

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



Tuesday, 7 December 2021

## **BOOSTING SOCIAL HOUSING IN CENTRAL VICTORIA**

The Andrews Labor Government is providing safe and affordable housing for vulnerable, ageing Victorians at risk of homelessness in regional Victoria.

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne today attended the official opening of four new social housing units in Heathcote, thanks to a \$795,000 grant from the Victorian Property Fund.

The one-bedroom units will serve as long-term affordable rental housing for vulnerable older Victorians, equipped with high accessibility standards that will allow renters to age in place, avoiding the need to move to another service provider. The units were successfully completed and tenanted in October 2020.

The grant for the units was provided to Wintringham Housing, a not-for-profit welfare organisation created to address the issue of elderly homelessness. The Heathcote site adjoins an existing Wintringham Housing affordable accommodation development.

There has been a significant shortage of long-term, age-appropriate housing in the Heathcote district, and these new units are helping to fill that gap.

Rent for the four units is set at 25 per cent of the renter's income plus Commonwealth Rental Assistance, or 75 per cent of market rent, whichever is lower.

The units incorporate environmentally sustainable design features, helping to save energy and water and reduce utility bills.

The property is well situated for accommodating older residents, being located on a flat block 600 metres from shops and public transport, and 850 metres to the local hospital and other services in the town.

The project involves a partnership with the Heathcote Lions Club, Heathcote Health, Heathcote and Nagambie Community Bank, and the City of Greater Bendigo.

This project is on top of the Big Housing Build which is investing \$1.25 billion in regional Victoria, ensuring the economic and social benefits of the program are felt in communities across the state. A minimum of \$85 million will be invested the Greater Bendigo area.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne**

*"Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to live – this accommodation provides a secure and long-term home for those who need it most."*

*"These new social housing units will make a huge impact on the quality of life for older Victorians, giving them the security, support and amenities they need to thrive."*