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MAJOR INVESTMENT MOVES MARYSVILLE AHEAD ONE YEAR ON

Significant progress is being made in the ongoing reconstruction and recovery of Marysville, one week after the anniversary of the tragic Black Saturday bushfires.

The township is seeing major new investment, the return of businesses and new community development, with the release of plans for a multi-million dollar community recreation facility.

Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction, Bill Shorten, and Chair of the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recover Authority, Christine Nixon today opened the Marysville agency of the Bendigo Community Bank and unveiled plans for the \$7 million stage two Community Learning Health and Recreation Hub.

The Bendigo Bank presented a \$450,000 cheque raised through local branches who have generously combined to support Marysville and the Bendigo Community Enterprise Foundation.

Funding will go towards stage two of the hub, which will include a recreation centre, indoor sports stadium community meeting rooms, community health and space for a local doctor.

The hub is part of the \$193 million *Rebuilding Together* package, announced last year by the State and Commonwealth governments, to drive recovery in bushfire-hit communities across the state.

It will build on stage one of the hub – the primary school and early learning centre - which is currently under construction and due to be completed in April 2010.

Consultation with users and the Marysville Triangle community is underway on the proposed design for stage two.

Ms Nixon said the investment by corporate and philanthropic donors had been an important part of the reconstruction effort across bushfire-affected regions.

“The commitment of Bendigo Bank to invest in Marysville by opening an agency in the township for the first time, and the Bank’s significant investment in the township since the fires has led to renewed confidence by businesses and locals,” Ms Nixon said.

Ms Nixon said that another major achievement for the township was the installation of petrol bowsers at the former service station in Marysville, with fuel expected to start flowing from next weekend.

“The owners of the Caltex petrol station, who also re-opened their FoodWorks business in the Marysville Central Shopping Centre late last year, Tina and Michael Redropp, are to be commended for their commitment and efforts in boosting employment and business confidence in Marysville,” Ms Nixon said.

“FoodWorks now employs four people and is set to increase those numbers in the near future with business doing extremely well.”

MEDIA CONTACT: Melissa Arch on 0400 933 772

Mr Shorten said that the Federal Government would continue to work with the Victorian Government and the private sector to rebuild Marysville and other bushfire hit towns.

“Given the scale and devastation of the bushfire disaster, Marysville has achieved an incredible amount in just a little over a year, but there is still a long way to go,” Mr Shorten said.

“We are continuing to work with the community to rebuild community facilities, streetscapes, parks and gardens and other vital infrastructure lost in the fires.

“We also understand the importance of tourism and business investment in the Marysville and Triangle area which is why we are investing in projects such as the \$9 million restoration of Lake Mountain Alpine Resort and new facilities for state and national parks to encourage people to return.

“And we are supporting investment in affected townships through a major business investment fund, to be announced shortly.”