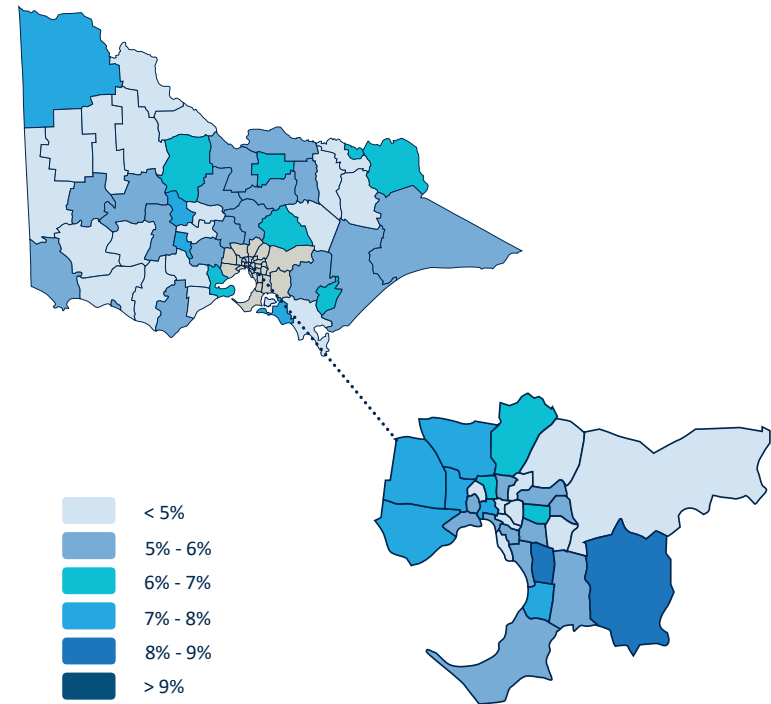


Unmet need for social housing in Victoria is significant and is projected to grow by over 50% in the next 20 years.

Insufficient investment into social housing stock in Victoria has created a disequilibrium between demand for services and supply of housing stock. Community housing will represent a significant proportion of future social housing investment.

Source: <sup>1</sup> R van den Nouwelant, L Troy, B Soundararaj, Quantifying Australia's unmet housing need, University of NSW, 2022

Unmet housing need (% of total households)<sup>1</sup>



Source: <sup>1</sup> R van den Nouwelant, L Troy, B Soundararaj, Quantifying Australia's unmet housing need, University of NSW, 2022 **5**

# The Big Housing Build represents significant investment, but Victoria is still below the national average for social housing stock

## Key impacts of the Victorian Big Housing Build



**9,300**

New social housing dwellings to be built over the next four years



**10%**

Increase in social housing dwellings



**25%**

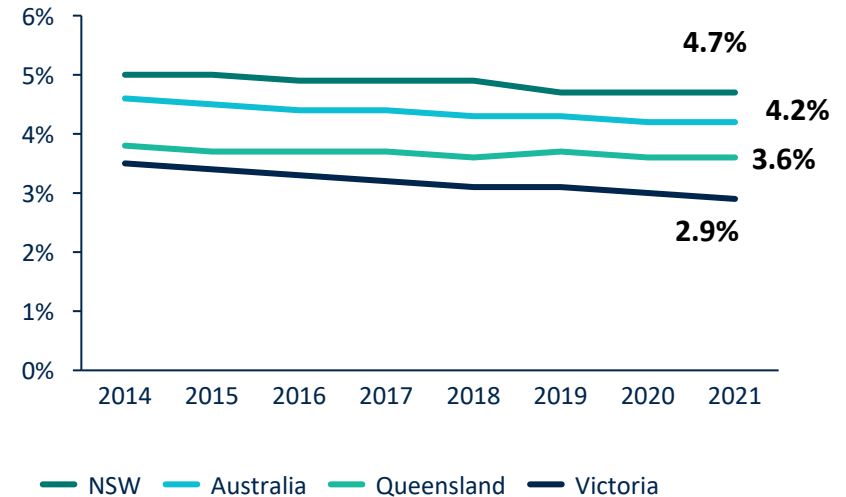
Of investment will be in rural and regional Victoria



**10%**

Of all net new social dwellings will support Aboriginal housing needs

Social housing as a proportion of total housing stock<sup>1</sup>

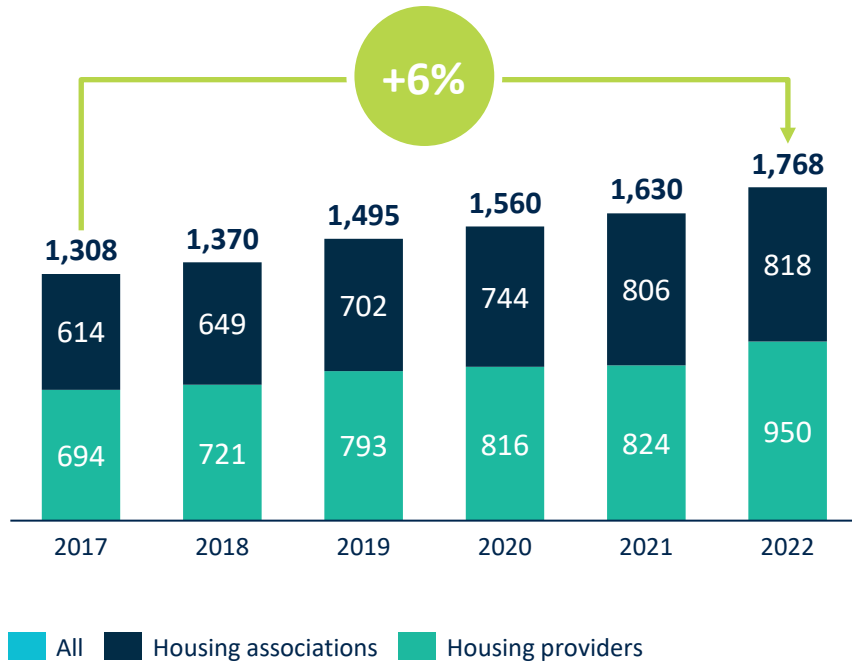


Sustained underinvestment in social housing has placed Victoria below the national average for the proportion of social housing stock relative to overall housing stock. Victoria has the lowest proportion of social housing relative to total housing stock of any jurisdiction in Australia.

Source: <sup>1</sup> Australia Institute of Health and Welfare, [Housing Assistance in Australia](#), Australia, 2022. Victorian Office of the Premier, [Victoria's Big Housing Build](#), Victorian Government, 2020.

# The workforce is growing and recruiting skilled workers is an ongoing challenge

Registered CHO workforce<sup>1</sup>



Assumptions and limitations:

- Limited data regarding the size of the current workforce.
- In the 2018 Industry Transition Plan, CHIA Vic identified a discrepancy between responses to the ACNC 2017 AIS reports and a sector-wide survey, highlighting the need for better data collection regarding the community housing workforce.

## Care and support worker shortages<sup>2</sup>

**80,990**

Nationwide shortage of care and support workers 2025-26

**285,800**

Nationwide shortage of care and support workers 2049-50

The National Care and Support Workforce Strategy highlights the tight labour market and the shortage of care and support workers likely to impact on sectors such as community housing.

Source: <sup>1</sup> Victorian Department of Treasury and Finance, [Housing Registrar Sector Performance Report 2020-21](#), Victorian Government, 2022. <sup>2</sup> Workforce Australia, [National Care and Support Workforce Strategy](#), Australia Government, 2022.

## Growing housing portfolios and changing models of services has necessitated additional workforce capacity and capability to deliver

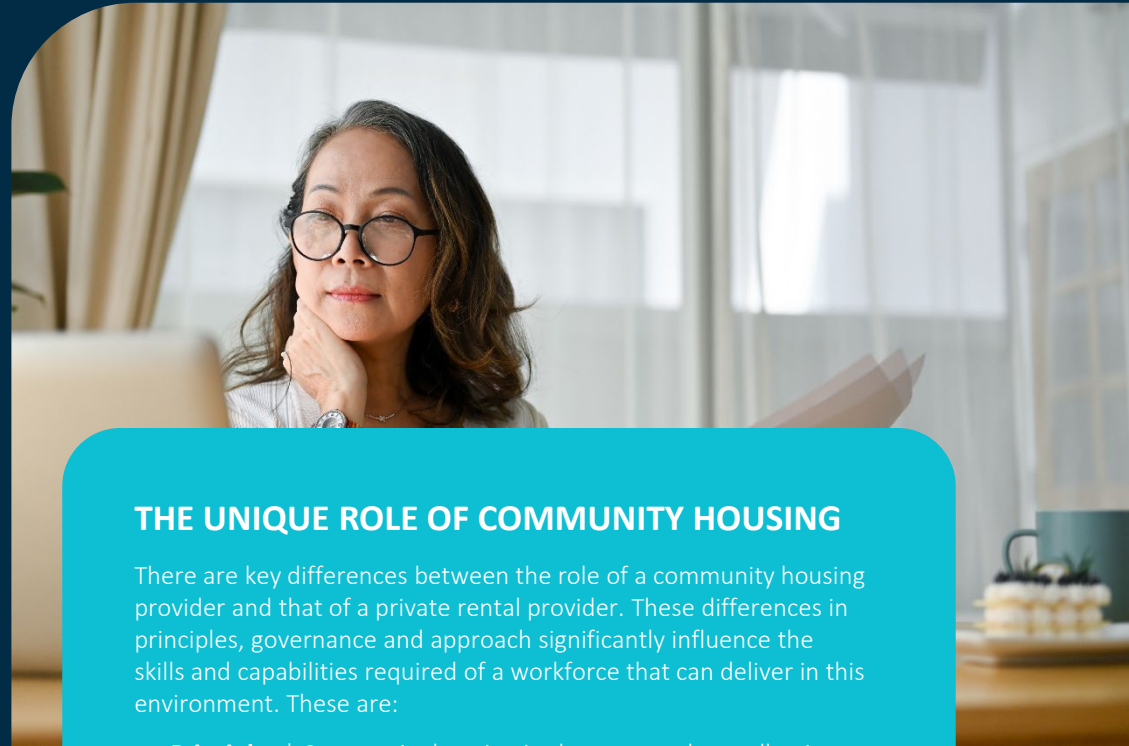
### The community housing sector workforce has grown in the last five years

Increasing supply of social housing stock has contributed to growth in CHO workforces and the Victorian Big Housing Build aims to further accelerate the expansion of housing stock.

However, many CHOs report workforce capacity constraints and recruitment as the biggest challenge they face. Sector HR leaders highlight that burnout and workload are some of the main drivers of dissatisfaction, suggesting more staff and improved capability development is required to meet the demands of the sector.

### Person-centred service delivery promotes positive renter outcomes

CHOs provide more than just shelter, including the provision of various services that support positive long-term client outcomes. Community housing service delivery is shifting towards a more person-centred approach and thus must take into consideration more than just individual-level outcomes. Community building and place making, resident mix and tenant voice are other factors that must be considered.



