



Australian Government



ABORIGINAL
HOSTELS LIMITED

2025 – 26 CORPORATE PLAN





Introduction

Aboriginal Hostels Limited acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

First Nations people are advised that this publication may contain references to people who have passed away.

The Board of Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL), as the accountable authority, present the AHL 2025–26 Corporate Plan, which covers the period 2025–26 to 2028–29, as required under section 95(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act).

AHL's national network of facilities provide culturally safe and affordable accommodation for First Nations people who need to be away from home to access services and economic opportunities.

AHL is a not-for-profit, Commonwealth company limited by guarantee. It does not have any

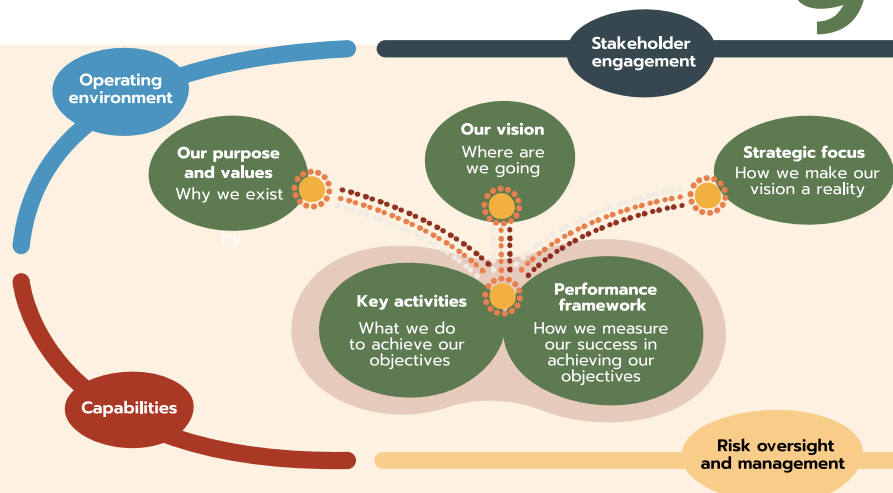
subsidiaries and is not a government business enterprise. The Australian Government, through the responsible Minister, is the sole member of the company. AHL is incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).

This Corporate Plan sets out our purpose, key activities and strategic direction. It describes the work we do, the opportunities and challenges in our operating environment and how AHL will measure its performance over the next 4 financial years.

It goes beyond just being a place to stay; it's a space that radiates warmth, love, support, nurtures and celebrates our culture in the best way possible.

Tony Mundine Hostel resident

How our corporate plan fits together





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Welcome from the Chair

Warami (“Hello” in Dharug language, Yuin Nation)

As the Interim Chair of the AHL Board, I am proud to present our 2025–26 Corporate Plan. This plan affirms AHL’s long standing vision to improve the quality of life and economic opportunities for First Nations people.

For over 50 years, AHL has proudly provided culturally safe, affordable accommodation to First Nations people.

While AHL’s enduring service model has played a vital role in supporting access to health, education, employment, and other essential services, our landscape is changing and that means AHL must respond.

There are 983,700 First Nations people in Australia, representing 3.8% of the total population. One-third are under 15 years of age¹. Almost 25,000 First Nations people are experiencing homelessness and 26% are youth aged 12 to 24 years². First Nations young people need support and AHL has the potential to create a lasting and positive impact.

Right now, the challenges facing all First Nations people are marked by increasing living costs, a national housing crisis, a struggling healthcare system and access to differentiated education offerings. One in 6 First Nations adults have diabetes³, 41% of First Nations households experience food insecurity⁴, and 19% of First Nations people live in an overcrowded dwelling⁵. Only 39% of First Nations people aged 20 and over have completed Year 12 and almost 40% of First Nations young people aged between 11–18 are not attending secondary school⁶.

A deliberate shift in how AHL shapes its future is needed now, and a focus on First Nations young people is front of mind. With 1 in 8 First Nations households having unmet housing needs (twice the rate of all Australian households)⁷,

and the First Nations population having a younger age structure compared to the general population⁸, it is critical that we focus our attention where it is needed.

AHL recognises the importance of ongoing investment by the Australian Government to support our ability to continue to deliver culturally safe services. AHL must diversify its service model to meet the emerging needs of First Nations people and ensure the company’s longterm operational stability.

AHL’s *Social and Economic Impact Report* (December 2024) highlighted the significant contributions to Closing the Gap outcomes across Australia that AHL delivers for First Nations people. By providing access to culturally safe accommodation AHL acts as a stepping stone to improved health and medical outcomes, education and employment opportunities.

The report also demonstrated that for every \$1 invested, AHL creates \$5.19 in value – delivering a \$356.7 million benefit in 2023–24 alone. Through leveraging the dollar-for-dollar investment AHL provides, and by responding to the growing demand from First Nations young people in crisis, AHL can stabilise and reposition itself as a key partner in improving social and economic outcomes for First Nations communities.

AHL is committed to our vision, purpose, and values in all that we do. Throughout the coming year, AHL will continue to build on more than 50 years of experience in supporting First Nations people through providing culturally safe and affordable accommodation, enabling access to services and economic opportunities.

Alison Page

Interim Chair, AHL Board

Our vision, purpose and values

Our vision

AHL's vision is to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for First Nations people.

Our purpose

AHL's purpose is to provide culturally safe and affordable accommodation for First Nations people who need to be away from home to access services and economic opportunities.

Our services

To deliver on our purpose, AHL currently operates 42 hostels across 3 service categories – Multipurpose, Health and Medical, and Secondary Education. We provide a place to stay and 3 meals a day for First Nations people across our hostel network.

Our values

AHL's values are outlined in our Cultural Statement and represented by our PROUD acronym. We regularly recognise and reward employees and teams who embody all that our cultural statement stands for. Acknowledging our staff fosters a sense of pride and recognises their value to AHL and the genuine, meaningful contribution they make to First Nations people – which is something to be proud of.

