

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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NEW WORKER ACCOMMODATION TAKING SHAPE IN MALLEE

Workers in the Mallee region will have access to more accommodation options, thanks to support from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas was today joined by representatives from the Swan Hill Rural City Council in Robinvale to mark the start of works at the Swan Hill Worker Housing project, part of a \$3.4 million investment to attract more workers to the region.

The project will deliver four houses through a \$500,000 investment from the *Building Works* program and is part of a plan to attract more workers to the region in industries such as healthcare and education.

The Ronald Street project is expected to be completed by the end of 2021. The Swan Hill Rural City Council has plans to further develop the site with more houses in years to come.

The Labor Government is also supporting the region's agriculture sector to overcome barriers such as a lack of accommodation, which is preventing some jobseekers from taking up seasonal work.

On Wednesday, the Minister met with the Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council to discuss the progress of an \$800,000 redevelopment of Mildura's Ramsay House to create 25 accommodation rooms for migrant and other seasonal workers.

The project is also being funded through *Building Works* and comes on top of a \$450,000 grant the council has received through the *Seasonal Workforce Accommodation Program (SWAP)*.

SWAP is a \$6 million investment to provide financial help for regional organisations and communities to deliver COVIDSafe accommodation, transport and support services for seasonal horticultural workers.

Further SWAP grants have also been awarded this week to Swan Hill Rural City Council (\$500,000) and Fruit Growers Victoria (\$365,000).

The Government has also invested more than \$1.5 million in worker accommodation across Mildura and Robinvale through the *Agriculture Workforce Plan's Business Adaptation Stream*.

The \$2.7 billion *Building Works* package is providing immediate and lasting benefit to communities across the state, with more than half the projects in rural and regional Victoria. For more information visit rdv.vic.gov.au.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"Accommodation availability in regional Victoria can be a barrier for permanent and seasonal workers – these important projects are helping to solve this issue."

Quote attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Mark Gepp

"The Mallee region has so much potential for employment and business growth, which is why I am so happy to see much-needed accommodation solutions coming to life. It's a win for farmers, a win for workers and a win for the entire community."

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