



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

MEDIA RELEASE



Grimley Wants Improved Access to Victoria's Big Housing Build for Regional Communities

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Continuing during Homelessness Week, Western Victoria MP Stuart Grimley is seeking clarification from the Victorian Government on the barriers Western Victoria's councils experience when accessing funds from Victoria's \$5bn Big Housing Build (BHB).

It has been reported to Mr Grimley that some regional councils are experiencing greater barriers and delays in accessing the BHB compared to their metropolitan counterparts.

The Homes Victoria website says "Local governments that identify opportunities, such as on underutilised council land, are encouraged to work with community housing providers to develop partnership proposals" however it seems these arrangements are not required for some Melbourne projects and it is proving difficult for regional councils to establish these partnerships.

This mixed with the more than 14% increase on rental property prices in regional Victoria, is proving it difficult for people to access affordable housing options.

Victoria's BHB is a good initiative that aims to make it easier for people to access housing, however many regional Councils believe it is easier for metropolitan LGAs to access the funding.

More than 116,000 Australians are homeless on any given night. The number one reason for this is access to affordable housing.

According to Vincent Care, in Victoria, there are 35,000 people on the waiting list for public housing, with 10,000 of those applications for early housing. People are waiting anywhere from two to 10 years on the general list and up to three years for emergency shelter.

The BHB has allocated \$1.25bn – or 25% of its total funding - to regional Victoria.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"On a recent trip around the Western Victorian region I spoke to a number of local councils who have had issues accessing funds from Victoria's Big Housing Build program. They've told me that there seems to be more barriers to access funds than their metropolitan counterparts.

"I've asked the Minister to explain what barriers exist for regional councils, such as Ararat, Buloke, Yarriambiack and others in my electorate in accessing the Big Housing Build to build social housing.

"Regional Victoria should have just as good access to these funds as metropolitan Melbourne and if there are any barriers for regional councils, they should be removed to even out the playing field.

"Being homeless isn't a choice. It doesn't just mean someone sleeping rough in the street. It could be someone couch surfing, living in a shelter or fleeing a family violence situation. There are many reasons that people can find themselves without a home, and it is up to the government to ensure that these people have access to a safe place to sleep.

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