

## MEDIA RELEASE: TIME TO ACT ON HOUSING



Independent candidate for the seat of Morwell, Tracie Lund, is calling for urgent action on housing as the Victorian Government's Private Rental Report reveals the true extent of the crisis sweeping the Latrobe Valley.

According to the Private Rental Report, the number of private rentals categorised as affordable in the Latrobe Valley has plummeted from 432 in September 2019 to just 200 in June 2022.

“At the Neighbourhood House, I see first-hand every single day the effects of inadequate housing, low rental affordability and homelessness,” Ms Lund said.

“People who have never needed help before are visiting our food bank and accessing other financial assistance services because they simply cannot afford the basic necessities after prioritising payment for rent and bills, just so they can survive that week.

“People are presenting in complete despair and with an enormous amount of stress and anxiety surrounding their capacity to keep a roof over their head. People are falling through the gaps. Many don't see a way out or see any form of help from the government on the horizon.

“Pair that with multiple interest rates rises this year alone and we are at serious risk of seeing a majority of people in the Latrobe Valley experiencing financial and housing stress in some form.”

Latrobe City has been allocated a minimum of \$60 million to build social housing and private rentals for low income earners as part of the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build, announced in 2020.

Since then, Covid-19 has further exacerbated systemic issues with accommodation supply and accessibility in the Gippsland region, and particularly in the Latrobe Valley.

There is also a backlog of people waiting for accommodation on the Victorian Housing Register, and this list is getting longer and longer.

“Immediate action and funding is required to build more homes and adequately resource local support services to ensure everybody has a roof over their head,” Ms Lund said.

“Having enough housing, in the form people need it, is critical now more than ever as availability of suitable housing is dropping at a rapid rate and the cost of living is rising just as rapidly.

“Access to safe, adequate housing support and services has a huge impact on health and quality of life and we cannot stand by and watch as our community suffers.”

***For more information or to arrange an interview with Tracie, phone 0403 595 093 or email [tracielund4morwell@gmail.com](mailto:tracielund4morwell@gmail.com)***