Respect for residents

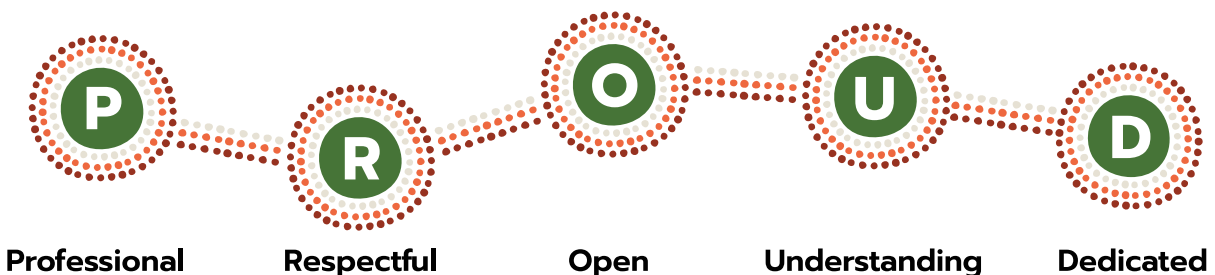
Although AHL is an accommodation provider, the value in our service is not only our physical facilities but also the supportive environment we offer our residents. 'Looking after each other' represents the promise AHL makes to residents to support them.

Respect for staff

'Looking after each other' is also a promise made to staff. Whether working in an enabling services role, as a residential youth worker working with students, or as a housekeeper in a hostel, all staff deserve a respectful work environment that also reflects the Australian Public Service (APS) values.

Our broader contributions

Across our network of hostels, dedicated AHL staff provide accommodation and meals for residents in a culturally safe and supportive environment, assisted by local First Nations service providers and a range of referral agencies. AHL also supports the Australian Government's efforts to improve economic outcomes for First Nations people. By purchasing goods and services from First Nations businesses at every opportunity, we help support a more inclusive economy. We are proud to be one of the largest employers of First Nations people in the APS, with First Nations staff comprising over 40% of our workforce.





Key activities

This Corporate Plan reflects the performance measures and expected results presented in our 2025–26 Portfolio Budget Statements and describes how we will measure our success over the next 4 years.

We will achieve our purpose through the following key activities:

- **Delivering services that improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for First Nations people through providing culturally safe and affordable hostel accommodation for First Nations people.**
- **Maximising partnerships and engagement with First Nations organisations and local service providers.**
- **Implementing an annual hostel maintenance program to provide safe, comfortable accommodation for residents.**
- **Implementing strategies to ensure the company's ongoing financial sustainability.**
- **Contributing to the priorities of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.**

Accommodation supply and demand

AHL has been providing First Nations people with a home away from home for more than 50 years. We were established to meet needs in areas of market failure and our operating model and footprint have evolved over time to meet changing demands in services. We operate in a number of areas where there are often limited viable alternatives to our services. AHL's *Social and Economic Impact Report* reveals that at any one time more than 50% of our residents stay with us because they have no other viable accommodation. The report notes that overcrowded housing or sleeping rough are not considered viable accommodation.

This is not to say we'll always operate in a particular location or operate a particular category of hostel. When services in a hostel segment, or location, are no longer needed, AHL reconsiders the use of its facilities, including alternative arrangements that will meet community needs, ensuring alignment with our company mandate.

Similarly, when there is an increased need for services in a location, AHL is a willing partner to support expansion to meet these demands, provided we can secure appropriate funding to back such ventures.

Throughout 2025–26, AHL will remain responsive to demand, while staying faithful to our values and mandate. We are implementing strategies to attract eligible students to our Secondary Education hostels and improve occupancy, particularly in our Sydney-based hostels. The strong demand for accommodation at our Health and Medical hostels is expected to continue along current trends. The upward trend in demand for general accommodation at our Multipurpose hostels is also expected to continue. Demand for public housing outstrips supply in some locations and many of our residents experience housing instability. Nationally, the private rental market is tight. Finding and securing affordable rental housing is difficult, including for First Nations families.

With these factors at play, AHL will continue to provide an important accommodation safety net for First Nations people in 2025–26 and beyond.



Our operating environment

AHL is an Indigenous Portfolio Body within the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio. As a not-for-profit Commonwealth company, AHL is regulated under the *Corporations Act 2001*, the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and the *PGPA Act*. With the exception of the Chief Executive Officer, AHL's workforce is employed under the *Public Service Act 1999* (PS Act).

Our operating environment is influenced by factors that affect our ability to deliver on our purpose. Many of these factors are out of our control. Factors that impact our operating environment include:

- our geographical footprint (in capital cities, regional towns and remote locations)
- population demographics
- natural disasters and weather events
- workforce trends and capability
- an evolving digital landscape.

As an accommodation provider, there are times when the needs of our residents go beyond the scope of our services. In these instances, we leverage our connections with local partners and community service providers to ensure our residents' needs can be supported, as much as possible during their stay with us.

By providing hostel accommodation, AHL gives First Nations people a place to access employment, education and health services in culturally safe, resident-centred settings across Australia.

The moment you step inside, there's a certain vibe that hits you – bright and alive, with welcoming, warm staff that gives the whole place a homely feel. It's got this atmosphere where everyone feels connected, like catching up with old friends and family. It's a space that embraces our diverse community and makes you feel at ease from the very start.