## THE UNIQUE ROLE OF COMMUNITY HOUSING

There are key differences between the role of a community housing provider and that of a private rental provider. These differences in principles, governance and approach significantly influence the skills and capabilities required of a workforce that can deliver in this environment. These are:

- **Principles** | Community housing is about more than collecting rents and managing property. In addition to housing, community housing providers must provide advice and assistance to applicants and renters, build community, and support renters to access external support services.
- **Governance** | Community housing operates under additional rules, and organisational direction and control that include responsibility to human rights legislation, and accountability to funders.
- **Practice** | Community housing must consider client outcomes beyond just shelter, provide for all client groups without discrimination, allocate properties based on criteria of fairness – rather than market mechanisms – and provide that housing for a rent amount based on need, rather than market demand.



## Social Housing Employment Program

The Social Housing Employment Program (SHEP) offers secure work for at least 12 months to jobseekers who are social housing residents, women (particularly women over 45), people with disability, the long-term unemployed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people aged 18-25, veterans and those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Workers can earn an income while gaining an industry-relevant qualification. They will also receive mentoring support to ensure success in their new jobs.

This initiative highlights the way government-funded innovative partnerships can provide employment, while increasing the pool of potential workers for the community housing sector. Jobs Victoria, Homes Victoria, Uniting Vic. Tas and Qualify Training are working together to deliver the initiative.

Recruitment has begun and will continue until mid-2023. The new jobs will be in metropolitan Melbourne and Gippsland.

## Labour market constraints are impacting the ability of CHOs to develop their workforce

### Victorian Government's Victorian Skills Plan

3,575 additional welfare workers will be required by 2025, which includes community housing workers. The plan presents initiatives to tackle skills shortages, with greater collaboration between education/training organisations and industry being a key approach. The Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025) draws upon these initiatives to address challenges faced by the community housing sector.

### Commonwealth Government's National Care and Support Workforce Strategy

The Commonwealth Government anticipates an increase in demand from 460,000 care and support workers in 2021 to 720,000 by 2049-2050, which includes community housing workers.

The National Care and Support Workforce Strategy outlines the Federal Government's approach to increasing workforce retention and participation, diversity and capability in the care and support sector.

# Adjacent initiatives also impact on the community housing workforce

## Industry Transition Plan and 10-year Sector Roadmap

CHIA Vic's Industry Transition Plan 2018-2022 outlined the actions needed to achieve the vision of the sector. It identified key sector challenges, including lack of workforce data and the impacts of the evolving responsibilities of a social landlord, both of which are central to the Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025). CHIA Vic is also developing a 10-Year Sector Roadmap, to be informed by this workforce strategy.

## Specialist Homelessness Sector Workforce Strategy

Workforce strategy developed for specialist homelessness services - an adjacent sector to community housing. Given the overlap between the two sectors' workforces, changes to the strategic direction of specialist homelessness services will impact on the community housing workforce.

The Specialist Homelessness Sector Workforce Strategy identifies five key goals for the sector:

1. Talented people are attracted to, and stay in the sector.
2. People have the capabilities to work effectively and opportunities to enhance their practice.
3. There is a sound knowledge base about our workforce.
4. Our workforce is connected, healthy, diverse and thriving.
5. There is an established architecture for workforce development.

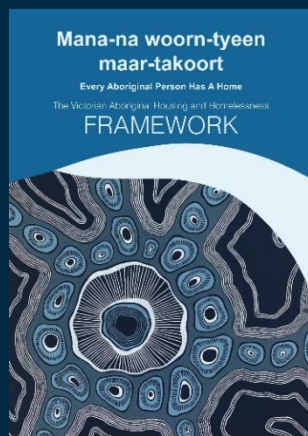


# Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort – Every Aboriginal Person Has A Home

## Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework

The Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework provides the building blocks for reconceptualising Aboriginal housing in Victoria, setting a 20-year agenda to guide the social housing sector towards delivery of culturally safe services. The framework initiates a new policy dialogue which commits to provide every Aboriginal Victorian with a home.

The Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025) acknowledges the principles set out in the *Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort – Every Aboriginal Person Has A Home* Framework and supports a culturally competent community housing system. A diverse and inclusive workforce must be underpinned by culturally safe policies and practices, including mandatory training. At publication, CHIA Vic is reviewing its cultural safety framework to ensure Aboriginal sovereignty is central to how the community housing sector operates. CHIA Vic affirms Aboriginal self-determination and sovereignty as essential aspects of culturally safe services.



## The Framework is underpinned by 12 key principles

- **Aboriginal self determination** – housing responses are designed for and delivered by Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people are the arbiters of good practice.
- **Rights based** – Aboriginal people have the right to adequate housing.
- **Housing First** – The housing and homelessness safety net provides Aboriginal clients with dignity, respect and quality of life.
- **Outcome driven** – The critical mass of Aboriginal people shift from marginal housing to home ownership.
- **Transparency and accountability** – The housing and homelessness system is accountable to the Aboriginal community through transparent, disaggregated public reporting of outcomes for people who seek assurance.
- **Cultural safety and access** – Aboriginal people can access a system which is responsive to their housing needs and understands their connection to land, culture and family networks.
- **Strengths based and people centred** – Housing is a platform for other services, building on individuals' community strengths to deliver people-centred outcomes that break the cycle of disadvantage.
- **Capacity** – The Framework builds the capacity of Aboriginal community controlled organisations to upskill, create critical mass for development and engage in productive partnerships with the mainstream.
- **Economic opportunity and innovation** – The Framework provides structures for development of local enterprises associated with land and culture; builds commercial opportunities; and delivers greater wealth to the community.
- **Culturally safe tenancy management** – Housing and tenancy policies support and enable Aboriginal approaches to caring for family.



**Workforce analysis  
and profiles  
2022 snapshot**

nous



**Community Housing**  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA

# Approach to develop the workforce profiles

## Purpose

There is an acknowledged lack of data relating to the size and structure of the Community Housing workforce. The workforce profiles outlined in the following section use data collected from the sector to address some of these issues.

## Methodology

The following workforce profiles and capability matrix draw on three data sources. Insights from qualitative and quantitative sources were combined to develop the workforce profiles and capability matrix. These were tested in workshops with members of the Victorian community housing workforce and with a Workforce Reference Group of community housing organisation leaders and experts.

1. An environmental scan of literature from the Victorian community housing sector, community housing elsewhere in Australia and internationally, and adjacent sectors, including public housing and homelessness.
2. Surveys of Victorian community housing organisations and members of the community housing workforce. The surveys were co-designed with a Workforce Reference Group comprised of community housing sector leaders and experts and were conducted online in November 2022. All registered community housing organisations were invited to participate in both surveys.
3. Extensive stakeholder engagement with community housing staff across roles and seniority. Consultations were conducted between October 2022 and February 2023.

**Ongoing data collection is essential to inform future decisions about community housing workforce**

21

Organisations responded to the community housing organisation survey

89

Individuals responded to the community housing workforce survey

4

Focus groups across a broad spectrum of community housing roles and levels of seniority

15

Consultations with sector leads and community housing experts

7

Workforce Reference Group sessions to test methodology and insights

## Data limitations

This is the first time CHIA Vic has conducted a workforce data collection exercise. The number of survey responses is modest and should not be interpreted as a perfect representation of the demographics within the sector. This is especially challenging when analysing the data by role, region, and other characteristics. These surveys are designed to be repeatable, and over time the workforce profile outputs will become more valuable as the data becomes more representative.

# Current profile of the community housing workforce | 2022

## DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>1</sup> n = 80

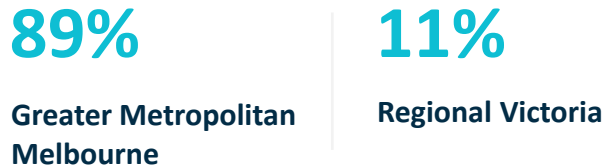
### GENDER



### AGE



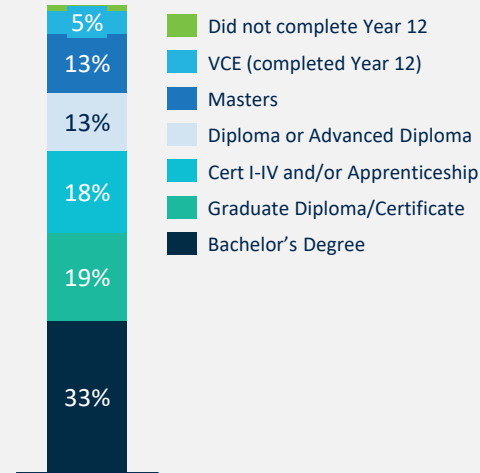
### REGION OF EMPLOYMENT



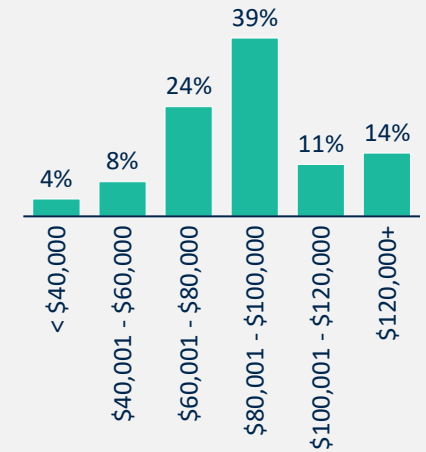
Rounding of figures may mean chart totals do not equal 100%. Small sample size should be considered when considering the representative nature of the data.

Source: 1 Nous Community Housing Workforce Survey, 2022

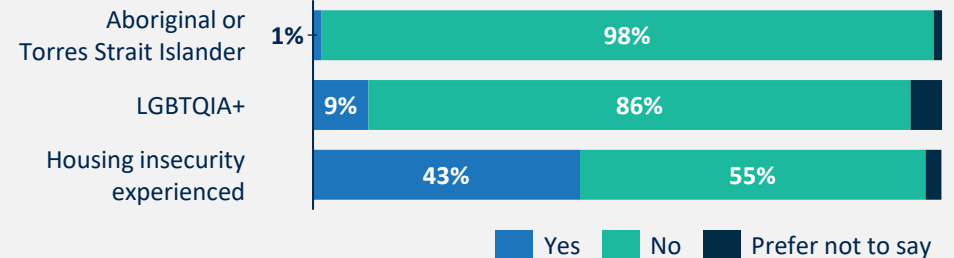
## HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED



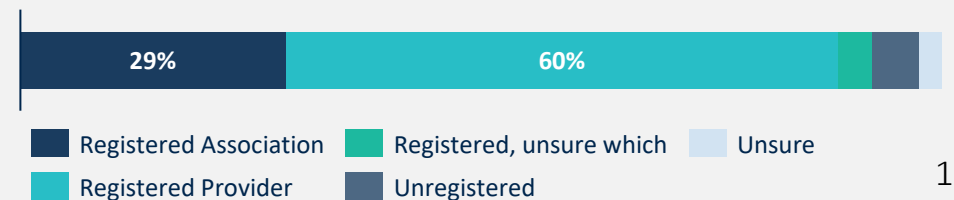
## ANNUAL SALARY



## DIVERSITY



## ORGANISATION TYPE



# Organisations differ widely according to their size and type, but share core functions

## 1

### TENANCY MANAGEMENT

Tenancy management delivers housing services to renters and these roles represent the largest proportion of the workforce.

Workers generally develop capability through on-the-job learning, which can be resource-intensive, particularly when experienced staff members are relied upon to train new colleagues. Currently in Victoria, there is no housing-specific certified qualification for tenancy managers.

