



## **ABORIGINAL HOSTELS LIMITED**

### **SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

#### **INDIGENOUS BODIES - CROSS-PORTFOLIO INDIGENOUS MATTERS**

**Friday 25 May 2018 - Mr Anthony Usher, CEO**

### **CEO OPENING STATEMENT**

- Thank you Chair – Tony Usher CEO Aboriginal Hostels Ltd.
- Good morning Senators.
- I also wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.
- I am accompanied today by Ms Michelle Deavin who is AHL's CFO & Company Secretary.
- I thank the Committee for inviting AHL to appear at today's hearing, and I look forward to assisting the Committee with its inquiries. My opening statement will be brief in order to facilitate sufficient time for the Committee's questions.
- For the sake of clarity, I would like to briefly revisit two items of information I provided to the Committee during the last Senate Estimates on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, specifically:

(1) My response to a Question on Notice from Senator Siewert regarding police checks for AHL staff.

I can confirm that every employee must pass a National Police Clearance prior to commencement with AHL. Every AHL employee currently possesses a clearance, and we have strengthened that requirement to be updated every two years.

(2) On the question of Hostel closures, I responded (again to a question from Senator Siewert) that there had been no hostel closures during my tenure at AHL. In clarifying the record, I reconfirm this to be the case, however I wish to add that we have taken 3 properties temporarily offline either for significant repairs & refurbishment, or for re-purposing to maximise their utilisation. There is no intention to permanently close or dispose of any hostels.

On the contrary, we are significantly along the track of identifying opportunities to expand our footprint where there is identified need and proven viability within our existing appropriations.

- In the case of those hostels identified for repurposing, we are currently working with potential partners to better use those facilities to meet local needs.
- During the March hearings, I also provided some detail on the significant improvement in AHL's financial position compared to previous years. I am very pleased to report a continuation of that situation and can advise that we will close this financial year with a 4th consecutive surplus quarter. We will end the year in surplus, with no divestment of hostels.
- Two significant areas of savings in achieving this result are the restructure of our workforce to eliminate a considerable number of Executive positions enabling more people on the ground, and the discontinuation of utilising external contractors to perform tasks that should be managed internally.
- Senators, thank you again for the opportunity to provide you with this update, and I welcome your questions.