



Media Release

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Move to boost region's Social and Affordable Housing

An \$80,000 seeding grant will help identify ways to increase Social and Affordable Housing available for low-income people within the Geelong region to meet a rapidly growing need.

Homelessness-service-provider data from within the G21 region shows there had been a 10 per cent increase over the four years to 2019 in people needing homeless services generally, with about 5 per cent of homeless people 60 years of age or older.

Geelong-based not for profit affordable housing provider Sirovilla Incorporated has received a \$80,000 grant from the Percy Baxter Charitable Trust to engage a project officer for 12 months.

The project officer will engage with a wide range of stakeholders including the existing providers of affordable and social housing across the region to develop a long-term strategy for funding social and affordable housing to reduce housing stress.

The 12-month project will focus its efforts on increasing affordable and social housing availability, including housing for older members of our community.

G21 - Geelong Region Alliance will host the project officer and provide access to its resources and networks to help develop the regional strategy.

Additional funding from other philanthropic sources to supplement the \$80,000 is being sought.

G21 CEO Elaine Carbines said the need for more social housing within the region had been clearly demonstrated in the [City of Greater Geelong's Social Housing Plan 2020-2041](#), released earlier this year.

"In Greater Geelong there is a total demand for social housing at 10,500 dwellings, or approximately 11 percent of all households in the municipality," Ms Carbines said.

"That means there is a shortfall in social housing generally in the Geelong area of 7,000 dwellings. This particular project's focus is on the retiree market for which the shortfall is close of 1500 dwellings.

“Our region has an aging population, with many people retiring here. The shortage exists now and will only get worse with time. That’s why we must act now and plan for the future.”

Ms Carbines said the issue of growing social housing needs within the region was first flagged by G21 and other organisations, including Sirovilla, in the 2016 [G21 Addressing Disadvantage Through Affordable Housing](#) position paper.

Sirovilla Executive Officer Michelle Ball said finding ways to supply accommodation to meet this growing need among the region’s aging population was becoming urgent.

“Although Sirovilla has received the grant we see this as a regional issue requiring an agreed regional strategy. That’s why we have teamed with G21 to ensure wide consultation and input so that the outcome is a comprehensive strategy,” Ms Ball said.

“The objective is a clear and coordinated approach by all social and affordable housing providers to gaining additional government and private support for affordable housing across the region, including housing for older, more financially vulnerable members of the community.

“We need to act now, otherwise the personal consequences for the low-income members of our region, including the elderly, will be tragic. We are already seeing demand that we are unable to meet at our existing facilities. Other providers are having similar issues.”

Sirovilla currently provides social and affordable housing for independent seniors at villages in Highton and Anglesea.

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