

Strong Family, Strong Communities Phase Two Implementation Plan



The Aboriginal Housing Office would like to acknowledge and thank the individuals and families whose images appear in this document.



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Background

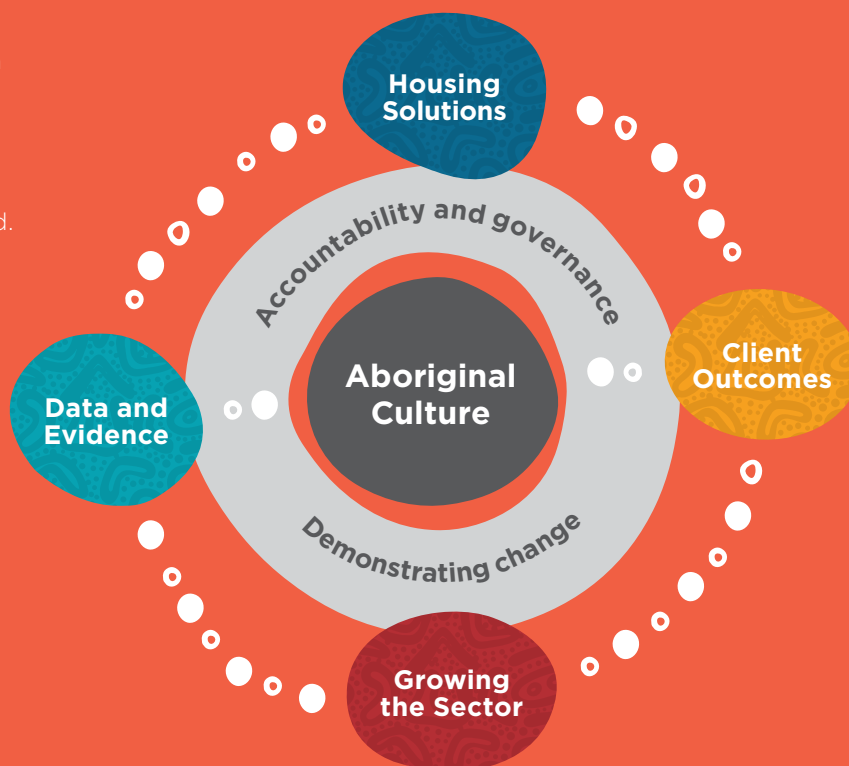
Strong Family, Strong Communities Strong Family, Strong Communities (SFSC) is the AHO's 10-year strategy to improve the well-being of NSW Aboriginal families and communities through housing.

The strategy is focussed on the following pillars:

- **Housing Solutions** — delivering housing solutions with Aboriginal families based on demand for social affordable housing.
- **Client Outcomes** — achieving better outcomes with Aboriginal tenants and clients through partnerships with Aboriginal organisations, human services agencies, and by creating study, work and business opportunities.
- **Growing the Sector** — strengthening and growing Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHP) through sector investment, regulation and the transfer of housing and property management.
- **Data and Evidence** — improving data collection, evaluation and analysis to plan and invest in the future.

While initially focused on a \$33.1m package of initiatives in 2018/19, the SFSC scope has gradually increased. At 30 June 2022, the AHO can point to achievements including:

- 2,279 refurbished homes
- 5,257 solar panel upgrades for AHO homes
- Property management transfer of 1,500 AHO homes to Aboriginal providers
- 33 Aboriginal Community Housing Providers supported to achieve registration through the National Regulatory System for Community Housing
- 101 Aboriginal students supported to undertake tertiary studies and improve their employment opportunities
- 7 families/individuals supported as part of a transitional housing program
- 100 home ownership opportunities
- 1,217 clients supported through Services Our Way
- 280 new AHO homes



SFSC Phase Two Implementation Plan

The SFSC Phase Two Implementation Plan will provide clarity and transparency on what you can expect from us over the next four years (1 July 2022 through to 30 June 2026). The plan focuses on:

- **What** we are going to deliver
- **When** we are going to deliver
- **How** we are going to deliver

While ensuring tenant/clients, communities, government and other stakeholders remain informed on our progress on the delivery of key programs, we have broadened the scope of the Phase 2 Implementation Plan to include all AHO work. In doing this we will ensure that:

- all our work is aligned with one or more of the SFSC pillars
- there is more comprehensive transparency and accountability
- tenants/clients, communities, staff and other stakeholders can see themselves in SFSC and celebrate our achievements

Our Approach

Keeping Aboriginal culture at the centre of everything we do underpins this plan. To ensure a strong Aboriginal voice in our planning and delivery over the next four years, we have asked AHO staff, our partners and communities for their feedback about **how** we can strengthen our work with Aboriginal tenants/clients, and communities more broadly. People have been thoughtful and generous in their responses. To ensure that people know that their voices have been heard, we are reviewing and recording all feedback. We will be transparent about what feedback we are implementing. We will also be transparent where feedback has not been fully implemented and provide reasons. This approach takes time.

At the same time, we recognise an immediate need for a plan that provides clarity on what you can expect from us and when you can expect it.

To meet both these needs our SFSC Implementation Plan will tell you:

1. what we expect to deliver through key programs as well as our ongoing commitment to improving housing outcomes for Aboriginal people through our core business and when we expect to deliver it
2. how we will work with and strengthen our partnerships with Aboriginal tenants/clients and communities and increase our ability to improve.

The SFSC Implementation Plan will tell you what you can immediately expect, what you should see by 30 June 2026 and what you can expect to see in the next three months. The plan will be updated quarterly to ensure ongoing accountability. The plan focusses on the following areas:

- Keeping Aboriginal culture at the centre
- What we are delivering
- Accountability and governance
- Demonstrating change

Reporting

Each quarter we will produce a SFSC update. This report will be available on our website and will include:

- snapshots of aspects of what we do as part of our core work
- a progress update of what we are doing through all our key programs
- an update on initiatives we have or have committed to implementing relating to how we work, reflecting feedback we have received

Each quarterly report will also include detailed program milestones for the following quarter which will form the basis of future reporting.





Keeping Aboriginal culture at the centre

The AHO Aboriginal Cultural Framework underpins our commitment to placing Aboriginal culture at the centre of everything that the AHO does.

Elements of the framework includes:

- the AHO Engagement Framework, which seeks to ensure respectful communication with clients, tenants, and the broader Aboriginal communities and the stakeholders we work with
- the AHO Aboriginal Employment Strategy, which focuses on recruitment, support and development for Aboriginal staff
- our commitment of the NSW Government's Aboriginal Participation in Construction Policy and Aboriginal Procurement Policy
- identifying and measuring the impact we have on individuals, Aboriginal communities and the sector by using Aboriginal Impact Statements, surveys, consultation and feedback loops.

Our Aboriginal Cultural Reference Group provides cultural oversight of all aspects of our work, ensuring our business is culturally respectful, appropriate, responsive and in line with the AHO Aboriginal Cultural Framework.



What we are delivering

Our Core Work

The AHO is a statutory body established under the Aboriginal Housing Act 1998 (NSW) to ensure that Aboriginal people have access to quality, affordable housing. The AHO delivers housing solely for Aboriginal people and is a key provider of Aboriginal-specific housing services.

Under the Act, we:

- a) plan and develop programs and services to assist Aboriginal people to meeting their housing needs,
- b) deliver those programs and services
- c) evaluate those programs and services to determine whether they continue to effectively meet the housing needs of Aboriginal people.

In undertaking this role the AHO:

- a) liaises with other government agencies and non-government bodies
- b) co-ordinates Aboriginal housing programs and services with other programs and services that are provided by government agencies (including Commonwealth agencies) and non-government bodies to assist Aboriginal people
- c) develops priorities for Aboriginal housing programs and services
- d) advises the Minister on Aboriginal housing policy, and
- e) develops and implements strategies to support Aboriginal employment of people in the delivery of Aboriginal housing programs and services.

