

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Treasurer

Minister for Industrial Relations

Minister for Regional Development



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PAVING THE WAY FOR MORE WORKER HOUSING IN OUR REGIONS

The Allan Labor Government is delivering more affordable housing in regional Victoria, making it easier for workers to live near their jobs while helping local businesses keep skilled staff in the industries that need them most.

Minister for Regional Development, Jaclyn Symes, today visited Wangaratta to announce 23 new successful recipients from Round 2 of the Victorian Government's *Regional Worker Accommodation Fund*.

The projects will unlock more than \$120 million in public and private investment in new worker housing, delivering more than 750 bedrooms for workers across regional Victoria.

Each accommodation project will bolster workforces in key regional industries including health, agriculture, tourism, hospitality and manufacturing – supporting local employers and strengthening the industries that keep regional communities thriving.

More than 40 projects are now being supported by the *Regional Worker Accommodation Fund* across two rounds, unlocking around \$370 million in new housing investment for thousands of regional workers.

Under Round 2, Nestd Developments in Wangaratta is making use of vacant land - transforming a former secondary school site into a healthcare worker accommodation hub to support critical provider Northeast Health to attract more staff. The hub will feature 34 dwellings capable of housing more than 100 workers including family members.

The Government's support for new worker housing also extends to drought affected areas of the state, including Warrnambool, where Midfield Meats will construct 88 dwellings for up to 300 meat processing workers.

Elsewhere in south-west Victoria, the old Noorat Butter Factory will be redeveloped into a worker housing destination for workers and their family members, with 13 new dwellings to support the agriculture industry.

Riviera Fresh in Lindenow, Gippsland will construct new worker accommodation for up to 18 of its vegetable processing workers. In Phillip Island, Moda will deliver accommodation to house more than 100 key workers in Cowes across the healthcare, food and beverage, retail and tourism industries.

With record migration to the regions, the *Regional Worker Accommodation Fund* ensures that rural and regional communities have the skills, workforce and infrastructure needed to thrive.

The investment forms part of more than \$47 billion in support provided by the Government for rural and regional towns across Victoria in just over a decade. For more information, visit www.rdv.vic.gov.au/rwaf

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Jaclyn Symes

"By supporting shovel ready worker housing projects, we're enabling better access to affordable housing and accommodation across the state which is crucial for health, agriculture, tourism, hospitality and manufacturing."

"In order to maintain stable employment, you need to have affordable accommodation, which is why we're backing worker accommodation across regional Victoria to retain workforces that will keep our regions thriving."

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