## 2

### ASSET MANAGEMENT

Asset management roles are responsible for the ongoing maintenance of housing stock managed by a CHO. They plan and coordinate property repairs and maintenance to ensure they continue to meet the needs of renters. Demand for these roles has increased with growing housing portfolios.

The complexity of this role within the community housing sector goes beyond that of a coordinator of tradespeople for efficient upkeep of housing. Asset management workers also play an important role in engaging with renters.

## 3

### PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

As the volume of social housing grows to meet demand, property development capabilities have been required to orchestrate projects and development.

The level of property development capability varies across the sector, with some organisations opting to outsource these roles. While property development skills are highly transferrable from other sectors, it is difficult to attract workers due to lower remuneration.

## 4

### CORPORATE SERVICES

Corporate services function provides support for delivery of housing services. It includes a broad range of roles such as senior leadership, financial governance, legal, marketing, and policy and advocacy.

While these skills are highly transferable from other sectors, smaller organisations may have less scope to attract or develop corporate services capabilities as they lack the scale required.

These represent the broad role types that most organisations have in order to effectively deliver community housing services. The size of organisations will differentiate the structure and exact description of these roles, as smaller organisations may combine these functions into a role performed by a single individual while larger organisations may have dedicated teams for each function or offer additional services.

# Current profile of tenancy management roles

## ROLE DESCRIPTION

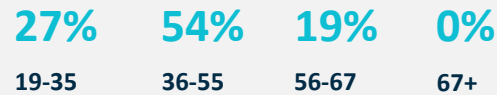
Tenancy managers deliver community housing services to renters. They must be adaptable to deliver effective and compliant tenancy management in a sector that is constantly evolving, ensuring renters are supported to sustain successful tenancies. Key responsibilities include filling vacancies, conducting inspections, managing rent collection and rental account problems, referring renters to support services, ending tenancies, participating in VCAT hearings.

## DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>1</sup> n = 26

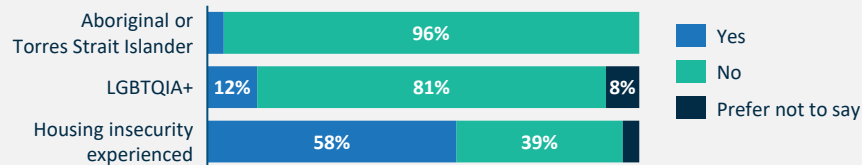
### GENDER



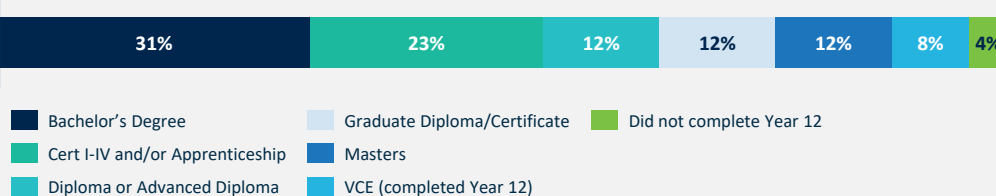
### AGE



## DIVERSITY



## HIGHEST EDUCATION COMPLETED



Rounding of figures may mean chart totals do not equal 100%. Small sample size should be considered when considering the representative nature of the data.

Source: 1 Nous Community Housing Workforce Survey, 2022

## KEY CAPABILITIES

The Workforce Survey results highlight that tenancy management roles require a broad, client-centric skillset.

Tenancy management is transitioning towards a more person-centred approach. Housing staff must spend time understanding the individual and their needs, and be able to effectively refer them to a variety of external support services.

Tenancy management staff must have knowledge of the legislation that governs the sector, the Residential Tenancies Act. Tenancy staff must deliver compliant services and are often required to represent their organisation at VCAT (Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal).

The community housing sector is constantly evolving, accelerated by the significant investment of the Big Housing Build. Tenancy managers must be resilient to change and adaptable to changes in legislation, procedure and best-practice.

## KEY CAPABILITY MATRIX



# The future of tenancy management roles

## CHANGING NATURE OF WORK



Social housing is increasingly being delivered in a person-centred way, focusing on the needs of individuals and households. Renters often have multi-dimensional support needs, requiring a variety of external services, including medical, mental health support, financial, legal, drug and alcohol, and family services. Tenancy managers must be able to make referrals to support services and evaluate when there is flexibility in policy and practice to best support the tenant. .



Recruiting housing staff has been challenging in recent times. As the labour market eases and the availability of workers improves, organisations will have better access to tenancy management skills, helping them meet the needs of more renters.

However, organisations operating in regional areas have access to a smaller pool of workers, and attracting staff will continue to be difficult.



Smaller organisations often require individuals to work across multiple roles or functions. Individuals may be required to take on both tenancy and asset management roles, shouldering additional responsibility and requiring a broader skillset to meet their responsibilities.

## CHANGES TO THE SECTOR



Currently, the community housing workforce does not reflect the diversity of the renters it serves. Tenancy management staff must navigate cultural sensitivities and differences as the delivery of culturally safe services becomes a priority for organisations. More mandatory training and other cultural safety and awareness measures are required to develop those capabilities.



As the Victorian Big Housing Build drives greater investment in the sector, community housing is being delivered through a broader range of housing products and models. Tenancy managers will need to be familiar with and operate within these models in order to effectively evaluate the best option for renters and deliver the highest quality services.



Tenancy managers are considering a broader range of factors when delivering housing services. Tenant compatibility, resident mix and creating communities are increasingly acknowledged as being central to sustaining successful tenancies and improving outcomes for renters. Renter voice is becoming integral to delivering services which meet the evolving needs of renters. Tenancy managers will need to become more adept at considering these factors.

# Current profile of asset management roles

## ROLE DESCRIPTION

Asset maintenance roles focus on ensuring properties meet the needs and standards for renters. Asset managers are responsible for looking after the physical assets of an organisation by coordinating necessary repairs and maintenance work on rental properties. This should be done efficiently and in a community-oriented way.

## DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>1</sup> n = 10

### GENDER

**80%**  
WOMEN

**20%**  
MEN

### AGE

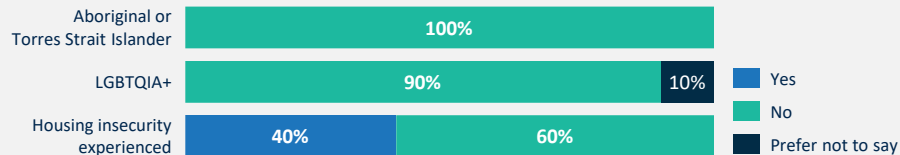
**0%** 19-35

**90%** 36-55

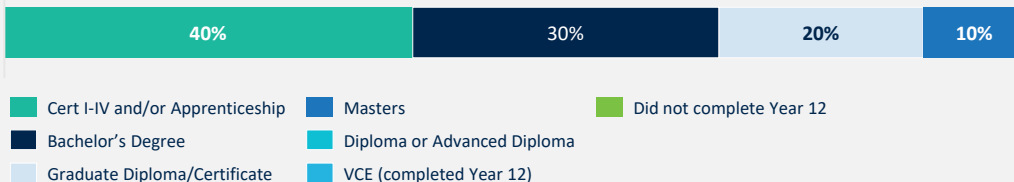
**10%** 56-67

**0%** 67+

## DIVERSITY



## HIGHEST EDUCATION COMPLETED



Rounding of figures may mean chart totals do not equal 100%. Small sample size should be considered when considering the representative nature of the data.

Source: 1 Nours Community Housing Workforce Survey, 2022

## KEY CAPABILITIES

Asset managers must be able to work with the diverse range of renters in the sector in order to effectively coordinate maintenance work of properties. Community housing asset managers may also work across owned and leased stock in the portfolio, with variations in roles in dealing with the asset.

Overseeing the maintenance of properties requires collaboration with external parties, such as builders, plumbers and other contractors. Asset managers usually oversee a portfolio of properties and must therefore be able to proactively coordinate maintenance requests. They must communicate with tenancy staff in order to identify properties that require maintenance, as maintaining the quality of the physical assets is essential for promoting sustainable tenancies.

Asset managers play an important role in engaging with renters. Bringing them closer to the tenancy work within organisations means their experience and knowledge from working with renters can be transferred between teams and improve the quality of housing services.

## KEY CAPABILITY MATRIX



# The future of asset management roles

## CHANGING NATURE OF WORK



Asset maintenance functions have often been combined with other organisational functions, such as tenancy management or property development. Investment in the sector has meant CHOs have grown their housing stock and require dedicated asset maintenance functions to manage larger portfolios while maintaining service delivery quality.



Asset managers are required to have a level of familiarisation with the legislative and regulatory environment which community housing operates within. Budgets may include funding for disability modifications to properties, meaning asset managers must be across the relevant building codes and standards to ensure compliance.



Asset managers are being required to deal with a changing tenant profile. With such high demand for social housing, properties are increasingly being allocated to those in “greatest need”, which has translated into more challenges with respect to property damage, maintenance of housing stock, impact of drug and alcohol use in properties, and associated tenancy issues.

## CHANGES TO THE SECTOR



CHOs are no longer simply relying on government grants for growth. New and more complicated funding models are changing the profile of assets held by CHOs. A CHO may work in partnership with private real estate property managers where community housing and private housing are part of a mixed development.



With parts of the community housing portfolio ageing, asset managers need information and capability to plan works to rejuvenate older housing to maintain standards. Alternatively, they may identify stock that no longer meets needs or standards. Disposal of unsuitable older properties releases capital for investment in new affordable housing.

# Current profile of property development roles

## ROLE DESCRIPTION

Property development is a commercial function within a CHO that oversees the development and expansion of its housing portfolio. The responsibilities of property development roles are broad, including financial modelling and analysis, as well as orchestrating property development projects.

## DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>1</sup> n = 7

### GENDER

**43%**  
WOMEN

**57%**  
MEN

### AGE

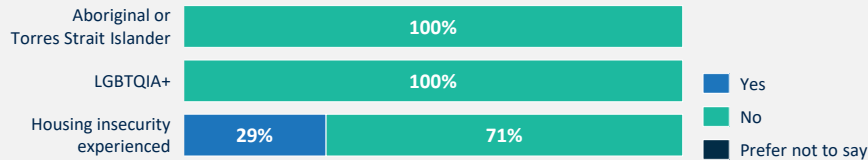
**43%** 19-35

**29%** 36-55

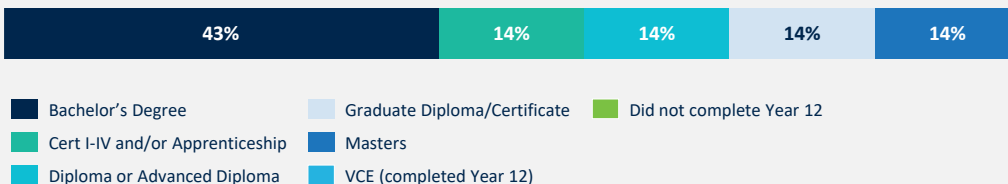
**14%** 56-67

**14%** 67+

## DIVERSITY



## HIGHEST EDUCATION COMPLETED



Rounding of figures may mean chart totals do not equal 100%. Small sample size should be considered when considering the representative nature of the data.

