

Media Release

The Hon Harriet Shing MP

Minister for Water
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy
Minister for Equality



Friday, 31 March 2023

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL ELDERS IN BALLARAT

Aboriginal Elders in Ballarat will soon have access to a culturally specific independent living village, thanks to support from the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing today met with representatives of the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC) to turn the first sod on the Elders' Independent Living Community, backed by a \$2.6 million investment from the Labor Government's *Regional Infrastructure Fund*.

Located near Ballarat's city centre, the village will help older Aboriginal people share their culture and lead their communities. The project includes 8 self-contained units, a central hall for community meals, treatment rooms for medical personnel and a vegetable garden. It will enable Elders to live independently while receiving care.

Ballarat-based D.R.A.R. Constructions will build the village, creating 160 jobs during construction and 4 ongoing roles at BADAC once complete. Cultural themes and spaces are being designed in consultation with Elders.

There are more than 700 Aboriginal people aged 45 and over across 5 local government areas in western Victoria – including Ballarat, Moorabool, Hepburn, Golden Plains and Pyrenees – who may need support as they get older.

The project is part of BADAC's goal to strengthen Aboriginal families in their local communities through health, social and community development programs.

The *Regional Infrastructure Fund* is part of the Government's *Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund*. The Fund is key to the Government's record investment of more than \$36 billion across regional and rural Victoria since 2015.

For more information about the Fund, visit rdv.vic.gov.au/rjif.

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Harriet Shing

"Projects like the BADAC Elders' Independent Living Community are so important in delivering facilities, inclusion and spaces to regional Victorian communities."

Quote attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams

"We're pleased that construction is underway on this important project, paving the way for Aboriginal Elders to continue to support and guide their local communities."

Quote attributable to Member for Eureka Michaela Settle

"We're investing in projects that matter across Ballarat and this investment will help local Elders get the care they deserve."

Quote attributable to BADAC Chief Executive Officer Karen Heap

"This infrastructure funding is a powerful symbol of this state government's commitment to genuine Aboriginal self-determination and willingness to Close the Gap."

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