

Media Release

The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Thursday, 8 June 2023

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP RETURNS TO ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting self-determination and giving Victorian Aboriginal communities economic opportunities, handing ownership of five properties back to Aboriginal organisations.

Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams today announced five properties owned by three Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations are the latest to have their first mortgages removed as part of the First Mortgage and Community Infrastructure Program.

First mortgages were removed from:

- Rumbalara Aboriginal Coporation's property in Mooroopna, northern Victoria
- Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-Operative's property in Bairnsdale
- Ngwala Willumbong Aboriginal Corporation's properties in Windsor, East St. Kilda and Thornbury.

The removal of first mortgages gives Aboriginal organisations full control of their assets, increased financial autonomy and the ability to boost their economic growth and stability.

Since 2017, the program has removed 38 of the 59 first mortgages that were held by the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples and delivered \$2.2 million for eligible organisations to complete repairs and minor works and undertake feasibility studies to explore options for future use of the properties.

The first mortgages were in place to allow Aboriginal organisations to initially purchase properties for aged care facilities, community centres, office spaces and medical centres.

The Labor Government's continued work through the First Mortgage and Community Infrastructure Program is part of its broader commitment to advancing self-determination for Aboriginal Victorians.

For more information, visit firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au/first-mortgage-and-community-infrastructure-program.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams

"The removal of first mortgages for Aboriginal organisations ensures control of their properties is led by Aboriginal people, for Aboriginal people, providing a pathway to greater self-determination by generating growth and allowing planning for the future."

"Aboriginal organisations do incredible work for their communities and the removal of first mortgages allows them to potentially further fund, enhance and expand their programs and facilities."