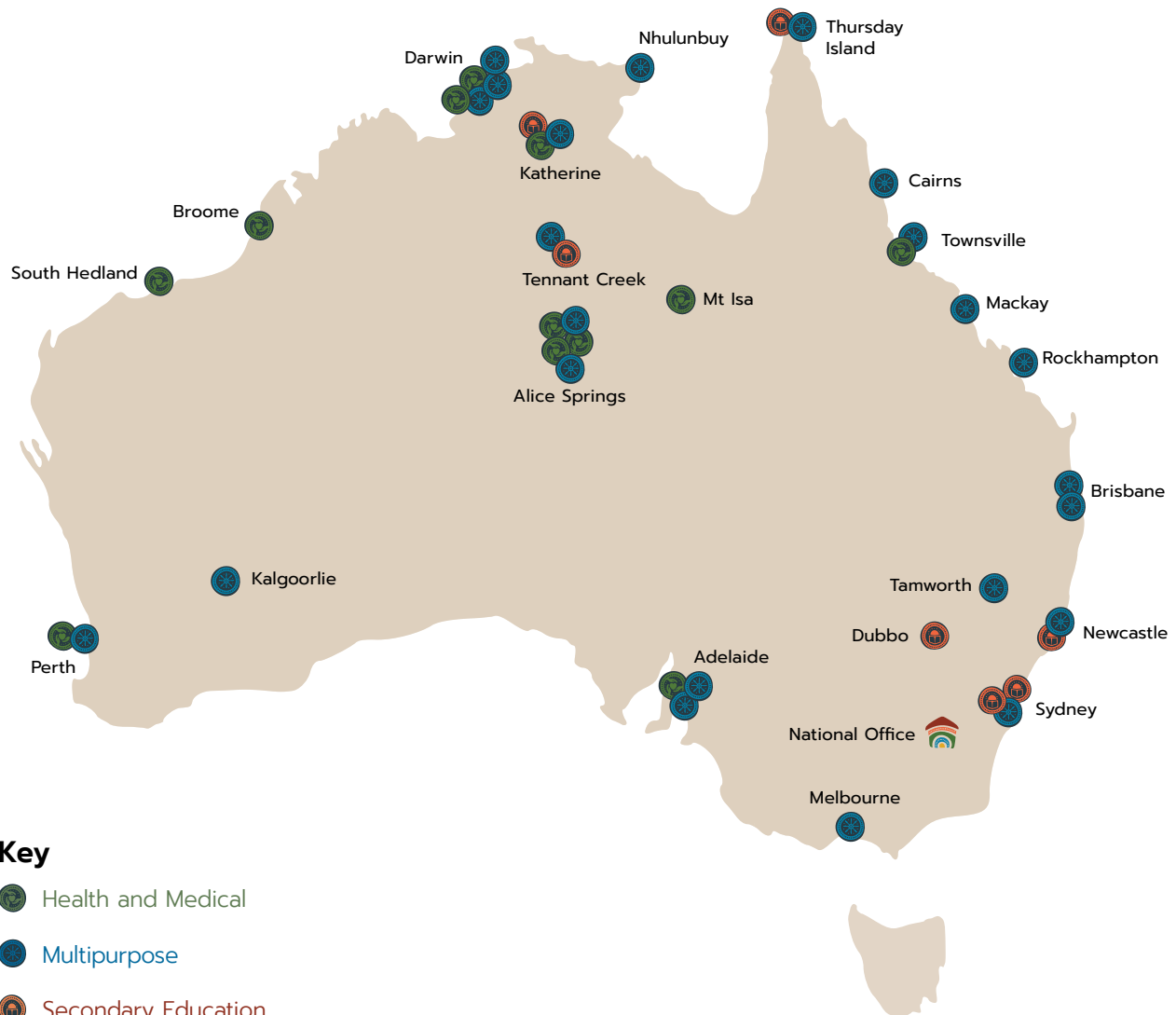
AHL Resident

Residents at Kuiyam Hostel
















































AHL's hostel network



Although not captured on the map above or in the following table, AHL owns facilities in:

- **Armidale:** which is operated under a management agreement with a Community Housing Provider who provides accommodation to vulnerable people, including First Nations people.
- **Derby:** which is leased to a First Nations corporation providing accommodation and support services.
- **Kununurra:** which is operated under an access license by local First Nations organisations providing accommodation and support services for First Nations people.

Jurisdiction	Hostel	Location	Service Category
Northern Territory	Alyerre	Alice Springs	
	Sid Ross	Alice Springs	
	Apmere Mwerre Visitor Park	Alice Springs	
	Ayiparinya	Alice Springs	
	Topsy Smith	Alice Springs	
	Daisy Yarmirr	Darwin	
	Galawu	Darwin	
	Gudang Dalba	Darwin	
	Nagandji Nagandji-Ba	Darwin	
	Silas Roberts	Darwin	
	Corroboree	Katherine	
	Fordimail Student Hostel	Katherine	
	Katherine Women's Medical	Katherine	
	Nhulunbuy	Nhulunbuy	
	Tennant Creek Secondary	Tennant Creek	
	Wangkana Kari	Tennant Creek	
New South Wales	Grey Street	Dubbo	
	Durungaling	Newcastle	
	Kirinari Newcastle	Newcastle	
	Biala	Sydney	
	Kirinari Sylvania	Sydney	
	Tony Mundine	Sydney	
	Tamworth	Tamworth	
Queensland	Elley Bennett	Brisbane	
	Yumba	Brisbane	
	Kuiyam	Cairns	
	Mackay	Mackay	
	Kabalulumana	Mount Isa	
	Neville Bonner	Rockhampton	
	Canon Boggo Pilot	Thursday Island	
	Jumula Dubbins	Thursday Island	
	Iris Clay	Townsville	
	Tonky Logan	Townsville	
Victoria	William T Onus	Melbourne	
South Australia	Luprina	Adelaide	
	Mulgunya	Adelaide	
	Nindee	Adelaide	
Western Australia	Broome	Broome	
	Trilby Cooper	Kalgoorlie	
	Allawah Grove	Perth	
	Derbal Bidjar	Perth	
	South Hedland	South Hedland	
Australian Capital Territory	National Office		



AHL's hostel network service categories

Our network has 42 hostels across 3 service categories.