Source: 1 Nous Community Housing Workforce Survey, 2022

## KEY CAPABILITIES

Accelerated by the demands of the Victorian Big Housing Build, CHOs require a commercialised skillset through their property development roles. These are not skillsets which the sector has previously required to the same extent.

Having a good understanding of the community housing sector and the various models of housing provided is essential for property development roles. Property development staff must have commercial skills such as drafting tender and grant applications, financial modelling and analysis and a strong understanding of the legislative and policy environment is essential.

Although not identified through the Nour surveys, stakeholder consultation highlighted that property developers play a significant role when it comes to community outreach and engagement. They are often responsible for educating the community on how new projects will impact different regions and communities, and how the properties will be maintained and used.

## KEY CAPABILITY MATRIX

-	Ability to work with diverse and vulnerable renters	●●	Digital literacy
●●●●	Understanding of the community housing sector	●●●●	Lead others
●●●●	Problem solving	●●●●	Strategic asset management and planning
-	Service delivery	●●●●	Financial analysis
●●●	Community engagement	●●	Legal

- Not applicable    ● Knowledge required    ●● Familiarisation required  
 ●●● Proficiency required    ●●●● Expertise required

# The future of property development roles

## CHANGING NATURE OF WORK



As the sector grows, some organisations have decided to embed property development roles into their organisation, while others outsource these capabilities. Size of organisation and aspirations for growth will be key determinants of this decision. Smaller organisations that do not seek to expand as rapidly tend to outsource property development capabilities.



Availability of property development staff is less constrained but more competitive compared to tenancy roles, given the volume and scale of the private property development sector. Strong employee value propositions and employee experience is important to attract and retain workers and to counter the higher remuneration packages offered by private sector employers.



Property development staff play a crucial role with respect to community engagement. They must negotiate with surrounding communities and try to address any concerns about new developments. Communicating how new developments will impact the community and how the properties will be managed once completed are critical skills for the evolving property development role within CHOs.

## CHANGES TO THE SECTOR



The Victorian Big Housing Build represents significant medium-term investment and demands mature property development capabilities be embedded in organisations. Affordable housing is an increasing priority for state and federal governments, with housing policies and programs expected to provide new funding streams for CHOs. CHOs face a significant challenge in maintaining property development capabilities in the longer term, dependant on a pipeline of investment in new community housing.



Driven by the Big Housing Build, CHOs are becoming more commercialised, engaging in development projects to increase their portfolio of housing stock. This has created the need for additional property development capability, in order to successfully manage these projects.



New funding models of housing, such as the Ground Lease model, have led to the formation of consortia when undertaking large-scale development projects. There has also been increasing reliance on private capital, such as social investment, to finance growth. New funding models will require better business networks, leveraging relationships and reduced reliance on government to totally fund new developments. CHOs require more experienced and knowledgeable property development staff to support their development programs.

# Current profile of corporate services role

## ROLE DESCRIPTION

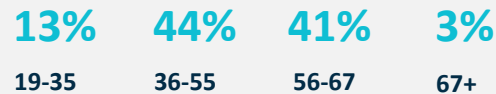
Corporate services includes a range of roles within CHOs, that support the main tenancy and asset functions of the organisation. The main functions of corporate services within each organisation can vary depending on size of the organisation, but may include financial management, policy and advocacy, marketing and human resources.

## DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>1</sup> n = 32

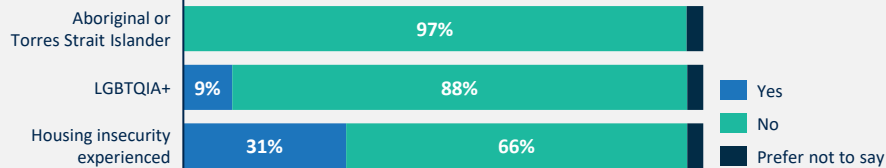
### GENDER



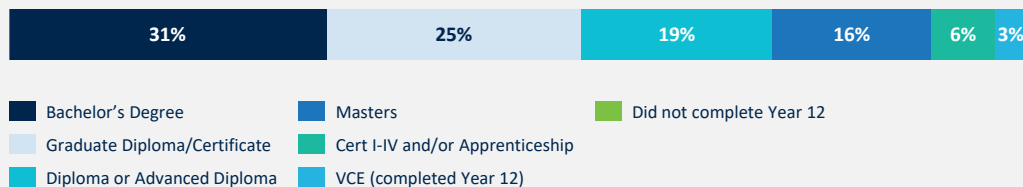
### AGE



## DIVERSITY



## HIGHEST EDUCATION COMPLETED



Rounding of figures may mean chart totals do not equal 100%. Small sample size should be considered when considering the representative nature of the data.

Source: 1 Nous Community Housing Workforce Survey, 2022

## KEY CAPABILITIES

Corporate services includes a range of roles within an organisation, and therefore key capabilities will vary depending on the specific role.

Corporate service roles typically act to support, uplift or increase the efficiency of service delivery. As such, having a sound understanding of the community housing sector is important for those in these roles.

Corporate service roles include the senior executive and senior management function of CHOs. Therefore, leadership is a key capability for these roles, being able to provide the environment and support necessary for tenancy and asset management staff to operate efficiently and deliver high quality services. Developing capability of their teams is also required.

Corporate service roles often include financial and treasury functions. The ability to manage finances, conduct financial analysis and engage in strategic asset management and planning are important to the increasingly complex transactions and business that CHOs engage in.

## KEY CAPABILITY MATRIX



# The future of corporate services roles

## CHANGING NATURE OF WORK



More complex debt instruments and other financing mechanisms are being used to fund growth in the sector, requiring more sophisticated strategic and financial management capabilities within organisations. Executives face the challenge of navigating high levels of capital investment while continuing to manage their organisation to ensure services are being delivered to a high standard.



As demand for community housing grows in Victoria, CHOs are expanding operations and serving more renters and therefore efficiency improvements will be required to manage growing caseloads. Improvement to ICT systems, supporting more efficient workflows, process compliance and records management will be required to unlock efficiency gains. In-house IT capabilities will be required to implement more sophisticated CRM and query management systems to efficiently manage higher caseloads.



As organisations grow and require a broader range of capabilities in their corporate services roles, they may outsource some specialised corporate service capabilities. It may be more cost effective for capabilities such as IT, marketing and financial management to be outsourced, rather than organisations seeking to fund permanent, full-time internal positions.

## CHANGES TO THE SECTOR



As public investment drives growth in the sector, organisations have become more commercialised and expanded their corporate service functions. Organisations have also moved into policy and advocacy work, using their platform to positively influence policy and promote positive outcomes for renters.



Recruitment has proved a major challenge for CHOs, particularly as Victoria faces economy-wide skill shortages. The sector has acknowledged the need to increase the public profile of the sector, the organisations operating within it and the work they do. Growing corporate service functions such as the policy and advocacy and marketing functions will contribute to increasing awareness of the sector and encourage potential workers to consider a career in community housing.

# Community Housing Capability Matrix

	Tenancy Management	Asset Management	Property Development	Corporate Services
<b>Ability to work with diverse and vulnerable renters</b>	●●●● Front-line workers who deal with renters on a daily basis, delivering services and support.	- Maintaining properties involves a high level of communication and coordination with renters.	- No client-facing activities.	● Minimal client-facing activities. May involve taking client calls and redirecting to housing staff.
<b>Understand the Community Housing context</b>	●●●● Services delivered are tailored to the client's needs, evaluating range of housing options.	●●●● Ensure housing stock continues to meet expectations and contributes to sustainable tenancies.	●●●● Properties developed must meet the needs of the sector and its renters.	●●●● Develop strategy and operating model to effectively operate in evolving sector.
<b>Problem solving (determine solutions)</b>	●●●● Must work with various renters and determine best possible solution or housing option.	●●●● Determine most cost effective and timely option to create, maintain or dispose of physical assets.	●●●● Manage large-scale development projects involving many external parties.	●●●● Many roles requiring problem solving, such as recruitment, management, marketing, treasury.
<b>Deliver services</b>	●●●● Primary individuals involved with the delivery of community housing services.	- Understand how services are delivered in order to coordinate asset maintenance activities.	- No service delivery activities.	- No service delivery activities.
<b>Community engagement</b>	●● Engage with community to build relationships and encourage building sustainable tenancies.	●● Community engagement activities associated with works.	●●● Engage with communities with information relating to new developments.	●●● Engage with community to ensure services are accessible to those who need it.
<b>Digital literacy</b>	●● Use of internal digital IT systems to manage renters.	●● Use of internal digital IT systems to manage properties.	●● Use of software to manage property development projects.	●●●● Expertise required to engage in digital infrastructure uplift and ensure efficiency maximisation.
<b>Lead others</b>	●● Need to be decisive and manage renters with complex needs.	●● Make decisions regarding the best way to manage assets and delivery maximum quality services.	●●●● Overseeing potentially large-scale property development projects.	●●●● Senior management roles require strong leadership skills.
<b>Strategic asset management and planning</b>	- No strategic asset management or planning activities.	●●●● Manage large portfolio in line with strategic objectives of the organisation.	●●●● Grow housing portfolio and manage projects in line with organisational strategic objectives.	●●●● Evaluate strategic direction of the organisation and align and communicate effectively.
<b>Financial analysis</b>	- No financial analysis activities.	●●● Overseeing housing portfolios through asset creation, maintenance and disposal.	●●●● Conduct financial analysis on development projects to ensure viability.	●●●● Allocate resources to maximise service delivery efficiency based on financial analysis.
<b>Legal</b>	●● Understanding of the Residential Tenancies Act to represent organisations at VCAT.	●● Understanding of legal obligations relating to maintenance of properties.	●● Understanding required when drafting contracts for development projects.	●●●● Larger organisations will often have dedicated legal departments.

- Not applicable    ● Knowledge required    ●● Familiarisation required    ●●● Proficiency required    ●●●● Expertise required

# Challenges and opportunities

nous



Community Housing  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA

## The community housing sector workforce faces a number of key challenges



Attracting and  
keeping talent in  
the sector



Developing capability,  
leadership and person-  
centred service



Building a diverse  
and inclusive  
workforce



Keeping staff  
well and  
engaged



Accessing data-  
based insights on  
the workforce



## CHOs and staff have emphasised the difficulty in attracting and keeping talent in the sector

Community housing stakeholders identified recruitment and retention as the biggest challenge faced by their organisation and the broader sector.<sup>1</sup> Staff turnover has consistently remained above the sector target range.

This is compounded by the lack of housing-specific certified training offered in Victoria. This makes it difficult for people to enter the community housing workforce without prior experience, limiting the pool of potential workers from growing.

