

## NEWS



**HOUSE WARMING:** David Richardson and Joy Griffith welcome Richard Wynne and Ken Marchingo.

# Grant lessens housing stress

AN Eaglehawk couple's long search for a home is finally over, thanks to the Federal Government and Loddon Mallee Housing.

Joy Griffith and David Richardson yesterday welcomed State Housing Minister Richard Wynne into their home, which was made available to them after a \$30,000 refit by Loddon Mallee Housing.

The money came from the Federal Government's nation building plan, which is being developed with the State Government.

A total of \$1.58 billion has been allocated to Victoria under the plan and \$99.2 million will be used to maintain social housing.

Loddon Mallee Housing has received almost \$500,000 for maintenance work on 40 properties.

Mr Wynne said a third of the

**By RICHARD WILLINGHAM**

\$1.58 billion would be allocated to housing projects in country Victoria.

"This project provides two great outcomes," he said.

"The stimulus package provides employment in the local area and the social outcome of breathing life into houses that have been a bit run down over time.

"This is the biggest investment in public and social housing since the 1956 Olympic Games.

"About a third of the funding will go to regional Victoria and we have a significant amount of houses in Bendigo, so funding will reflect that."

Loddon Mallee Housing CEO Ken Marchingo said the funding did not solve the homelessness epidemic, but would help give

many people affordable housing. Loddon Mallee Housing provides affordable houses to lower income families at a reduced rent.

"We have been given a free kick with this money," he said.

"What it does is gives a house an extra 15 years lifespan and gives people like Joy and David a new lease on life."

Previously the family lived in private rental accommodation with the possibility of eviction hanging over their heads. The new house has become their home.

"No matter what you do here, it feels like it's your home, so anything you do is going to stay there as long as you're there," Ms Griffith said. She said she had been on waiting lists for almost nine years and felt stress-free now she had a home.