1,069
beds



23
facilities



MULTIPURPOSE

Our Multipurpose hostels provide accommodation for individuals, couples and families. Residents stay with us when waiting for housing, seeking employment, participating in tertiary or other educational opportunities and when meeting commitments away from their homes and communities. Some residents stay until they are able to access long-term accommodation.



375
beds



12
facilities



HEALTH AND MEDICAL

Our Health and Medical hostels cater specifically for First Nations people who need to be away from home to access medical services, including renal dialysis and antenatal or postnatal care for mothers and babies. Financial assistance and help with transport are available through state and territory Patient Assisted Travel Schemes. These hostels are often located close to medical facilities, where residents can access specialist treatment. Some examples of our service offering can be seen in Katherine and Alice Springs. Our Katherine Women's Medical Hostel, which caters for First Nations women, is just over 200 metres from the Katherine District Hospital. In Alice Springs, our Alyerre Hostel is conveniently located a short 5-minute drive from Alice Springs Hospital.





116
beds



7
facilities



SECONDARY EDUCATION

Students from years 7 to 12 are accommodated in our Secondary Education hostels and supported by a Head and Deputy of Boarding and a team of residential youth workers, while they attend high school and college away from their homes. Our students are involved in extra-curricular activities before and after school. They also take part in support programs that assist them to successfully complete their studies. Eligible students attract ABSTUDY payments to support the cost of boarding.

Every day, AHL provides a place to stay and 3 meals for approximately 1,200 First Nations men, women and children.

The tariff is set at an affordable rate for individuals and families receiving Australian Government income support. Through an annual appropriation, the Australian Government provides funding to cover the gap between an affordable tariff and the cost of providing hostel services.

Alyerre Hostel



AHL’s residents

In 2024–25, our hostels accommodated a diverse range of residents, including children, youth and adults. Our residents are at the centre of all that we do, whether it is our high school students staying at our Secondary Education hostels or residents of all ages at our Health and Medical and Multipurpose hostels. Last year alone, we welcomed both newborn babies and a resident who was 98 years young.

We are proud to accommodate residents from communities across the nation – from Fitzroy Crossing to Mabuiag Island, and Coburg to Doomadgee. Building relationships with residents and learning about the communities they come from is one of the ways AHL distinguishes itself from other accommodation providers.

Some residents stay for a short time, while others stay for extended periods to access medical treatment or until they are able to secure long-term accommodation.

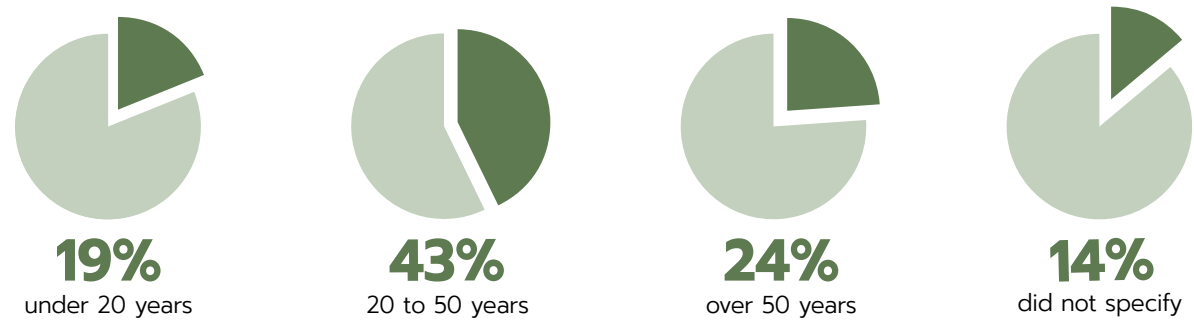
Average length of stay in 2024–25

Hostel type	Average length of stay
Multipurpose	12 days
Health and Medical	14 days
Secondary Education	On average, our Year 12 graduates in 2024 had stayed with AHL for 15 school terms (approximately 3.5 years).

AHL will continue to play a critical role in supporting First Nations people to access medical services. In 2024–25, 54% of our residents in our Health and Medical and Multipurpose hostels were people and their carers, accessing our services for medical reasons. We offer First Nations people a home away from home when they need to be in town to attend appointments and access medical services. Without our accommodation services, there would be a greater demand on hospital beds and fewer alternative options for First Nations people to manage their accommodation needs. Although the average length of stay in our Health and Medical hostels in 2024–25 was 14 days, some residents have stayed with us for over a year to ensure they were able to access medical services.

2024–25 Demographics

Age range



Gender

We have a higher proportion of female residents staying at our hostels. We have 3 hostels which only cater to female residents – our Biala Hostel, which is an all-girls Secondary Education hostel, and 2 hostels supporting antenatal or postnatal care for mothers and babies. We also have 2 all-boys Secondary Education hostels.

54%
of residents were female

28%
were male

18%
did not specify their gender

Outlook for 2025–26

In 2025–26, AHL will continue to operate efficiently, while providing accommodation to First Nations people and families unable to afford short term accommodation at commercial rates. While some cost recovery is possible in our current operating model, our mandate to provide affordable accommodation means we are reliant on the Australian Government to fund the gap between an affordable tariff and the cost of our services.

Maintaining and upgrading our facilities, and strengthening key partnerships, is evidence that we have no plans to slow down our work.

While operating our business-as-usual services, AHL will continue to focus on strong fiscal planning and management. In conjunction with consideration of the company's longer-term business planning and financial sustainability, AHL will maintain cost controls and seek to maximise returns from investments.

As we plan and implement projects throughout the year, we will maintain our commitment to placing residents at the centre of all that we do.

For some, it's a place to regroup, to recharge, to heal, and be surrounded by others who understand.

AHL Resident

Kuiyam Hostel



Strategic focus and priority areas

Strategic focus

To ensure AHL can achieve its purpose and deliver services that have meaningful impact in improving the quality of life and economic opportunity for First Nations people, throughout 2025–26 we will continue to:

- communicate our purpose with clarity
- raise awareness of our services
- strengthen our cultural identity
- maximise partnerships
- optimise our asset base
- improve our service offering
- strengthen our people, fiscal and governance capabilities.

