

#E2022/63169



July 2022

Dear Ratepayer

As I write this letter it is now four months since the devastating floods and landslides hit our Shire and neighbouring Shires in the Northern Rivers.

One of the impacts of the floods was to further highlight the desperate need for housing in our Shire. There was a chronic shortage of housing before the floods but the inundation of people's homes and the subsequent displacement of hundreds of households sees us at breaking point.

In addition, the impacts of COVID-19 over the last couple of years have been felt in our region as people move here from the cities due to a change in work habits and this has placed extra pressure on local housing.

Many of our local workers have had to move away from the area, leaving these jobs vacant and forcing businesses to operate below capacity.

With the added impacts of the recent natural disasters, it has become clear to all levels of government that an immediate and concentrated effort is required, by all levels of government, to address this housing crisis.

We are a proud community that is one of the most visited places in Australia. What many don't know is that Byron Shire has the second highest number of homeless people in NSW, behind the City of Sydney. What is becoming more apparent to everyone is that there are no affordable long-term rental options available in our Shire and increasingly beyond our borders too. Teachers, police officers, nurses and our key workers in the tourism sector, cannot find accommodation. People on low incomes most certainly cannot find accommodation.

As a ratepayer, who may be using their property as a holiday let, or leaving it vacant most of the year, I am asking you, to consider putting your property into the long-term housing pool, at least for a couple of years until we can bring more supply to the pool. A long-term rental will deliver you a reliable rental income and while this might not be as lucrative for you as landlord, there will be a social benefit - you will be making an enormous difference to someone's life and helping us preserve our local community and our local economy.

As a property owner in the Byron Shire you have a vested interest in this place and you obviously bought here for a reason. You also have the power to help. Please help us to retain our vibrant community and economy by ensuring all our residents and workers, regardless of income, have somewhere to live.

If you wish to discuss this further please email me at michael.lyon@byron.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Lyon', is placed below the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Michael Lyon
MAYOR