Our Key Programs

SFSC Closing The Gap Program:

This program is made up of the following streams:

- 1) **AHO Economic Recovery 23** which comprises two projects for new supply of homes by June 2023.
 - a. ACHIF new supply will deliver 51 new homes by end June 2023.
 - b. AHO new supply will deliver 45 new homes by June 2023.
- 2) **Closing the Gap – Housing Solutions Program** which will provide 200 new Aboriginal homes, 256 significant upgrades and over 4,440 Solar and Air-conditioning upgrades.
- 3) **Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) Flood Recovery Program** which will provide \$70m of grants to Aboriginal Housing Providers to repair and upgrade flood damaged properties in flood affected regions in NSW. For properties to be eligible for funding they are required to be located in the following seven LGA's (Ballina, Byron, Clarence Valley, Lismore, Richmond Valley, Tweed, Kyogle).
- 4) **AHO LAHC Transfers Project** which will transfer 3,325 homes from LAHC to AHO, starting with Tranche 1 (500 properties in May 2023), Tranche 2 (500 homes Nov 23), Tranche 3 (2,325 homes August 24)

Redfern-Waterloo Housing

Infrastructure NSW (INSW) has transferred funds to AHO from the Redfern-Waterloo Housing Contributions fund. These funds can be used for a combination of:

- Purchase of existing dwellings/buildings
- Refurbishment of established dwelling/buildings for the purpose of providing additional affordable housing
- Purchase of newly constructed dwellings
- Construction of new dwellings.

The AHO is currently exploring opportunities to ensure the funds provide maximum value for money.

Reporting to INSW on the use of these funds will occur on a six monthly basis.

A summary of this reporting will be included in future SFSC reporting.



SFSC Strengthened Sector and Communities Program

The NSW Government has provided \$67.2M in funding over four years. The program is focussed on continuing and further developing a range of initiatives that commenced in the first four years of SFSC.

Key Outcomes

An overview these initiatives and expected outcomes and funding is summarised in the following table.

Initiative	Outcomes
Home Ownership Options	320 home ownership opportunities over 4 years
Tertiary Accommodation Grants	300 students enrolled in tertiary studies supported with the cost of housing over 4 years
Finding Your Way Transitional Housing Options	20 properties repurposed over 4 years supporting 40 families in transitional housing each year
Sustaining Aboriginal Tenancies	SATP supports 260 families over four years, 1 Leading Community Demonstration Site for FY23 and 3 years funding for a new site to FY 26, 2 Client Experience Initiatives supported each over four years
Aboriginal Housing Management Transfers	650 AHO property management transfers to ACHP sector and evaluation
ACHIA and Sector Workforce Development	167 staff trained and 16 community events over 4 years
Sector Capability Fund	125 ACHPs supported over four years to achieve and maintain registration and/or build capacity
High Cost Community Support	Ongoing support payments for 1,805 properties in remote areas where there is significant revenue-cost shortfall
Commissioning Insights and Evidence	Biennial and tenant provider surveys, update of demand and supply model, cultural wellbeing framework and an SFSC evaluation

Services Our Way

This program provides tailored responses to individual client needs, and supports vulnerable Aboriginal families to engage with funded programs and services including health, education, justice, housing, and community services, as well as State Revenue and Service NSW. The program operates from seven locations: Campbelltown, Coffs Harbour, Armidale, Nowra, Penrith, Dubbo and Tamworth, with outreach services in Pilliga (Narrabri) and Moree.

Services Our Way has an annual target of supporting 600 clients in the 2022/23 financial year.