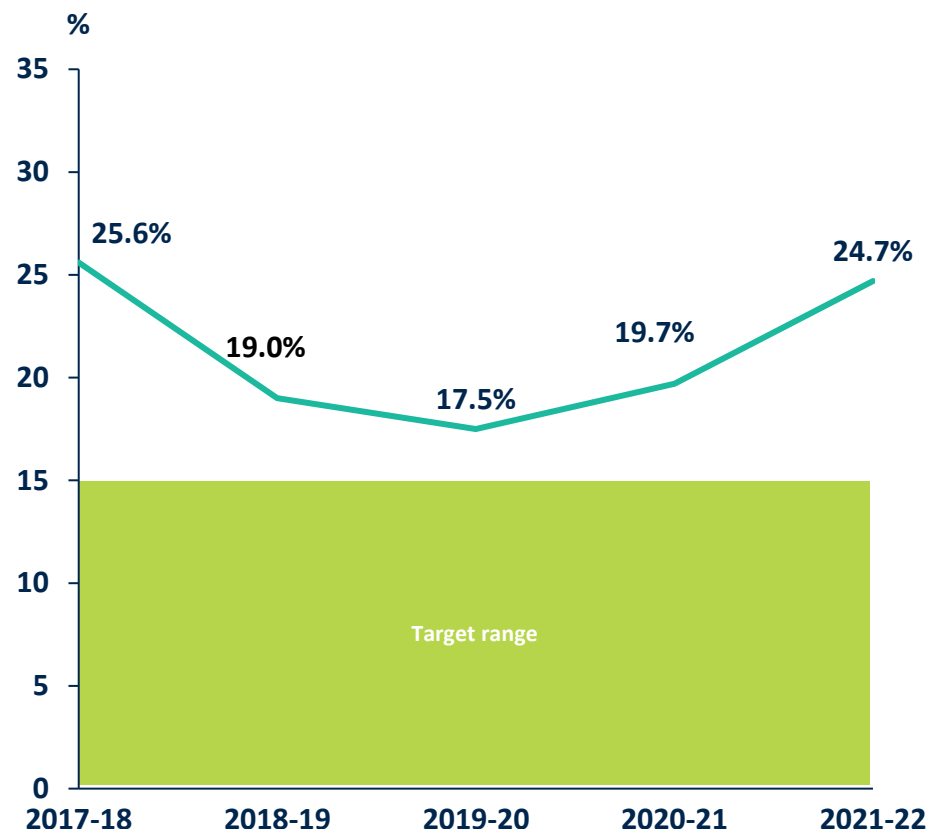
Lack of career progression was identified as the main reason for individuals moving between organisations or leaving the sector. Clearly articulated career pathways and finding ways to offer staff progression is critical to ensuring high quality workers stay in the sector, and helps CHOs avoid costs associated with high turnover, such as increased onboarding and training costs.



The biggest challenge we face is recruiting the right staff, keeping those staff here and supporting them with their wellbeing and training needs.

– Community housing stakeholder

Staff Turnover<sup>2</sup>





## Community housing roles require capability to deliver person-centred housing services

Delivery of contemporary community housing services demands more than just the provision of shelter. CHO staff must have the skills and knowledge to provide person-centred services to promote sustainable tenancies and positive outcomes for renters.

Tenancy management roles have low barriers to entry, with no formal qualification required or available in Victoria. Candidates are often hired with little – or no – prior community housing experience, based on having the right “soft skills”.

Stakeholder consultation identified the heavy reliance on on-the-job training for tenancy management staff. A lack of structured training and professional development programs means CHOs often struggle to develop the housing-specific capabilities required to deliver high quality, person-centred housing services in their new staff.

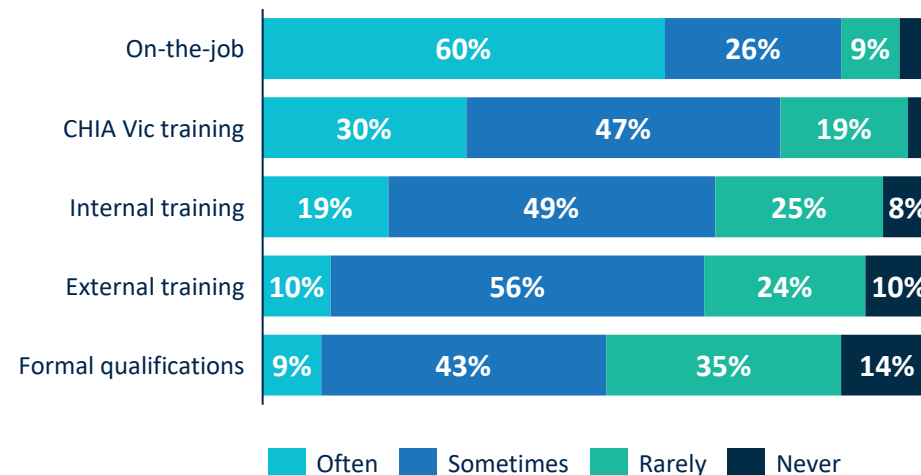


[Best-practice community housing service delivery] has some key elements: human-centred practice, focus on understanding the individual and their needs, understanding where there is flexibility in policy and practice, communicating properly, and being well placed to make referrals.

– **Community housing stakeholder**

## How capabilities are developed in the sector<sup>1</sup>

n = 80



There is a lack of structured training programs; planned training and development to support people in their roles. We need specific capability development programs.

– **Community housing stakeholder**



## Supported and developed supervisors and team leaders will manage staff more effectively

Consultation with workers highlighted that the quality of managers within an organisation is a key determinant for how supported they feel. Many noted that high performing housing staff that naturally progress into supervisor and team leader roles do not necessarily possess the inherent skillset to lead a small team. Individuals who are skilled tenancy managers may need upskilling to become effective supervisors, team leaders or managers. It is incumbent on CHOs to establish the training structure and frameworks to develop the leadership capabilities of these individuals.



Workload [is the primary reason for dissatisfaction and turnover]. Upskilling of the leader has a lot to play in that. If a leader can help a worker or their team manage their workload, that makes a huge difference.

– **Community housing stakeholder**



People can be promoted into management roles because they are really good technically, but they are not supported to become really good managers.

– **Community housing stakeholder**



## A diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the community it serves and promotes the delivery of culturally safe community housing services

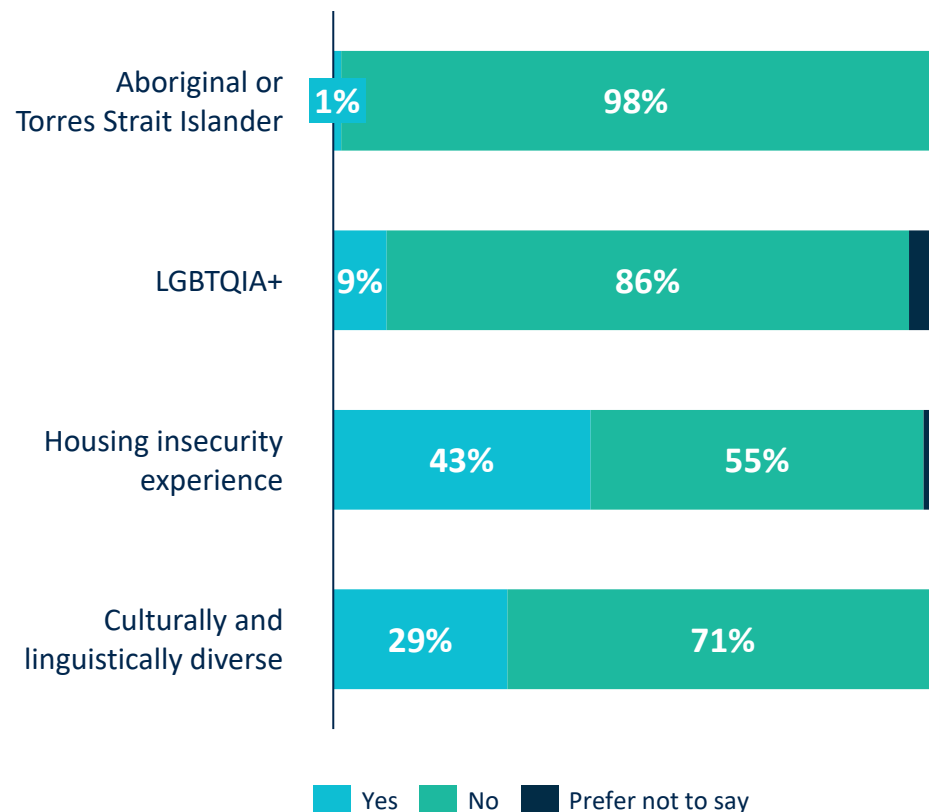
A diverse and inclusive workforce is necessary to ensure community housing services are delivered in a culturally safe way, promoting positive outcomes for all renters. Data collected in the workforce survey indicates that the workforce does not reflect the diversity of community housing renters.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQIA+, culturally and linguistically diverse renters are examples of minority groups who are overrepresented in seeking housing and homelessness services. A diverse and inclusive workforce can help ensure cultural sensitivities and language barriers can be overcome and housing services can be delivered in a person-centred, individualised manner.

A more diverse workforce will also help promote the sharing of broader knowledge, skills, and experience, helping to ensure that CHOs can more consistently deliver high-quality housing services.

### Diversity in the community housing sector workforce<sup>1</sup>

n = 80





## Developing Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the community housing sector is key to delivering culturally safe services and positive tenant outcomes

In consultations, stakeholders emphasised the need for greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples representation to enable organisations to deliver culturally sensitive and safe housing services to renters.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are severely overrepresented in seeking community housing services. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples make up 1% of the Victorian population, 16.8% require homeless services and 20% are dependent on social housing.<sup>1</sup> This level of overrepresentation highlights the need for additional investment into Aboriginal Community Controlled housing providers.

The Victorian Big Housing Build has allocated 10% of housing stock to be targeted to Aboriginal households. However, only a small proportion of this will be delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) and delivered in line with the 12 core principles outlined in *Manana worn-tyeen maar-takoort – Every Aboriginal Person Has A Home*, the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework.

### Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victorian Community Housing<sup>2</sup>

18%

Of renters identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander according to organisations surveyed  
n = 21

2%

Of community housing workforce surveyed identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander  
n = 80



There are two components [of the challenge]: mainstream workforce being culturally safe to deliver services to Aboriginal people, and then the lack of representation within the workforce.

– Community housing stakeholder



## Employment in the sector, as well as the services provided, must be safe and accessible for the communities served

The survey data suggests that culturally and linguistically diverse workers are well represented in community housing. However, workforce representation alone is not sufficient to guarantee a culturally safe workplace or the delivery of culturally safe community housing services.

Consultations with key stakeholders emphasised that being able to show empathy, navigate sensitivities and overcome language barriers is essential to deliver culturally safe housing services to renters from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

International literature suggests that among the youth homelessness population, 20-40% identify as LGBTQIA+. Similar rates of LGBTQIA+ rates of homelessness have been reported in Australia, although more specific prevalence data is unavailable.<sup>1</sup> Nour survey data indicated that LGBTQIA+ make up less than 10% of the community housing workforce.

Organisations must create inclusive working environments, with policies, training, and procedures in place to promote the delivery of safe housing services which lead to positive outcomes for renters.



We are a culturally and linguistically diverse population, and we should be aiming [to remove] barriers to getting greater diversity in the staffing profile.

– **Community housing stakeholder**

### Proportion of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals in Victorian Community Housing<sup>1 2</sup>

20%

Of renters identify as culturally and linguistically diverse according to organisations surveyed  
n = 21

29%

Of community housing workforce surveyed identify as culturally and linguistically diverse  
n = 80

30%

Of Victorians are born overseas

### Community housing workforce survey respondents who identify as LGBTQIA+<sup>2</sup>

n = 80





## Promoting staff wellbeing and job satisfaction will help retain high quality, experienced workers within the sector

The delivery of high-quality community housing services depends on staff feeling engaged and satisfied with their work.

