



Answer to question:

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

MIGRATION, PATHWAY TO NATION BUILDING INQUIRY

QUESTION: Could the Council provide copies of the Housing reports that have been commissioned that demonstrate how houses might be built together with what the impediments to being able to construct homes are.

ANSWER: Please find attached Housing Reports that were highlighted in the discussions with the Standing Committee.

In addition Council has highlighted 14 sites within the Robinvale Township that are currently owned by the Victorian State Governments Department of Education that currently have a variety of homes that are in various states of disrepair.

The Education Department Policy relating to the provision of housing for teachers does not allow for the sharing of accommodation meaning that one single person is often occupying three bedroom homes.

The quality of the housing stock is poor and need replacing. Significantly the blocks of land are very large and could accommodate the construction of units on the sites which would allow for more accommodation and modern buildings.

The Education Department could realise half the sites and with the proceeds of the sale of the properties then redevelop the remaining seven sites with modern housing for teachers and other professionals.

The seven sites sold could be redeveloped for seasonal workers accommodation and this would also achieve the enhancement of the neighbourhood character by introducing modern housing stock either with the construction of new homes or units.

The land parcels are evenly spread out across the township and the size of the project would make it attractive to builders on the basis of economies of scale.

Added to this project is the prospect of the redevelopment of the Council Resource Centre site for seasonal workers and the interest of adjoining land owners in Herbert Street to

develop accommodation and commercial properties. This would be a super housing project that would attract considerable interest.

Investors have already commenced small scale redevelopment of properties that they purchase, renovate and then either resell or rent out.

A large scale construction project of over a number of sites would certainly be an attractive proposition and could be supported by both the Federal and State Government through grant funding for infrastructure.

Both Council and the Victorian State Government need to continue to explore what land holdings they have that might be able to be put onto the market either for purchase or in a joint venture with private developers which would see the construction of homes.

Projects will need to be of a considerable scale due to the costs involved in provision of infrastructure in regional and rural areas of Victoria.

The issue of housing must be addressed as the Swan Hill Rural City Council Municipality is a significant contributor to the nation's food bowl, a significant employer across a wide range of industries and relies upon the influx of seasonal workers and migrants to supplement the work force required.

Without housing this growth is placed in jeopardy which would have a detrimental impact on the entire nation.

The region is also about to experience an expansion in the mining sector with a major mineral sands mine to begin operation 25 minutes from Swan Hill. The work force will not be fly in fly out and will be expected to be located within close proximity to the mining operations.

It is not hard to imagine that a percentage of the workers may well come from overseas destinations and will require housing.

There is an opportunity for the Federal Government through its housing fund to support small towns within our Municipality with funding to get critical infrastructure like sewerage to the locations where there is land available to be developed for housing.