

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Premier



Friday, 1 December 2023

HUGE HOMES BOOST FOR REGIONAL WORKERS

Regional Victorian workers will benefit from a huge boost to affordable housing and accommodation, part of the Allan Labor Government's investment in supporting local businesses to retain and attract workers.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Regional Development Gayle Tierney visited the Ararat East Development Zone today to announce the opening of the \$150 million *Regional Worker Accommodation Fund* for workers in key industries where staff are in demand like agriculture, hospitality and teaching.

Building and construction companies are amongst the wide range of eligible groups that can now apply for grants between \$150,000 and \$5 million to develop projects that support local businesses to retain and attract workers by delivering affordable housing and accommodation.

The *Regional Worker Accommodation Fund* follows the success of the Ararat East Development Zone – part of the Labor Government's \$5 million *Regional Workforce Pilots* initiative – that has supported sewage and other infrastructure connections to develop up to 160 lots at the Greenhill Lake housing estate.

First time homeowners Emily Hanns and Mat Smith are two Ararat locals, working in key local industries and raising their young family, who are benefiting from the pilot – with their new home currently under construction.

The Labor Government is also delivering an additional \$1 billion through the *Regional Housing Fund* – building more than 1,300 new homes with a mix of social and affordable housing, on top of the *Big Housing Build*, which includes \$1.25 billion to build new homes in communities across rural and regional Victoria.

The *Tiny Towns Fund* encourages local community groups to bring their best project ideas to the table and develop projects that matter to their community.

Grants between \$5,000 and \$50,000 are available to deliver infrastructure projects, such as new hiking trails, splash parks and playgrounds – with \$20 million available across the state.

The \$25 million *Regional Council Support Package* is also now open, supporting local projects that will bring long-lasting benefits to rural and regional communities – empowering local volunteers, strengthening businesses and communities and promoting Traditional Owner culture, participation and leadership.

The announcement follows extensive consultation with local councils, industry bodies, Traditional Owner groups and communities about what they need most to ensure they thrive into the future.

An expression of interest process for the *Regional Worker Accommodation Fund* will run until 25 February. To find out more visit rdv.vic.gov.au/rwaf.

Quotes attributable to Premier Jacinta Allan

“Regional Victorians have told us that more places to live, work and stay across the state is what really matters to them – and that’s exactly what we will deliver.”

“The investment will mean Victorians can live close to where they work, towns and communities can build the local projects that matter to them, and that our fantastic regional towns are attracting the visitors they need to keep their local economies booming.”

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Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Gayle Tierney

“We know one of the biggest barriers for regional businesses and employers to find the workers they need is affordable housing and accommodation that is close by – so we are creating solutions to boost that supply.”

Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

“This will be a game-changer for our region – helping locals secure affordable housing close to their work, helping businesses grow, and supporting our rural and regional communities to thrive long into the future.”