



Australian Government



**ABORIGINAL
HOSTELS LIMITED**

Opening Statement

Dave Chalmers, CEO

I wish to begin by acknowledging the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. I thank the Committee for the request for Aboriginal Hostels Limited (AHL) to appear at today's hearing.

I'd firstly like to note that 2023 is a significant year for AHL, with the company turning 50 on 6 June. For 50 years, we have proudly offered a safe place to stay for generations of First Nations people, across Australia.

Since our previous Committee appearance, AHL has continued to provide safe, culturally appropriate and affordable accommodation, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As at the end of April 2023, our year to date occupancy was 76%. This is testament to the continued demand for our services, in priority areas of education, employment and health.

Furthermore, the 2023-24 AHL Budget measure provides AHL with additional funding to support us making improvements to our services. The \$20.0 million over 2 years allows us to do a range of activities, such as increase our spending on meals and food for residents, improve our security, better recognise the work of our hostel managers and undertake important repairs, maintenance and capital works in our hostels.

We will provide regular updates as we implement these improvements and endeavour to work collaboratively and effectively with residents, communities and other stakeholders.

In our 50th-anniversary year, it's timely to reflect on our achievements and our humble beginnings, with our first hostel – Yumba – opening in 1973. Our anniversary provides an opportunity to celebrate the role we've played in the lives of many First Nations peoples and families.

To secure our long-term viability, we will remain attuned to opportunities to adapt and strengthen our business model to respond to emerging needs through evidence-based business planning. This will ensure we can continue to provide a home away from home for First Nations people for future generations to come.

I thank the Committee and welcome your questions.

