



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 17th August, 2020

Mallee Family Care meets with Minister for Housing

Late last week, Mallee Family Care met with the Minister for Planning and Minister for Housing, The Hon. Richard Wynne. Discussion centred on the \$500 million the Victorian Government has committed to maintenance and upgrades of the state's public housing and the potential for cooling to be installed into properties in the Mallee as part of this investment.

Mallee Family Care has been leading a campaign for a review of social housing policy, particularly around the provision of air-conditioning, arguing current policy does not meet the needs of people living outside the metropolitan area and fails to reflect the considerable variations of climate across the state.

During the Mallee Family Care representation to the Minister, General Manager of Education, Research and Training, Ms. Chris Forbes, said that a 'one size fits all' policy framework was no longer tenable, with the Mallee experiencing heatwaves that evidence shows are increasing in duration and frequency.

"Research we conducted in partnership with the University of Sydney indicated that in our region it is hotter for longer than what it was 20 years ago and this extreme heat is having physical and emotional impacts on people living in public housing, it exasperates existing conditions and adds further disadvantage, with flow-on effects across our community."

Mallee Family Care Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Teresa Jayet warned that COVID-19 could present additional complications as the Mallee moves towards the hotter months.

"Usually the State Government recommends that people living without cooling, make use of public buildings during the heat of the day, to get respite – places like libraries, shopping centres and swimming pools. However, in light of COVID-19, people are being actively discouraged from doing this, meaning they will have nowhere to go for relief.

"We know that during the hottest days and nights, multiple families and friends often congregate together in the home of someone with cooling, resulting in upwards of fifteen people in the one place. Again, this would not comply with COVID restrictions and could allow for rapid spread of the virus should it be present in the Mallee."



For all media enquiries:

Kirsten Lloyd | Communications & Marketing Co-ordinator

T: 03 5023 5966 **M:** 0459 020 665

E: klloyd@malleefamilycare.com.au



Ms. Jayet said the Minister recognised the investment Mallee Family Care has made in its research and did not debate the health and social questions, as he accepted they were anchored to strong research.

“Minister Wynne provided us with a valuable opportunity to advocate for the need for cooling in public housing in this region and he was genuinely receptive to the information and evidence we were able to provide.”

Ms. Jayet finished by saying that COVID-19 has emphasised the differences and distance between the northern Mallee and Melbourne and that it’s time for Government to develop place based policy that truly reflects and addresses the needs and conditions of regional, rural and remote communities.

“We look forward to having ongoing discussions with the Minister in the hope of achieving a result that will provide better outcomes for people living in public housing in the Mallee and for our wider community.”

ENDS



For all media enquiries:

Kirsten Lloyd | Communications & Marketing Co-ordinator

T: 03 5023 5966 **M:** 0459 020 665

E: klloyd@malleefamilycare.com.au