

4WDL MEDIA RELEASE

Wheatbelt Councils Unite to Tackle Housing Crisis with \$4.9M State Funding Bid

A coalition of six Wheatbelt and Great Southern local governments has joined forces to tackle the region's critical housing shortage, lodging a \$4.9 million application to the State Government to deliver urgently needed homes for key workers.

The 4WDL Voluntary Regional Organisation of Councils (VROC) is seeking support through the Regional Housing Support Fund to fast-track the construction of 20 new homes across the Shires of Dumbleyung, Lake Grace, Wagin, West Arthur, Williams and Woodanilling.

The project directly targets one of the biggest barriers facing regional communities, the inability to attract and retain essential workers due to a lack of housing.

4WDL Chair Cr Karen Harrington said the situation has reached a tipping point.

"We have jobs, we have communities ready to grow, but without housing, we simply can't bring people in," Cr Harrington said.

"Right now, councils, schools, health services, police and local businesses are all competing for the same limited housing stock. That's not sustainable."

The submission builds on several years of coordinated regional planning, including detailed housing analysis, local housing strategies and a comprehensive business case confirming a significant and growing shortfall.

The findings are stark, the region requires between 158 and 254 additional key worker homes over the next decade.

Despite strong demand, the business case confirms that housing delivery in smaller regional towns is being held back by fundamental market failure, where construction costs far exceed property values.

"Local governments have done the groundwork, we've planned, we've prepared land and we're ready to go," Cr Harrington said.

"But the reality is these homes won't be built without State Government partnership to close that feasibility gap."

If successful, the project will use modular construction and a coordinated regional delivery model to accelerate build times and maximise value.

Beyond housing, the economic benefits are substantial. Independent analysis estimates the project could generate more than \$30 million in economic output and contribute over \$9 million to the regional economy.

Cr Harrington said the proposal represents a practical, ready-to-deliver solution to a well-known regional challenge.

“This is exactly the type of project the Regional Housing Support Fund was designed for, it’s evidence-based, regionally coordinated and ready to go,” she said.

“With the right support, we can unlock housing, strengthen essential services and support long-term growth across our communities.”

4WDL has been a prominent thought leader in substantiating and advocating the need for key worker housing in regional WA, including identification of the market failure challenge.

The 4WDL region spans approximately 21,000 square kilometres and is home to around 10,000 people across six local government areas.

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Media Contact:

Cr Karen Harrington

4WDL Chair

Cr.Harrington@westarthur.wa.gov.au