Digital Restart Fund (DRF)

While including elements focussed on strengthening our internal information management systems, the DRF includes a number of developments which will support both ACHPs and tenants. Wherever possible, these developments will build on Ngamuru, the AHO/ACHP online platform. Developments include:

- *Market Rent and household income rent calculator*, which will enable ACHPs to calculate rent based on household income, consistent with the AHO Rent Policy
- *Tenants mobile housing application*, which that will allow ACHPs and tenants to keep each other up to date on rent and maintenance issues
- *Digital housing management agreements* for housing portfolios managed by ACHPs

Closing the Gap

Closing the Gap began in response to a call for governments to commit to achieving equality for Aboriginal people in health and life expectancy within a generation.

To accelerate improvements in life outcomes, programs and services need to be designed, developed and implemented in partnership with Aboriginal people. As a result Aboriginal people called for a community-led, strengths-based approach.

In 2019, the Council of Australian Governments and the Coalition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Organisations signed the Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap which places Aboriginal people as shared decision-makers at the table.

People can secure appropriate, affordable housing that is aligned with their priorities and need is target 9 of this agreement. Within NSW, the AHO in partnership with the Coalition of Aboriginal Peaks (CAPO), is responsible for a range of initiatives focussed on making this target a reality. The following diagram outlines the activities being undertaken as part of our Closing the Gap commitment, highlighting their alignment with SFSC commitments.

While regular public reporting on these initiatives will be coordinated at a state level, we will ensure that it is integrated into our quarterly reports.