The needs of our residents and the broader First Nations community are guiding factors in setting our strategic direction, as they are at the centre of all that we do. Routinely seeking feedback from residents and stakeholders not only enables us to measure satisfaction, it keeps us connected to residents' changing needs and allows us to respond where it matters most.

In line with AHL's mandate, our strategic agenda is underpinned by the following principles:

- While we do not provide wraparound support services, we will look to improve AHL's connections with service providers so that residents' needs can be supported in an integrated way.
- We should not be in competition with other providers and should operate only in areas of market failure.
- We should not provide services in areas the Australian Government already funds and our service footprint should be in the health, secondary education and multipurpose segments.
- We must continue to operate within budgets, and will explore alternative funding sources and partnerships where needed to achieve our objectives.
- We will reassess our contribution to the growth in demand for more medium-term, transitional accommodation, however, we will not move into social or other forms of public housing provision.

Yumba Hostel



Mackay Hostel





Minister Malarndirri McCarthy with AHL staff and stakeholders at Apmere Mwerre Visitor Park.



Strategic direction in 2025–26

In 2025–26, AHL will continue to:

- be an integral provider of affordable accommodation that supports the Australian Government's effort to overcome disadvantage of First Nations people
- connect with our residents and stakeholders to better understand their needs
- operate in locations of greatest need, in priority areas of education, employment and health
- deliver a consistent standard of accommodation services, by service type, across Australia
- sustainably manage and maintain our property portfolio
- respond to need through evidence-based business planning
- pursue best practice in workplace health and safety
- focus on options to strengthen our business model and secure the company's longer-term financial viability.

Apmere Mwerre Visitor Park Upgrade

We are committed to proactively engaging with our stakeholders and directing our efforts to priority areas of need, such as the upgrade and expansion of Apmere Mwerre Visitor Park (AMVP) in Alice Springs. In late 2023, AHL received \$3.5 million from the Australian Government to deliver additional accommodation for First Nations people in the region, including women and children experiencing domestic violence. In early 2025, AHL received a further \$1.1 million to address increased site and project costs. Construction is well underway and is due to be completed by the end of 2025. This upgrade will deliver 20 additional short-term beds at the hostel.



Capabilities

Outlined in this section are strategies and plans AHL will implement to have the capability it needs to undertake our key activities and achieve our purpose.

Facilities

AHL is committed to sustainably and cost effectively managing, maintaining and improving our hostel facilities, while providing culturally safe, functional and affordable accommodation for our residents.

Guided by our *Strategic Asset Management Plan*, we will continue to deliver upgrades and maintenance projects to improve the standard of amenities across our national hostel

network. AHL's planned maintenance and capital improvement programs are underpinned by our goal to maintain industry benchmark repair and maintenance investment in our hostel asset portfolio.

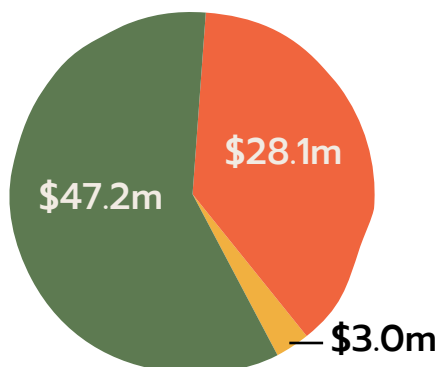
In 2025–26, major refurbishment projects will prioritise critical bathroom and kitchen upgrades and internal and external painting. Strengthening hostel security will continue to be a focus as we implement the recommendations of the protective security review completed in 2024–25.

The first phase of AHL's new *Designing with and Caring for Country Strategy* will commence in 2025–26. The strategy sets out the priorities over the next 10 years to fulfill our vision to create culturally designed, sustainable, and energy-efficient hostels that honour and integrate with the land and its First Nations heritage, fostering a connection with Country and the local community.

Financials 2025–26

The rising costs of hostel operations places significant pressures on the financial sustainability of the company going forward. As a result, tight financial controls and fiscal restraint will remain in place during the period of this Corporate Plan.

AHL's funding sources



- Australian Government annual appropriation
- Self-generated revenue (tariff, contracted services, and grants)
- Investment revenue



\$127.5m
Property portfolio



\$44.0m
Payroll



People

The delivery of culturally safe and affordable accommodation for First Nations people draws on a wide range of skills and experiences across our team. We take pride in creating warm, welcoming environments that promote inclusion and provide support for our First Nations residents. Our people continue to lead improvements in service delivery and build positive, collaborative relationships with external stakeholders. As they are the most important asset we have, AHL will continue to invest and build capability in our people to ensure a robust and highly skilled workforce for the future.

The year ahead will see a continued investment in our people through:

- The implementation of a company-wide Strategic Workforce Plan that focusses on achievable and tangible actions designed to support our people to have the right capabilities, tools, technology and processes to provide the best service for our First Nations residents.
- The implementation of a new Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) designed to meet future workforce technological and process challenges.
- Strengthening probity in payroll processes, to enhance compliance with condition and entitlements through improved transparency, accountability, and regulatory adherence.
- The introduction of an improved Performance Management Framework to increase consistency and alignment between staff performance and AHL's goals to ensure organisational success.
- Enhancing our workforce by implementing a targeted Capability Strategy.

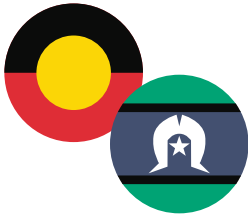
In 2025–26, AHL will look to build core and specialist capabilities to strengthen our own people and create flexibility among the workforce. We will work to become an employer of choice for First Nations employees and recognise the importance of their role in our workforce and delivering a culturally safe service. We will set targets where necessary and monitor our successes to allow us to modify strategies when required. These actions are key components in ensuring that all AHL employees across Australia feel valued, engaged and supported.



