



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for State and Regional Development

Monday, 13 March 2006

\$167,000 FOR ARARAT STREETScape REVITALISATION

Central Ararat will be transformed and revitalised with the help of \$167,000 in Bracks Government funding, the Minister for State and Regional Development, John Brumby announced today.

Mr Brumby said the funding to Ararat Rural City Council was being brought forward through the Bracks Government's *Small Towns Development Fund* in response to the devastating bushfires that swept through the area in January.

"The Government is doing all it can to help support fire affected communities and this project will transform Barkly Street in central Ararat and open up new economic development opportunities for the town's main central business district," Mr Brumby said.

"The works include upgrading the footpath with bluestone paving and asphaltting, new street furniture, banners and flag poles and new landscaping works.

"Beautification and enhancement to the Barkly Street streetscape will increase economic activity for traders and bring a sense of optimism back to the town that has experienced a series of recent setbacks including bushfires, a mini-tornado in nearby Lake Bolac and another tornado in Ararat itself."

Member for Ripon, Joe Helper, said the Government was providing \$167,000 toward the \$250,000 project, with the Rural City of Ararat contributing the rest.

"This project aims to create a vibrant precinct for the people of Ararat and surrounding communities, and spur new economic growth and development by attracting tourists and through traffic to stop and shop in Ararat," Mr Helper said.

Mr Brumby said the Ararat streetscape revitalisation project was an important part of Government's overall \$10.8 million recovery package for Victorian communities affected by the January 2006 bushfires.

Other features of the recovery package include:

- **\$3 million** to assist farmers and rural landholders with business recovery, pest control, soil erosion and the de-silting of dams;
- **\$2.2 million** for a range of initiatives to rejuvenate the natural and built environment including:
 - rebuilding walking trails in the Grampians to reactivate tourism, the continuing engagement of summer fire crews until April to rebuild trails, with priority given to "iconic" trails to enable them to open before Easter;
 - boosting the State's fire mapping capacity to assist Parks Victoria with assessing the extent of fire damage;
 - measures to assess and protect cultural works; and

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- repairs to damaged water authority works.
- **\$1.6 million** in new tourism industry support, including a marketing and advertising campaign to help bring people back to the bushfire affected areas;
- **\$300,000** for Ararat, Northern Grampians, Southern Grampians shires and the Rural City of Horsham for community development initiatives;
- **\$135,000** for small-scale community projects across all the fire-affected areas;
- and **seven** community infrastructure projects brought forward under the Government's *Small Towns Development Fund (STDF)*, in Ararat, Halls Gap, Rawson, Walhalla, and Yea.