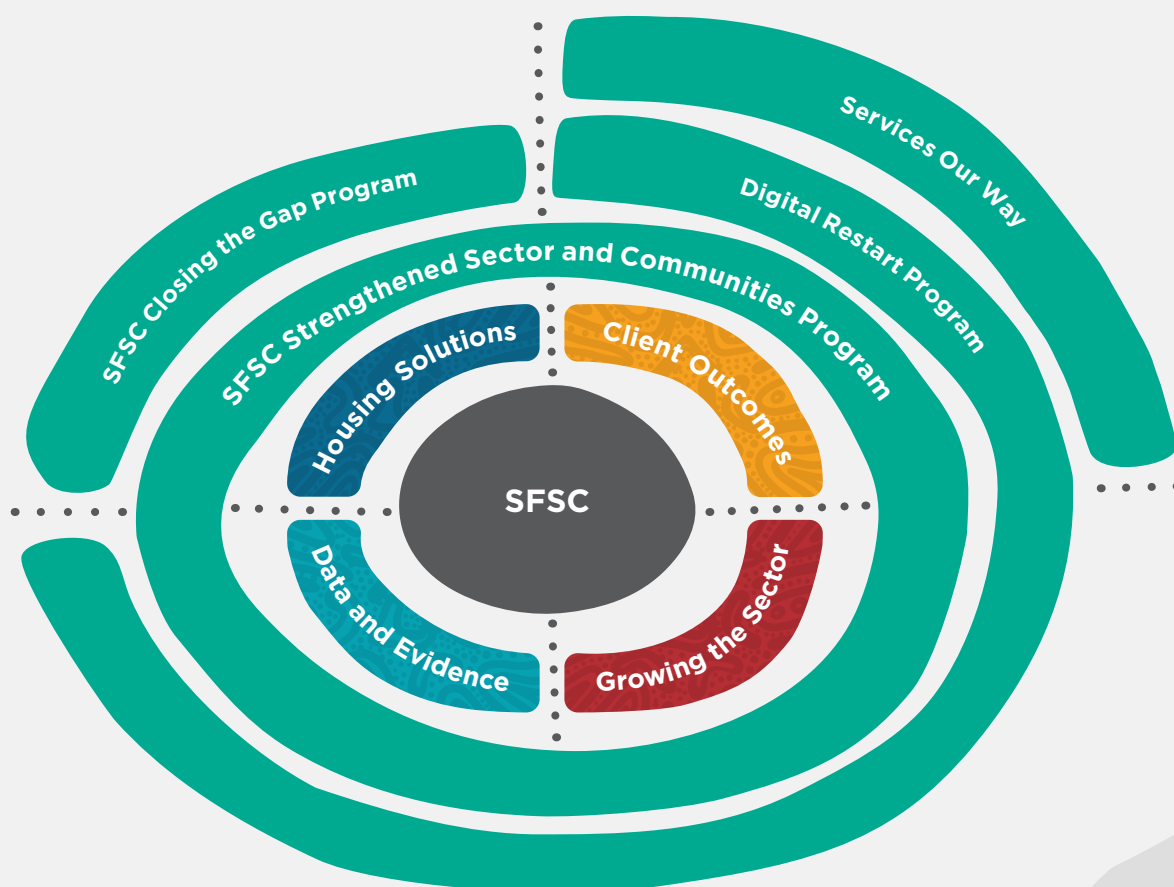


Accountability and Governance

Strong Family, Strong Communities Program Alignment

The diagram below outlines how our key programs align with the Strong Family, Strong Community pillars. We recognise, however, interconnectedness of our work. Every member of our team supports each pillar, often on a daily basis. For example, a staff member working in our Home Ownership Team will support the *Housing Solutions* pillar by supporting

an Aboriginal family into home ownership. As part of their work, they will collect data on where the opportunity was realised, what strategies were successful and what needed adjusting. In doing that they are supporting the *Data and Evidence* pillar. Purchasing a home may see the family exiting the social housing system, freeing up accommodation for another family in need, contributing to *Client Outcomes*. Understanding the interrelated nature of need and responses is key to all AHO work.



Demonstrating Change

We want to ensure that our work will communities makes a lasting and sustainable improvements.

Our commitments under Pillar Four: Data and Evidence, focus on developing an evidence base of good practice. As well as positively impacting on communities, this will provide the necessary base for future funding requests. Regular quarterly reporting progressively paint a picture of the practical impact of our work

The SFSC Implementation Plan contributes to a range of existing government commitments. The following provides initial mapping of some these commitments against SFSC pillars.



	Pillar One: Housing Solutions	Pillar Two: Client Outcomes	Pillar Three: Growing the Sector	Pillar Four: Data and Evidence
Closing the Gap		• Reducing homelessness and overcrowding • Reducing the number of children in out-of-home care • Increasing the proportion of Aboriginal people attaining a year 12 or equivalent education • Increasing the proportion of Aboriginal youth in employment or education • Reducing domestic violence reoffending • Reducing recidivism in the prison population.		• Priority Reform Four — Shared Access to Data at a Regional Level
Premier's Priorities	• Taking steps to ensure more NSW citizens have the opportunity to own their own home	• Making ends meet for families and ensuring NSW is the best place to live, work and raise a family regardless of postcode. • Helping every child to reach their potential to make NSW the smartest state.		• Providing accessible, affordable and world class services
The Future Directions for Social Housing in NSW	• More social housing • More opportunities, support and incentives to avoid and/or leave social housing	• A better experience in social housing		
NSW Homelessness Strategy		• Prevention and early intervention • Better access to support and services • An integrated, person-centred system		

	Pillar One: Housing Solutions	Pillar Two: Client Outcomes	Pillar Three: Growing the Sector	Pillar Four: Data and Evidence
NSW Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy		• Increase access to early intervention for Aboriginal families • Reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home-care • Improve economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal social housing clients • Increase engagement with disability services.		
Housing 2041	• The NSW Government's state-wide housing strategy sets a 20-year whole-of-government vision that supports housing security, comfort, independence, and choice for all people at all stages of their lives. • The strategy is structured to respond to four interrelated pillars, supply, diversity, affordability and resilience and will address housing needs for people across the housing spectrum.	• The NSW Government's state-wide housing strategy sets a 20-year whole-of-government vision that supports housing security, comfort, independence, and choice for all people at all stages of their lives. • The strategy is structured to respond to four interrelated pillars, supply, diversity, affordability and resilience and will address housing needs for people across the housing spectrum.		