Consultations with the sector stakeholders supported survey data indicating that the socially impactful work was the primary reason for joining the sector. Staff must be able to see the positive impacts they are having on the lives of renters to remain motivated and engaged with their work.

With high workloads and capacity constraints, it can be challenging for organisations to implement structured mental health and wellbeing practices, that promote staff satisfaction and avoid experienced workers from leaving the sector due to burnout.

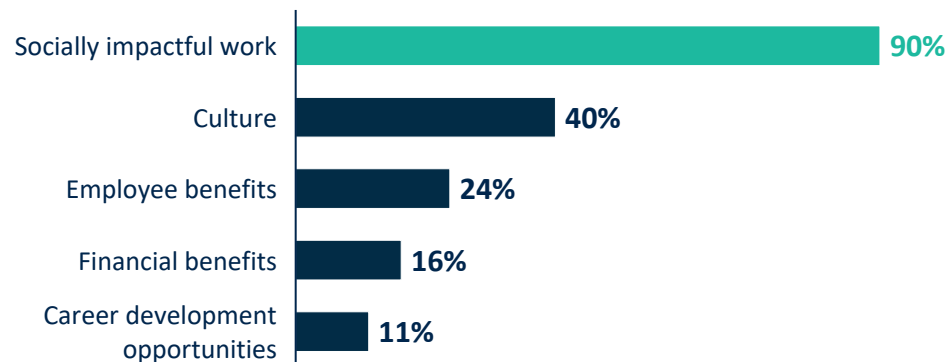


We bring people in, but how are we looking after people to ensure they are supported?

– **Community housing stakeholder**

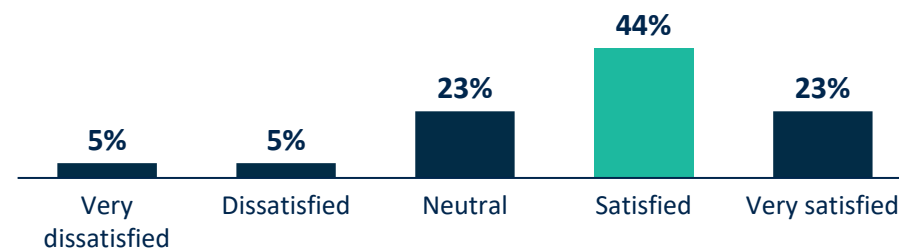
### Reasons for joining the community housing sector<sup>1</sup>

n = 80



### Satisfaction levels

n = 80





## Provide training and support for workers to protect their wellbeing and ensure they can deliver high quality housing services and stay in the sector

In consultation, stakeholders emphasised that working within the sector is challenging, with more community housing residents having multi-dimensional support needs, and the number of different service models workers have to navigate. The workforce identified workload as the number one reason for their dissatisfaction, highlighting the burden and pressure workers face.

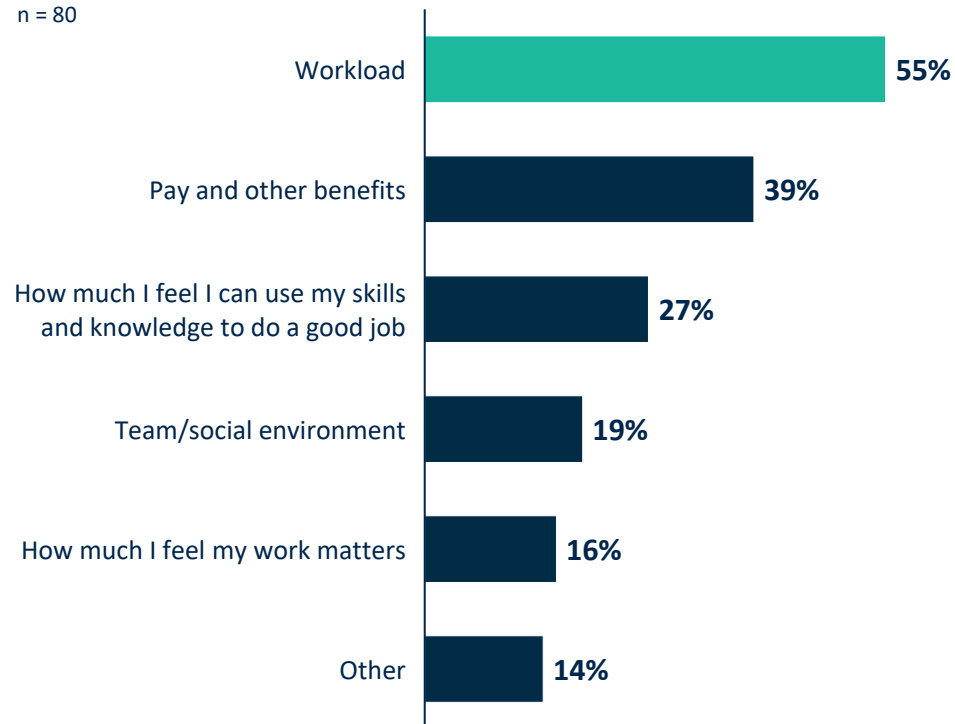


We must be creating a safe – physically and psychologically – environment for people working within the sector.

– **Community housing stakeholder**

### Dissatisfaction factors<sup>1</sup>

n = 80





## Data-based insights on the workforce will improve decision-making and drive positive outcomes for renters

A challenge to be addressed by the Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025) is a lack of data on the sector's workforce.

Improving data about the workforce will help develop evidence-based insights, improving the ability of CHIA Vic and CHOs to make sound strategic and operational decisions regarding recruitment, retention, training and other workforce topics.

The CHIA Vic Industry Transition Plan identifies the value in using data to gain a better understanding of the workforce. For example, this would help identify the workforce overlap between housing and support services.

### CHIA NSW Benchmarking

CHIA NSW have developed a sophisticated data collection process to provide sector-wide benchmarks. This research provides deep insight on the community housing sector in NSW, including the workforce.

Sharing data across CHIA jurisdictions would help align the information collected and improve quality of insights.

### Organisational investment in IT systems

In consultation, it was noted that currently, it can be difficult for IT systems to pull together internal workforce data in order to provide insights and measure against KPIs.

Several organisations indicated they were in the process of upgrading their IT systems. This should improve operational efficiency, as well as have the capability to provide more detailed insights to benchmark against internal KPIs and the official Performance Standards and KPMs of the Victoria Housing Registrar.



# Workforce strategy and actions

nous



Community Housing  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA

# The strategy is guided by a clear vision and priority areas for action

Three cross-cutting themes underpin all elements of the strategy:

## Provide what renters need

“[Everyone] can see the difference a home can make for people’s lives.”

– Community housing stakeholder

## Build a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities the sector serves

“[We need an] inclusive and diverse workforce that presents opportunities to enable everyone who wants to work in it to work in it.”

– Community housing stakeholder

## Promote workforce wellbeing and sustainability

“We need to be making sure that staff are supported and cared for.”

– Community housing stakeholder

## VISION

A strong, skilled, and supported workforce that meets renters needs and delivers high quality housing services

## Broaden talent pipeline and attraction

Strategies to attract, recruit and retain against critical capabilities and gaps

## Improve retention

Employee experience, career pathing, wellbeing initiatives

## PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

## Better training and professional development

Establish professional development pathways, improve availability of accredited training programs that address future critical capabilities

## Improve understanding of the workforce

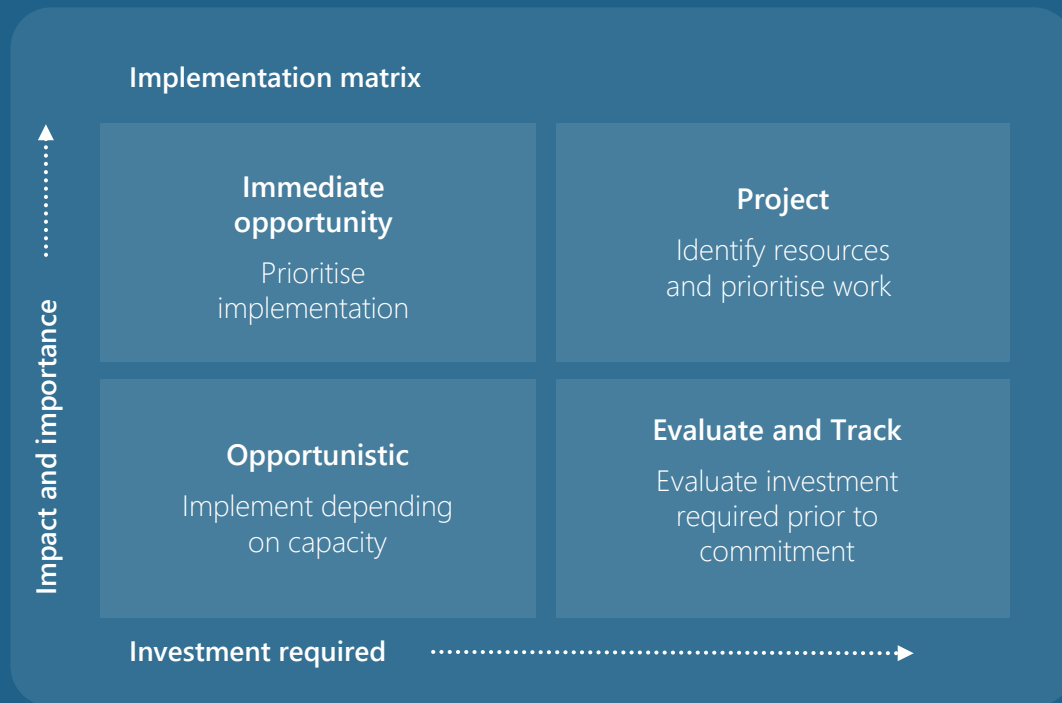
Establish Victorian community housing workforce dataset to improve understanding of sector workforce composition and key issues

# Actions are prioritised for implementation based on investment and impact

## Implementation consideration

Actions across all areas of the strategy are considered against two factors; the required investment and the impact or importance of the outcome. These assessments are informed by a detailed consideration against prioritisation principles.

Each action is assigned to a category, which guides implementation priority as shown in the implementation matrix.



## Relevance to specific role types

Many of the actions within the strategy apply to all roles within community housing, but some are applicable to only a subset of the roles. In the table of actions, the below markers are used to denote to which role/s an action applies.

ALL ROLE TYPES

TENANCY MANAGEMENT

ASSET MANAGEMENT

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

CORPORATE SERVICES

# Aboriginal Victorians and regional workforce development are drawn out as specific areas of focus in the strategy

## Aboriginal Victorians in the workforce

Aboriginal Victorians presented to specialist homelessness services at a rate of 17.69% per annum in 2021-22, which represents the highest proportion per population of any jurisdiction in Australia<sup>1</sup>. Ten percent of housing stock from the Big Housing Build will target Aboriginal households.

The *Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort – Every Aboriginal Person has a Home* Victorian Aboriginal Homelessness and Housing Framework acknowledges the need for a culturally competent mainstream housing system with culturally safe policies and practices in place. Culturally safe service delivery involves both improving the cultural understanding and practice of the entire workforce, and increasing the number of Aboriginal people in the community housing workforce.

The Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025) seeks to address the under-representation of Aboriginal people in the community housing sector workforce through additional targeted actions, including the addition of cultural safety and awareness to the updated Community Housing Capability Framework. Respect and support for self-determination is fundamental to the strategies proposed herein. The strategies and actions have been developed to align with, and build on, the Community Housing Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework.

## Regional workforce development

Regional CHOs and their workforce face similar, but accentuated, challenges to metro Melbourne organisations.

Recruitment is a significant issue. Regional organisations have an even smaller pool of potential candidates, making it difficult to find individuals with the right skillsets to work in the sector.

Geographic constraints make it difficult for staff to access in-person training, limiting their professional development opportunities.

The Workforce Strategy seeks to address these regional workforce challenges.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Specialist homelessness services annual report 2021-22 Indigenous clients, Australian Government, 2022



**Ten percent of housing stock from the Victorian Big Housing Build will target Aboriginal households**

## Broaden talent pipeline

### Initiatives

1.1

**Promote reputation of community housing sector as a career and industry to potential workers**

Immediate opportunity

All role types

1.2

**Identify foundational aptitude requirements to recruit for successful candidates**

Project

All role types

1.3

**Build connections with learning institutions, professional and occupational bodies to promote the sector**

Project

All role types

### Actions for CHIA Vic

Develop case studies highlighting:

- Growth and development opportunities in the sector
- Realistic job preview that shows the inherent complexity as well as rewards
- Transition from other sectors into community housing (e.g real estate)
- Personal fulfilment from a purpose-driven career in community housing

Draft a standard package of text for CHO's to use to describe the sector and opportunities.

Articulate foundational values, attitudes and interpersonal skillsets that predict successful transition of workers from other sectors into community housing for CHOs to select community housing workers.

Develop offering of general onboarding programs that correspond to the Capability Framework so that CHOs can recruit for key attributes (also connected to strategy 3.2).

Map foundational capabilities for the main community housing role types to other more common roles/sectors/qualifications to define transferrable skillsets and critical experiences for successful employment in the community housing sector (i.e. social work, commercial property development).

Build connections with universities, TAFE and RTOs to encourage graduate entry point to the sector.

Promote this avenue of employment with relevant student organisations, professional and occupational bodies.

### Actions for CHOs

Find opportunities to promote the sector in general, as well as specific career opportunities, on websites and other material.

Apply understanding of foundational aptitudes, capability framework and general onboarding programs to expand scope of recruitment to target people with high potential to transition to the sector when connected to CHIA onboarding courses.

Build connections with local TAFEs and RTOs to encourage graduate entry point to the CHO.

## Broaden talent pipeline

### Initiatives

1.4

#### Investigate trainee and cadetship options

Project

Tenancy management

Property development

1.5

#### Connect people with lived experience of housing insecurity to employment pathways

Project

Tenancy management

1.6

#### Identify and address unintended barriers in recruitment and selection

Immediate opportunity

All role types

1.7

#### Support flexible resourcing to enable greater access to employment

Project

Tenancy management

### Actions for CHIA Vic

Explore funding options to establish a Community Housing Industry Cadetship Program providing cadets the opportunity to commence study of a VET qualification while undertaking paid employment in application, allocation, tenancy and property development with a designated CHO.

Provide guidance for CHOs when taking on a trainee or cadet (i.e. availability of on-the-job supports and supervision, establishing mutually-agreed expectations of on-going employment, rates of pay, etc).

(N.B. Current partnership between CHIA NSW and NSW Government may provide inspiration for potential offering in Victoria.)

Share examples of practice where CHOs have connected renters to employment within the community housing sector (this may include Social Housing Employment Program examples).

Encourage workforce analysis to understand current diversity and inclusion, and strategies to further improve this.

Develop unconscious bias audit toolkit for CHO's to self-identify unintentional recruitment and selection barriers.

Articulate the common principles for successful flexible working arrangements (i.e. types of roles, workplace factors, supports needed, approaches to embedding).

Collect and share case study examples of where CHOs have successfully applied hybrid or remote working options, part-time roles, flexible hours.

### Actions for CHOs

Determine capacity to engage a community housing industry cadet once program is established.

Promote Community Housing Industry Cadetship Program and/or other employment programs locally, with particular focus on how this can encourage participation from workers from diverse backgrounds or identities.

Promote opportunities for renters to access entry pathways into community housing roles. This may include connecting renters to the Social Housing Employment Program, among others.

Perform unconscious bias audit of recruitment and selection processes to identify potential barriers for potential workers from non-dominant cultures or identities applications and address these.

Encourage opportunities for flexible work to enable greater workforce participation. (i.e. work hours shaped within school hours or client-contact appointments within specific 2-days per week etc to enable reduced commuting for regional staff).

## Broaden talent pipeline

### Initiatives

1.8

**Active recruitment of Aboriginal staff (aligns with strategy 1.1)**

Project

All role types

1.9

Additional strategies focusing on Aboriginal workforce

**Improve the cultural safety of the workforce for Aboriginal Victorians**

Project

All role types

1.10

**Aboriginal cadetship program (aligns with strategy 1.4)**

Project

Tenancy management

1.11

Additional strategies focusing on regional workforce

**Regional partnership cadetship program (aligns with strategy 1.4)**

Tenancy management

Asset management

1.12

**Pathways for local residents (aligns with strategy 1.1)**

Immediate opportunity

Tenancy management

### Actions for CHIA Vic

In partnership with AHV, promote the sector as a career to Aboriginal people by focusing strategies detailed in strategy 1.1 of this plan on the experience of Aboriginal staff.

Take a lead role in supporting CHOs to develop culturally safe policies with alignment to the Community Housing Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework.

Provide the sector with connection to training in cultural safety.

Partner with First Nations provider to develop guide to culturally safe workplace approaches to share across sector.

Explore funding options to establish a Community Housing Industry Cadetship Program similar to cadetship program described above, with particular focus on employing and training Aboriginal people.

Explore funding options to establish a Community Housing Industry Cadetship Program similar to cadetship program described above, with particular focus on regional areas.

Promote the sector as a career to local residents in regional areas by focusing strategies detailed in strategy 1.1 of this plan on the experience of regional staff.

### Actions for CHOs

Focus recruitment advertisement and communications to target Aboriginal staff, including through Aboriginal media and community networks.

Review wording on job ads to encourage Aboriginal candidates to apply for roles.

Include Aboriginal people in all recruitment processes, where appropriate.

Promote a culturally safe organisation by developing culturally aware staff and leaders by creating a thorough understanding of, and training in, Aboriginal cultural safety and self-determination.

Conduct self-assessment of workplace against culturally safe approaches.

Offer opportunity for Aboriginal students/prospective workers to do cadetships and internships with CHOs.

Offer opportunity for students/prospective workers to participate in cadetships and internships with regional CHOs.

Share case studies and recruitment text as described in strategy 1.1 of this plan to local community hubs, employment services and schools.

## Improve retention

### Initiatives

2.1

#### Promote opportunities for career growth (connects to 1.1)

Immediate opportunity

Tenancy management

Asset management

Property development

2.2

#### Identify ways to support ongoing employment

Evaluate and track

Tenancy management

2.3

#### Develop internal diversity and inclusion policies and management practices

Project

All role types

2.4

#### Support organisations to promote and protect workforce wellbeing

Project

All role types

### Actions for CHIA Vic

Identify training and capability building pathways for career progression, including what 'promotion ready' looks like (addressed in strategy 3.2).

Draft example career progression pathways with CHOs that are accessible to existing staff and potential new recruits.

Advocate for legislative changes to funding of programs to support long-term and permanent employment opportunity, providing more job security for community housing workers.

Develop workforce analysis to understand current diversity and inclusion, and strategies to further improve this.

Develop unconscious bias audit toolkit for CHO's to self-identify unconscious bias in internal policies and management practices.

Identify recommended psychological first aid training programs for the sector and provides links to these for CHOs.

Develop and share key indicators against which organisations can proactively check their workplace environment, strategies and culture to identify and mitigate risks associated with health and wellbeing.

Analyse sector workforce data to identify stress and workload issues the sector is facing and potential mitigation strategies for CHOs.

### Actions for CHOs

Articulate how career development and learning typically occurs within the CHO and promote to new joiners and existing staff.

Explore opportunities to offer long-term and permanent contracts to staff where possible.

Support cross-sector connections (e.g recruitment pool) that facilitates re-employment of high-quality workers by peer organisations where programs reach their natural end of funding is exhausted.

Perform unconscious bias audit of policies and practices to identify potential barriers for workers from non-dominant cultures or identities and address these.

Provide psychological first aid training for managers to provide support for staff.

Conduct self- assessment against indicators for health and wellbeing risks to identify and mitigate.

## Improve retention

### Initiatives

2.5

**Improve access to quality corporate services for CHOs to enhance internal effectiveness**

Project

Tenancy management

Asset management

2.6

**Reduce workload and burnout through review of workforce practices**

Evaluate and track

Tenancy management

2.7

**Reduce workload and burnout through systemic factors**

Project

All role types

### Actions for CHIA Vic

Establish corporate services community of practice for sharing tips and assistance regarding disciplines such as financial management, policy and advocacy and human resources.

Identify opportunities for shared procurement of specialised corporate services expertise and facilitate access. (e.g. access to employee relations advisers, health and safety experts, or other specialised skillsets).

Provide guidance on investment in technology to improve efficiency of workflows and reduce burden on staff.

Facilitate options for shared procurement of systems where viable.

Provide guidelines and training opportunities in risk management, physical safety to reduce and protect against occupational violence.

Scope opportunities to build up a skilled relief workforce, including through workforce supply agencies, that can fill temporary gaps and support better access to alternative work arrangements and leave for the permanent workforce.

Advocate for more appropriate funding to strengthen the broader support sector and reduce indirect load on community housing workforce.

### Actions for CHOs

Contribute to centralised knowledge base and community of practice for corporate service disciplines such as financial management, policy and advocacy and human resources as appropriate to the individual CHO.

Identify opportunities to streamline processes and invest in technology to reduce process burden on staff.

Provide training and upskilling regarding occupational risks, violence, quality and safeguarding for tenancy management and asset management workers.

## Improve retention

### Initiatives

Additional strategies focusing on Aboriginal workforce

2.8

#### Create a culturally safe workplace

Project

All role types

2.9

#### Support onboarding and career growth for Aboriginal staff

Project

All role types

2.10

#### Promote connection of regional workers

Evaluate and track

Tenancy management

Additional strategies focusing on regional workforce

2.11

#### Develop opportunities for continued growth for regional workers

Project

Tenancy management

### Actions for CHIA Vic

(Actions identified in initiative 1.8 - Active recruitment of Aboriginal staff - apply here)

In partnership with AHV, provide guidance to the sector on appropriate Cultural Leave policies and procedures including Sorry Business and Community Leave.

Investigate opportunities to facilitate connections for Aboriginal staff in CHOs to cross-organisation or cross-sector mentors where appropriate mentors are not available or working at capacity. Mentors may be from private enterprise, government or from other community service sectors.

Explore strategies to help connect CHOs with each other or other community service (e.g. investigate potential colocation of services in regional centres).

Support within-sector opportunities to offer secondments or role rotations to enable regional workers access to a breadth of experiences and career development.