From Alice Springs to Cairns, AHL's P.R.O.U.D values shine through our staff.



Our diverse workforce



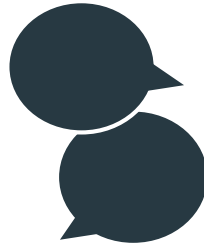
42%
First Nations
people



6%
people with
disabilities



56%
women



29%
Culturally and
linguistically diverse

From prep to plate,
care goes into every meal.

What really stands out is the way the staff approach things; they're not just there to help but to ensure everyone feels seen, understood and safe. It's clear they're dedicated to providing more than just accommodation – they're creating a genuine environment where people can feel supported, thrive, and find strength to achieve goals.

AHL Resident





Strategic Commissioning Framework

During 2025–26, AHL will continue to review the use of its contract and labour hire arrangements to ensure compliance under the Strategic Commissioning Framework. At this time, no targets have been set as our core work is already being performed by AHL staff under the APS framework.

While some labour hire and contractor arrangements are utilised, they are considered critical to ensure ongoing hostel operations are maintained, especially where labour market conditions are challenging. Such occurrences of outsourcing are considered appropriate under the framework principle around outsourcing in limited circumstances.

Information and Communication Technology

AHL's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy for 2025–27 has been refreshed. Our strategic themes remain the same: to Build, Maintain, Protect and Innovate. Our activities align with the themes, to help meet our business objectives and deliver our operational requirements.

In 2025–26 our key ICT projects include the review of the National Network and Managed Service and Secure Internet Gateway providers, tuning of the hostel Wi-Fi implementation, and delivery of the new Human Resource Management Information System. We'll continue transitioning key services to the cloud, maturing information and records management, enhancing ICT recovery and redundancy capacity and strengthening our ICT security.

Customer service

Providing the best service for our residents and our stakeholders is a key priority for AHL. We actively seek feedback from our residents and stakeholders and work to continually improve what we do. To help residents connect to local services while staying with us, we recently introduced in-room Welcome Books, which provide a range of contact information for residents to connect to services.

Residents can also use our complimentary Wi-Fi service to go online and conveniently access services from the comfort of their rooms. A focus for 2025–26 will be supporting more local services to regularly visit the hostels and engage with our residents.

Food is always an important part of our residents' stay. Each of our hostels now have winter, summer and seasonal menus designed by in-house dietitians and are tailored to the requirements of each hostel. We will continue to support our residents' nutritional requirements by regularly reviewing our menu plans, seeking feedback from residents, working with local dietitians and health providers and adapting our menus to new requirements. In 2025–26, we will support our cooking teams with improved technologies, introducing a tablet in the kitchens with prepopulated menus, shopping lists, nutritional and allergy information. This will ensure our food service is easily delivered and provides an excellent service to our residents.

Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and history will continue to be part of AHL's service. We will hold hostel events and invite stakeholders and others to share in a range of events in 2025–26.

We will continue to seek feedback, formally and informally, from our residents and stakeholders to provide the best service we can for our residents.



Our meal service now includes healthy snack stations for residents.

Corporate governance

AHL operates in a complex regulatory and accountability environment. In carrying out its governance role, the AHL Board must ensure the company complies with its contractual, statutory and other legal and compliance obligations.

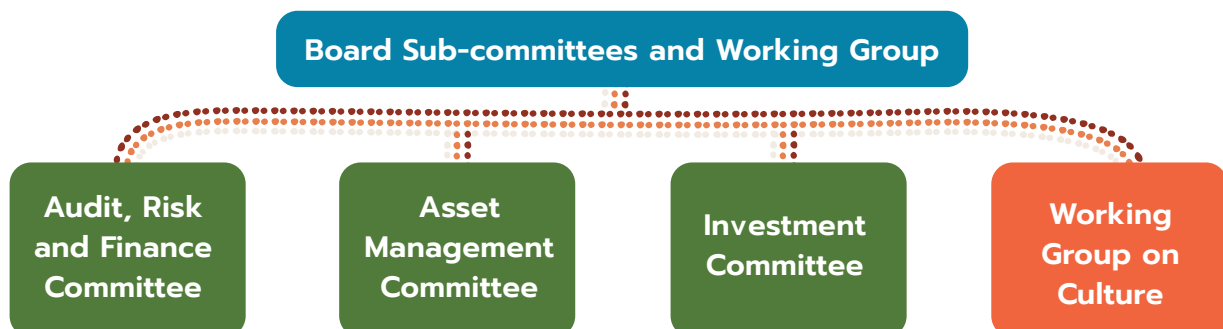
To assist the Board to discharge its responsibilities, the Board has established 3 sub-committees and one working group: the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee (ARFC), the Asset Management Committee (AMC), the Investment Committee (INC), and the Working Group on Culture.

AHL Board members bring diverse professional skills and public and private sector expertise to their roles. This expertise is complemented by the cultural expertise with a majority of First Nations Board members from across the country.

The Board's extensive corporate governance experience ensures the company's purpose and outcomes are delivered with accountability and transparency.

The AHL Board Charter supports ongoing professional development of Directors, to support the complex and evolving nature of corporate governance and the changing environment in which AHL operates. To ensure best practice corporate governance, the Board conducts an annual review of its performance and effectiveness, including:

- **governance structure, roles and relationships**
- **performance of Board functions**
- **Board decision-making processes**
- **Board skills, culture and development.**





Risk oversight and management

As risk is dynamic and inherent in AHL's operations, effective risk management is a strategic and operational priority. AHL's commitment to risk management improves our performance and supports achievement of our objectives. It is also embedded into the planning and delivery of our business objectives, to ensure that risks are identified, managed and mitigated as they arise.

