

## \$7.6 MILLION TO CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN GIPPSLAND

From the Minister for Regional & Rural Development

Thursday, 21 October 2010

Gippsland families will benefit from more than \$7.6 million in new actions to help the region create new jobs, prosperity and opportunities in a low-carbon economy.

In Gippsland today, Regional and Rural Development Minister Jacinta Allan, joined by the Member for Eastern Victoria Johan Scheffer, outlined the Government's initial response to the Gippsland Regional Strategic Plan as part of the \$631 million Ready for Tomorrow regional blueprint.

"The Brumby Labor Government is determined to support families living and working in Gippsland by driving new prosperity and opportunities," Ms Allan said.

"The region's leaders have worked together to produce a plan outlining the long-term priorities for Gippsland communities.

"These early initiatives will help to create more jobs, drive investment and grow this vibrant, dynamic region.

"The response includes initiatives to secure eco-tourism and boost small towns, to ensure both remain sustainable.

"Our initial response also includes additional funding from the Latrobe Valley Advantage Fund to help prepare the region for a low-carbon economy by attracting job-creating industry investment."

Initiatives in the response include:

- Upgrade to Gippsland Lakes ports - \$2.9 million to ensure that the Gippsland Lakes ports act as gateways for the seafood industry, recreational boating and fishing, ocean safety and tourism. Importantly, the upgrades will increase local economic, employment and lifestyle opportunities as well as boost tourism growth;
- Workforce Transition Strategy - \$500,000 from the Latrobe Valley Advantage Fund to develop a strategy to give Gippslanders the new skills they need to get the jobs of the future;
- Four Industry Link Positions - \$1.2 million towards ensuring the effective and coordinated implementation of the Skilling the Valley initiatives;
- Central Gippsland TAFE - Providing \$1.5 million over three years to ensure displaced workers are able to receive Government subsidised training;
- Investing \$300,000 in the development of a Low Carbon Growth Plan. This plan will identify clear actions that can reduce emissions whilst accounting for regional priorities and barriers;
- Economic Development - \$400,000 to the Gippsland Regional Development Australia Committee to support, develop and implement significant strategic planning across the region;
- Improving opportunities for student access - Within the Gippsland region, the Government will commit to contributing to the development of additional student beds. This is part of the Government's allocation of \$25 million which will see 1000 new student beds created across regional Victoria;
- Transport - The Government will continue to work with the region to prioritise improvements and optimise the benefits of investment in public transport under the Linking Young People to Education and Jobs initiative, including the early stage development of a Car Pooling initiative;
- Strengthening Regional Leadership - \$100,000 will be provided through the Developing Regional Leaders Program to support the Gippsland Community Leadership Program;
- Improving Liveability for Older People - \$20,000 to support the South Gippsland Shire to plan and deliver projects that will make a positive difference to the quality of life, social participation, health and wellbeing of older people; and
- Sustainable Small Towns - \$767,000 for three initial projects to support Gippsland's small towns:
  - o Toora Railway Park Reserve Development - \$167,000 for a \$225,000 project;
  - o Sale Mall Redevelopment - \$300,000 for a \$700,000 project; and
  - o Wonthaggi Centennial Centre - \$300,000 for a \$1.5 million project.

Ms Allan said the Government had also re-affirmed its support for on-going and long term projects through support for the Lakes Entrance urban renewal project and as the Gippsland Regional Land Use Plan to address urban growth issues in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon.