

Suzanna Sheed MP

Phone: (03) 5831 6944

Fax: (03) 5831 6836

5 Vaughan Street

Shepparton Vic 3630

suzanna.sheed@parliament.vic.gov.au

**State Member of Parliament for
Shepparton District**

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE USE

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Sheed calls for safe pathway for Victorians to return home

Independent Member for Shepparton District Suzanna Sheed has called on the Victorian Government to find a safe pathway home for Victorians who have been locked out due to COVID-19 restrictions.

“We have been speaking to residents from the Shepparton electorate either waiting at the New South Wales border or Queensland and they are growing increasingly anxious that there is no clear path for their return,” Ms Sheed said.

“While my office was able to help some residents with exceptional cases to return, we have many more who left to travel in their caravans when they were entitled to and now find themselves locked out of their own state.

“Some of these residents are elderly and need to feel settled at home during these trying times.

“Many of these travellers are over the age of 60, were first in line to receive their vaccination, and they can self-isolate at home.

“Home isolation, following a direct transit from the New South Wales border seems to be the most simple and straightforward approach.

“We are going to great efforts to bring people home from overseas and provide quarantine facilities for them. Surely, we can bring home our local residents from interstate and find a safe way to do so.

“They could provide a current negative COVID-19 test before leaving New South Wales and perhaps an additional rapid antigen test as they cross the border.

“I am also concerned that if a Victorian who is in Northern New South Wales or Queensland is granted an exemption to return to Victoria, the timeframe for their return is 24 hours.

“This is a mammoth task for two drivers, especially when they are elderly, let alone one driver, which is in many instances the case.

“It puts pressure on them to make it to the border in a short timeframe which puts them and other motorists at risk on the road.

“I would like to see this time extended to 36 hours, to ensure road safety and the safe return of our residents.”

Media contact

Elaine Cooney 0447 820 466 | elaine.cooney@parliament.vic.gov.au