AHL's risk management framework is reviewed regularly to ensure it is fit for purpose. In 2025–26, we will continue to monitor and review our risks, identify emerging risks, promote a positive risk culture, and support staff to build capability in managing and engaging with risk.

Enterprise Risk Management

AHL manages risk by ensuring compatibility between our business strategy, business plan and Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework, under the guidance of AS/NZS ISO 31000. Our ERM framework is a structured, consistent and continuous process used to identify, assess, respond to and report on risks that could affect AHL in achieving its business objectives.

AHL's ERM framework comprises our Risk Management Policy, Risk Appetite Statement, Risk Management Framework and Plan, Enterprise Risk Register and Subsidiary Risk Registers. The framework is operationalised through regular assessment of AHL's enterprise and operational risks, mitigation strategies and internal controls.

Throughout 2025–26, the framework will continue to provide guidance to the AHL Board, management and staff on managing and engaging with risk and inform decision-making, governance arrangements and business and project planning and delivery.

Risk oversight

AHL's corporate governance structure plays an important role in ensuring we implement effective risk management practices. Our risk management roles and responsibilities include:

Board – overall responsibility for risk management including determining AHL's risk appetite and tolerance and ensuring there is an effective risk management culture across the company.

ARFC – assisting the Board in discharging its responsibilities under the PGPA Act, including providing independent advice on the appropriateness of AHL's risk management and systems of internal control.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – ensuring risk management is understood, complied with and effective at all levels across the company and fostering a positive risk culture throughout AHL.

General Manager, Corporate/Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary (Chief Risk Officer) – monitoring compliance with the ERM framework, implementing risk management governance, overseeing risk management throughout AHL, supporting the Board to manage AHL's risks in line with the company's risk profile, building risk management capability and fostering a positive risk culture.

Tonky Logan Hostel

General Manager, Operations (GM) and Chief People Officer (CPO) – supporting compliance with the ERM framework, embedding risk management in business activities, processes and procedures, continuous monitoring and reporting of the effectiveness of risk controls, supporting risk management capability, including risk systems, processes, information and tools as well as people capability, and fostering a positive risk culture.

Risk owners – managing, monitoring, reporting and escalating risks, identifying and managing emerging risks, embedding risk management into project processes and procedures and implementing and maintaining effective risk controls and treatments including assessing their effectiveness.

All staff – actively managing risk in accordance with the ERM framework, complying with legislative,

regulatory and policy requirements and reporting any real or perceived risks to the health, safety and working environment for themselves, our residents or the general public.

Monitoring and review

The ARFC and the Board review AHL's ERM framework regularly as part of the company's process of continual improvement set out in AS/NZS ISO 31000.

Throughout 2025–26, the ARFC and the Board will continue to monitor and review AHL's enterprise risks quarterly to ensure AHL's risk profile reflects the current business environment and AHL has appropriate mitigation strategies and internal controls in place to manage current and emerging strategic and operational risks.



Enterprise risks

AHL's enterprise risks and our management strategies are:

Risk	Management strategies
AHL's financial instability and failure to operate within budget erodes the long-term financial sustainability of the company.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government approved budgeted deficits across the forward estimates.• Closure of under-performing hostels.• Comprehensive monthly financial reporting and monitoring of income and expenditure.• Mid-year budget review and quarterly updates of full year forecast.• Maximising own source revenue, including: annual review of tariffs and implementation of the investment strategy.• Monthly reporting to the Department of Finance.• Oversight and monitoring of AHL's investment activities by the INC.
AHL fails to recruit and retain essential staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enterprise Agreement flexibility clauses to match APS salaries for transferring staff and CEO discretion to agree additional remuneration in line with the requirements established by the Australian Public Service Commission.• Participation in the Indigenous Apprenticeship Program and the Indigenous Graduate Pathways program.• Increased training opportunities.• AHL's Capability Strategy.• Use of third-party providers to support recruitment activity.
AHL is unable to maintain appropriate controls over ICT systems resulting in a significant data breach or system failure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business continuity management and ICT disaster recovery plans.• ICT Strategic Plan.• Strengthening ICT cyber security maturity.• Internal and external hardware and software system controls.
AHL's services are not culturally safe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resident and stakeholder satisfaction survey and other feedback mechanisms.• Hostel specific stakeholder plans.• Cultural safety training for staff.• Employing higher numbers of First Nations staff.• Cultural competency selection criteria embedded in recruitment processes.• Working Group on Culture supporting the Board.• Cultural awareness training for Executive Level 2 and Senior Executive Service employees.• Implementing the Designing With and Caring for Country Strategy.• Indigenous champions network.• Inclusion of culturally appropriate foods in hostel menus.
AHL fails to meet regulatory requirements to protect children and vulnerable people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Protection Adviser contracted to provide guidance to AHL staff on child protection matters and mandatory reporting requirements.• Child Protection framework developed and published.• Secondary education policies and procedures.• Compliance with Commonwealth Child Safe Framework Principles.• Recruitment policies and procedures including working with vulnerable persons and police record checks for staff.• Mandatory child protection training for staff.
AHL fails to meet regulatory requirements to protect residents or staff from serious injury or death.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AMC oversight of AHL compliance obligations.• Hostel Inspection Program.• Regular essential safety measures audits.• Compliance training.• Food Safety Plan, food licences and compliance checks.• Compliance with Department of Health and National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation pandemic and infectious diseases guidance.• Oversight and monitoring by the Board sub-committees and the Board.



Stakeholder engagement

Partner organisations and cultural connections

To ensure AHL provides an optimal service, we partner with organisations at the community, local, regional, state and territory, and federal levels. Regularly seeking feedback from stakeholders allows us to assess satisfaction, which in turn guides improvements to services and partnerships. One way we support local stakeholders is by offering prepaid bed arrangements so our partners know accommodation is available for their clients when it is needed. We will continue to grow these partnerships in 2025–26, recognising the value they provide for First Nations people in need of short-term accommodation.

