



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for State and Regional Development

Monday, 13 March 2006

\$65,000 FOR YEA WETLANDS STAGE TWO DEVELOPMENT

A \$65,000 Bracks Government grant will enable completion of stage two of the Yea Wetlands development, the Minister for State and Regional Development, John Brumby, announced today.

Mr Brumby said the funding to Murrindindi Shire Council on behalf of the Yea Wetlands Committee of Management was being brought forward through the Bracks Government's *Small Towns Development Fund* in response to the 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 provide a boost for the people of Yea and the surrounding communities," Mr Brumby said.

"This project will provide immediate improvements to the community facilities at the 30 hectare Yea Wetlands reserve for the benefit of visitors and locals.

Member for Seymour, Ben Hardman, said the Government was providing \$65,000 toward the \$97,500 project, with the Council contributing \$3,000, the Catchment Management Authority contributing \$5,000, the Committee of Management contributing \$1,000, the Rotary Club of Yea contributing \$10,000 and the community providing the rest through in-kind contributions.

"The Yea Wetlands are located on a large area of land between the Yea River and the anabranch of the Yea River. Development of these facilities will encourage more public access to the rivers and lagoon system in a very picturesque setting," Mr Hardman said.

The project includes:

- Connection of power to the reserve, a new electric barbecue and shelter, tables and seating;
- Installation of extensive interpretative and directional signage;
- Development of network of internal walking tracks;
- Upgrade of the park entrance, and a new public address system;
- Upgrade of a limited section of internal track near the park entrance for improved vehicle movement and car parking; and
- Construction of steps from the existing bridge platform to provide pedestrian access to the 'Franklin Track' on the southern side of the park, and landscaping and revegetation works.

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

The recovery package includes:

- **\$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:

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- 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
- 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.