

Wednesday, 13 April 2022

MORE HOUSING FOR WORKERS IN COLAC

The Andrews Labor Government is laying the groundwork for more housing in Colac to address workforce shortages and deliver the infrastructure that locals and visitors need, while creating more than 100 jobs.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited Colac to announce \$3 million from the Labor Government's *Regional Infrastructure Fund – Round 2* – to support potential future land development.

The project will support current and potential future housing development in the region to address Colac's growing population and local workforce.

Works will floodproof the low-lying area by building the Irrewillipe Road retarding basin to store stormwater during heavy rain to be reused. Preparation for footpaths, parks and walkways will also be completed during the project.

Providing more land for residential development is a priority of the Colac Otway Shire's 2050 Growth Plan and will give employers the confidence to keep up to 250 jobs locally with more housing for workers.

The Labor Government understands that housing is a major barrier to workforce attraction in Colac, with rental vacancies at 0.03 per cent. That's why the Government is taking action to address housing shortages across the state, through projects like this one, which complement the \$5 million *Regional Workforce Pilots*.

These Pilots are being developed in five regions across the state, including in the Great South Coast to support coordination between local, state and Commonwealth governments and test solutions to workforce shortages which can include addressing housing and accommodation shortages.

As part of these pilots, the '*Unlocking Affordable Housing Project*' is providing essential infrastructure to develop up to 140 residential blocks in Timboon and Simpson for the Great South Coast's growing population and seasonal workers.

The Pilots and other regional housing initiatives like the Elliminyt Wetlands project build on the Government's historic \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build to construct more than 12,000 new secure and modern, social and affordable homes throughout the state – with \$1.25 billion being invested in regional Victoria.

The Elliminyt Wetlands project is one of several new projects announced as part of the *Regional Infrastructure Fund – Round 2*. The Fund is part of the Government's flagship \$156 million *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund*, designed to help businesses create more jobs in regional Victoria and support community projects.

This investment is key to the Government's more than \$30 billion investment across regional and rural Victoria since 2015. For more information visit rdv.vic.gov.au/rjif

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"We understand that workforce and housing shortages are a real issue in our regional towns, especially those that are a hub for major employers like Colac – that's why we are investing in projects to help solve these issues."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Gayle Tierney

"Working with the Colac Otway Shire Council, this project has been developed to tackle housing shortages and other barriers to regional workforce attraction, which is threatening economic recovery and growth."