We respect the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our hostels operate. Our signage project which commenced in 2024–25 and will continue into 2025–26, will ensure our hostels acknowledge the Traditional Owners in each location. Through the signage project, we will consult cultural groups to include local language and custom. The project will also provide us with an opportunity to honor the namesakes of our hostels.



The staff are great and treat us like family. It's a great feeling.

Secondary Education
Boarding Student



Partnering with funding bodies

We will continue to work with funding bodies to improve hostel facilities and services and support the priorities of our funding partners.

We have secured funding through the National Indigenous Australians Agency's (NIAA) Indigenous Boarding Providers grant for 2025 and 2026.

We will use this funding to support the wellbeing and development of our boarding students, including continuing the engagement of a First Nations Student Wellbeing Officer and improving our facilities.

The funding will also support our students to participate in a range of cultural, community, recreational and sporting events. This will increase our service offering to our students, support greater retention and offer personal development for our students.

Previous funding has supported AHL to install basketball courts and outdoor gyms, and deliver upgrades and activities connecting our students across the hostel network..



Between appointments, Nhulunbuy Hostel resident harvests pandanus leaves, strips them and dries them in the sun for 2 days. Then sits with a cup of tea to weave the threads into beautiful jewellery and bowls.



NIAA's Indigenous Boarding Providers grant will support additional student activities and upgrades to facilities.

Key partnerships in 2025–26

Across the country, AHL partners with a diverse range of stakeholders to meet local needs. Our prepaid bed arrangements with local health, medical and community service providers ensure they can offer guaranteed accommodation to their clients, particularly for immediate or urgent requirements. The majority of prepaid beds support First Nations people accessing medical services and prepaid beds are also secured by organisations supporting First Nations people impacted by domestic and family violence.

Gove District Hospital is one of AHL's valued partners in providing accommodation for First Nations people needing to travel from their home community to access medical services. The Nhulunbuy Hostel has very high occupancy, with the 44-bed hostel often unable to take walk-ins or other bookings due to being at full capacity. Around 50% of the residents staying at Nhulunbuy Hostel are there to access local medical services. Our partnership with Gove District Hospital has been renewed for 2025–26, ensuring 10 beds are available for hospital patients when they need it.

In 2025–26, AHL looks forward to renewing our existing partnerships, and building new partnerships with health care providers First Nations organisations and local providers that deliver services to young people, so that AHL can strengthen the guaranteed accommodation it provides for First Nations people when it is needed.



Performance framework

Portfolio Budget Statement Outcome 1: Improved access to education, employment, health and other services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people travelling or relocating through the operation of temporary hostel accommodation services.

Program 1.1: The objective of this program is to provide temporary accommodation for First Nations people who must live away from home to access services and economic opportunities.

Key activities and performance measures 2025–26 to 2028–29

Key activity	Objective	Performance measure	2025–26 Planned performance results	2026–27 to 2028–29 Planned performance results
Delivering services that improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for First Nations people through providing culturally safe and affordable hostel accommodation for First Nations people.	To increase utilisation.	Occupancy level as a percentage of resident bed nights available per annum.	80% occupancy.	As per 2025–26
		Methodology: • Quantitative assessment of occupancy data.		
	To drive operational improvements and facility enhancements.	Percentage of residents providing a rating of 'satisfied' (or higher) with the quality of AHL's accommodation services.	80%	As per 2025–26
		Methodology: • Analysis of biennial Resident Satisfaction Survey results.		
Maximising partnerships and engagement with First Nations organisations and local service providers.	To strengthen partnerships with First Nations organisations to ensure that services are connected to community.	Partnerships and engagement with First Nations organisations and local service providers.	Maintained or increased compared to previous year.	As per 2025–26.
		Methodology: • Analysis of stakeholder engagement plans. • Analysis of annual stakeholder satisfaction survey results. • Quantitative assessment of Indigenous procurement performance.		
Implementing an annual hostel maintenance program to provide safe, comfortable accommodation for residents.	To maintain hostel assets to uniform building standards.	Maintain industry benchmark repair and maintenance investment in hostel asset portfolio.	Repair and maintenance investment represents at least 2% of hostel property asset replacement value.	As per 2025–26.
		Methodology: • Quantitative assessment of annual repair and maintenance expenditure.		
Implementing strategies to ensure the company's financial sustainability.	To identify savings and reduce projected deficits.	Company operating result consistent with or better than government approved budget.	2025–26 original budgeted deficit.	As per forward estimates.
		Methodology: • Assessment of annual financial statements.		
Contributing to the priorities of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.	To improve our ability to track and report on AHL's contribution to the Closing the Gap agenda.	AHL's contribution to applicable outcomes and targets in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.	Maintained or increased compared to previous year.	As per 2025–26.
		Methodology: • Quantitative and qualitative analysis of AHL's contribution to the 9 identified outcomes of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.		



South Hedland Hostel

Relevant legislation

Key legislation

- *Corporations Act 2001*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (PGPA Act) and the PGPA Rule Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*
- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005*
- *Australian Public Service Act 1999*
- *Auditor-General Act 1997*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Archives Act 1983*
- *Fair Work Act 2009*
- *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*

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This document must be attributed as the Aboriginal Hostels Limited 2025–26 Corporate Plan.



Endnotes

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) [Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians](#), accessed June 2025
- 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experiencing homelessness](#), accessed June 2025
- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022-24) [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Measures Survey](#), accessed June 2025
- 4 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022-23) [National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey](#), accessed June 2025
- 5 Australian Bureau of Statistics (September 2022) [Housing Statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#), accessed June 2025
- 6 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) [Education Statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#), accessed June 2025
- 7 Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (Feb 2025) [Indigenous housing support in Australia: the lay of the land \[PDF\]](#), accessed June 2025
- 8 Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 2021) [Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians](#), accessed June 2025



The artwork throughout this report is by Ngarrindjeri Artist **Jordan Lovegrove**.



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