Ensure CHIA Vic training is accessible through alternative delivery methods where in-person attendance is prohibitive.

Develop case studies to illustrate mobility within regional CHOs to support and promote development of workers in regional areas.

### Actions for CHOs

(Actions identified in initiative 1.8 - Active recruitment of Aboriginal staff - apply here)

In consultation with Aboriginal staff and advisers, establish Cultural Leave policies and procedures including Sorry Business and Community Leave.

In consultation with Aboriginal staff and advisers, define career plans that are culturally safe and lead to representation of Aboriginal people at all levels in the organisation.

Create opportunities for mentoring and support from Aboriginal peers or mentors.

Develop specific connection and communication plans for regional staff who may be at risk of isolation to ensure a peer or manager is in regular contact.

Identify opportunities to partner with other CHOs or similar organisations to provide mutual secondments or rotations that enrich the experience of staff.

## Better training & professional development

### Initiatives

3.1

#### Improve training offerings, based on the updated Capability Framework

Project

All role types

3.2

#### Re-establish certified housing qualification in Victoria

Evaluate and track

Tenancy management

3.3

#### Map development pathways and suite of activities to progress (also connected to strategies 1.3 & 2.1)

Project

Tenancy management

3.4

#### Support management and leadership development

Project

All role types

### Actions for CHIA Vic

Review CHIA training offerings to align directly with existing and new domains under the new Capability Framework – in the immediate-term this includes cultural safety and trauma-informed service delivery as priorities.

Articulate how each course uplifts capability in each domain.

Regularly review the capability framework to include emerging requirements for the sector.

Work towards the establishment of a housing-specific certified qualification to be offered in Victoria.

Explore potential partnerships with a registered training organisation (e.g. CHIA NSW) or tertiary institution to deliver the qualification.

Advocate community housing as a career option for students through secondary school and tertiary education channels.

Explore the inclusion of social/community housing content in the Certificate IV in Community Services or social work program with government funding to increase access.

Use updated Capability Framework to highlight levels of proficiency required as an individual moves through a development pathway.

Extend offering of supervisor, leadership, and people management training to provide support for the transition from a direct service provider to a manager of people.

Promote initiatives designed to upskill high-performing workers to become strong supervisors, managers and leaders – interim roles, shadowing, secondments might be some examples.

Establish more professional development networking opportunities to promote greater connection across the sector.

### Actions for CHOs

Embed revised Community Housing Capability Framework into development planning and opportunities for staff.

Support development of CHIA Vic training offerings through ongoing input/feedback and encourage staff to engage with relevant training.

Embed revised Community Housing Capability Framework into development planning and opportunities for staff.

Apply development pathway mapping to provide a clearer sense of an individual's career options in the sector.

Promote cross-sector and inter-sector mentorship for emerging leaders to help with cross-pollination of skillsets and to reduce internal burden within individual CHOs.

Establish and maintain cross-sector connections to share leadership lessons and promote cohort relationships for mutual support.

## Better training & professional development

### Initiatives

3.5

**Identify and promote emerging sector skillsets and roles to existing and potential workforce**

Evaluate and track

All role types

3.6

**Identify a development track for Aboriginal workers**

Project

All role types

3.7

**Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation/community leaders-led training**

Project

All role types

3.8

**Expand alternative delivery options for regional access**

Project

All role types

Additional strategies focusing on Aboriginal workforce

Additional strategies focusing on regional workforce

### Actions for CHIA Vic

Identify emerging roles as the sector evolves and communicate these to sector leaders to signal likely demand.

Provide likely skillsets or critical experiences that will support successful delivery of emerging roles to support recruitment or staff transfer to these.

Define career plans that are culturally safe and encourage representation of Aboriginal people in all roles, at all levels.

Support ACCOs and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community leaders and key staff to design and deliver tailored training.

View culturally safe service delivery as its own professional development track.

Build a comprehensive selection of eLearning opportunities to reduce barriers to accessing professional development and training.

Explore opportunities to have training delivery in regional hubs to deliver face-to-face training in a 'boot camp' style of intensive workshops.

### Actions for CHOs

Work with CHIA Vic to share insights on likely skillsets and critical experiences that support successful delivery of new and emerging roles where they have occurred within a CHO.

(Actions identified in strategy 2.9 apply here)

Promote access to cultural competence and cultural safety training and communities of practice for ongoing development.

Support employee participation in regional training and remote e-learning opportunities.

## Improve understanding of the workforce

### Initiatives

4.1

#### Establish Victorian community housing workforce dataset

Project

All role types

4.2

#### Support CHOs and ACCOs to gather and analyse their own workforce data

Project

All role types

### Actions for CHIA Vic

Seek additional funding to establish ongoing Workforce resource within CHIA Vic to support ongoing workforce development and data insights.

Establish process for deployment of workforce survey tool every 12 months to collect data (per Dec 2022 workforce survey).

Collect and analyse workforce data in central point (CHIA Vic).

Publish workforce insights for sector organisations following each survey period.

Work with CHIA NSW to align workforce profiling approach with a view to eventually adopting nationally consistent benchmarks.

Use CHIA Vic training sessions as an opportunity to survey attending staff members and collect additional workforce data.

Run regular and consistent data collection exercises (e.g surveys) that can be distributed to CHOs and ACCOs and repeated regularly.

Develop and distribute data collection guidance to CHOs and ACCOs, undertake annual reviews of sector data collection performance and report back to sector.

### Actions for CHOs

Participate in Victorian community housing surveys and encourage workforce to provide responses.

Access published workforce insights to inform workforce issues.

Leverage opportunities to collect workforce data.

Encourage data-informed decision making about workforce issues.

# Appendix A

## Updated Capability Framework

nous



**Community Housing**  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA

# Key users of the updated Capability Framework

## CHIA Victoria

CHIA Victoria is the main provider of community housing professional development training courses, a key driver of capability development in the sector. The updated Community Housing Capability Framework will guide the reshaping of CHIA's training offerings to ensure they meet the evolving needs of the sector.

The framework will also help CHIA Vic articulate where transferrable knowledge and skills may exist in adjacent sectors that may be targeted for recruitment.

## Individuals within the Workforce

Clarification of what good practice and strong capability looks like across the community housing sector will enable individuals working in the sector to understand the development pathways available to them. It also serves as a shared touchpoint against which they can map their experience and expertise for career progression or mobility within the sector.

The framework also supports engagement of individuals by clarifying expectations of incumbents.

## CHOs

CHOs must ensure they employ sufficient workforce and develop their capabilities to support the delivery of high-quality housing services. The capabilities held by workers will have a material impact on the tenancy and business outcomes.

Successful recruitment is a key enabler for providing high-quality housing services. CHOs should adopt the Capability Framework to guide recruitment practices. Candidates can be assessed according to the relevant capabilities outlined in the framework to ensure they have the necessary skills or aptitude for the role they are applying for. Informing recruitment decisions with a pre-defined framework will help improve the likelihood of selecting the right candidate and them being successful in their role, contributing to positive outcomes for renters, and overall quality of housing services.

Following recruitment, the onboarding and ongoing training and development journey should be informed by the Capability Framework. Having structured onboarding programs that align with the relevant capabilities for each role will help new recruits gain the foundational skills and knowledge required to work in the community housing sector.

Organisations may use the framework to assess the development needs of their staff according to their relevant capabilities and map development pathways for members of the workforce.

# The Community Housing Capability Framework

In 2019 CHIA Vic published a *Community Housing Workforce Capability Framework*<sup>1</sup>. As part of the development of this strategy, Nous were asked to review the key capabilities set out in 2019. The work underpinning this strategy has found that the six key competencies in the 2019 framework are still valid.

Two additional capabilities are now incorporated which address the increasingly important areas of Cultural Safety and Awareness and Digital Literacy.



The project team established and employed the following principles to revise the 2019 Community Housing Capability Framework:

1. **Strive for simplicity.** The process naturally tends towards complexity, but effective frameworks are easily understood and succinct. Sufficient yet simple.
2. **Start with the end in mind.** The framework must be easy to use and able to be embedded with other initiatives and systems to build the attributes required by a future workforce.
3. **Few capabilities are better.** A capability framework should highlight the critical capabilities and those that differentiate – therefore only a small number of capabilities will genuinely generate value and impact.
4. **Local language helps craft a narrative.** Use language that resonates with the community housing sector.
5. **Informed by sector voice.** The capability framework reflects sector consultations and discussion.
6. **Adaptable over time** Investment is increasing the speed of evolution within the community housing sector, and the Capability Framework should be iterated over time to reflect these changes and in response to sector needs.

## About the additional capabilities

The additional capability domains are informed by existing relevant capability frameworks and consultations with sector stakeholders during development of the Victorian Community Housing Workforce Strategy (2023-2025).

### Cultural safety and awareness

Understands the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their world views and shared connections to land and culture.

Demonstrates respect for the perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and encourages this in others.

Is aware of own personal and cultural biases, and uses strategies to overcome these.

### Digital literacy

Uses digital devices to navigate internal and external systems and processes.

Finds and accesses digital information and learning.

Drives digital innovation and process uplift.

Informed by:

- CHIA Victoria Cultural Safety Framework  
<https://chiavic.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CHIA-Vic-Cultural-Safety-Framework-FINAL-1.pdf>
- APSC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework  
<https://www.apsc.gov.au/working-aps/diversity-and-inclusion/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-workforce/cultural-capability-framework>
- Victorian Public Service Commission Aboriginal Cultural Capability framework  
<https://vpvc.vic.gov.au/workforce-programs/aboriginal-cultural-capability-toolkit/aboriginal-cultural-capability/>

Informed by:

- DEWR Digital Literacy Skills Framework  
<https://www.dewr.gov.au/foundation-skills-your-future-program/resources/digital-literacy-skills-framework>
- NSW PSC Digital and Customer Capability Framework  
<https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/building-a-digital-and-customer-capable-workforce>

# Appendix B

## Strategy action prioritisation principles

nous



**Community Housing**  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
VICTORIA

## Prioritisation principles

The gap between current workforce and future need is significant. As such there are many initiatives that can be undertaken to help close that gap. However, funding and resources are limited. Prioritisation principles determine the relative priority of individual initiatives. This overall prioritisation then enables decision-makers to invest in the most beneficial initiatives first.

Principle	Elements	Description
Strategic merit	Alignment with purpose of community housing sector	How does this initiative help deliver outcomes for community housing renters?
	Alignment with purpose of Workforce Strategy	How does this initiative help deliver outcomes for the community housing workforce?
	Intersection with other initiatives	Does the initiative amplify, duplicate or detract from existing initiatives within the sector, State or Federal government?
Feasibility	Availability of financial means required	What is the financial cost of the initiative and from where are these funds available?
	Availability of human resources required	What capacity and capability is needed for the initiative and how will they be accessed?
Risk <i>(factors against the initiative)</i>	Unintended negative consequences for renters or workforce	What are the impacts if the initiative is ineffectual? What other detrimental effects may arise as a result of this initiative (for renters/for the workforce)?
	To sector or organisational reputation	Does the initiative pose a threat to the good standing of the sector or individual organisations within it?
	To fiscal sustainability	Does the initiative put at risk the long-term fiscal sustainability of organisations or the sector?
Overall		Go now / Go later / No-go