

# Residents rise up to combat homelessness.

By Chelsea Szabo

The Yarra Ranges-based Warburton Advancement League (WAL) have come up with an Affordable Social Housing Project to combat homelessness in their region.

Their plan is to build 12 new homes on an unused parcel of land and resurrect the community centre with funding from Labor's \$5.3 billion [Big Housing Build](#).

The housing model proposes turning the land into a Manufactured Home Estate (MHE), an area which accommodates pre-assembled and lower-cost manufactured homes commonly found in caravan parks.

"We don't have enough social housing," said WAL member Kate Barratt.

"People are really scared of social housing because they feel it's just a lot of drug addicts shoved into one place," she says.

"This will be really, really different. It will be built as a community."

WAL vice president and Warburton Holiday Park co-owner David Pratt said, "I think we just need the government to look at all solutions, not just what they've done in the past."

Mr Pratt said using this model will classify the estate as a "residential village" under Part 4 of the [Residential Tenancies Act](#).

The classification will permit more homes to be built on the land, he says, along with more secure leases for residents.

Funding for community housing projects must come through not-for-profit organisations who manage properties called [registered housing providers](#).

To get the project funded by the government, the WAL is partnering with the registered housing provider [CatholicCare Victoria](#).

"The board members are extremely keen to take on the project and make it a reality, which is fantastic. And that includes upgrading and improving the former Cerini Center building to be a community centre," said Mr Pratt.

Yet the caravan park co-owner said the government placing responsibility for public housing on these providers is an "issue" because housing isn't provided "everywhere it's needed", he said.

“The determination of where public housing is located is being outsourced, and that's why there's no public housing in the Upper Yarra.”

Yarra Ranges Mayor Jim Child said this project is “paving the way” as other government regions have “parcels of land that are just sitting there not being used”.

The area is held under three titles, one owned by the Shire of Yarra Ranges, the Department of Education and the Catholic Church.

Mayor Child said though “there’s a body of work that has to be done” because the area is zoned differently, it has been surveyed and they know “exactly what’s required”.

“What I strongly agree with is if this project was done under the auspices of Homes Victoria, they could do all that necessary planning,” he said.