

Media Release

The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP
Minister for Jobs and Industry
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples
Minister for Women



Friday, 23 August 2024

PROPERTY RIGHTS RETURNED TO ABORIGINAL ORGANISATIONS

The Labor Government is delivering on self-determination for First Nations Victorians by providing control of four properties to Aboriginal organisations, making it easier for them to do vital work for their communities.

Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Natalie Hutchins has announced the removal of first mortgages from four properties owned by three Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations. This gives Aboriginal organisations greater control of their assets and flexibility in planning for the future.

First mortgages were removed from:

- Rumbalara Football Netball Club's property in Shepparton, which is an Aboriginal-led sporting club that for decades has strengthened community and brought families together in the region. It is also adjacent to the site of the new Munarra Centre for Regional Excellence.
- Victorian Aboriginal Health Service's property in Clifton Hill, which currently operates as a mortuary and funeral support service. The Service delivers a range of comprehensive medical, dental and social services for Aboriginal Victorians across Melbourne and beyond.
- Mungabareena Aboriginal Corporation's two properties in Wodonga. Mungabareena provides early years, families, health, housing and justice services for Aboriginal people in the region.

First mortgages were originally in place to support Aboriginal organisations to purchase properties for aged care facilities, community centres, office spaces and medical centres. However, this also prevented the organisations from leveraging the property for future capital growth and economic stability.

Since 2017, 42 of the 59 first mortgages held by the Department of Premier and Cabinet have been removed. The Labor Government have also delivered more than \$1.8 million to Aboriginal organisations to complete urgent repairs, maintenance and feasibility studies.

This program of work reflects the Labor Government's ongoing work in 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 Natalie Hutchins

"This returns control to Aboriginal communities – where it belongs. By removing the first mortgages, we're handing control of these assets to the Aboriginal organisations and empowering them to decide their own financial future."

"These Aboriginal organisations can now leverage their assets to do vital work for their communities, such as running sports clubs, and providing health and wellbeing services."