



# Media release

From the Premier of Victoria and the  
Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction

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Friday 12 March, 2010

## **\$10 MILLION FUND TO BOOST BUSHFIRE AFFECTED ECONOMIES**

The Premier John Brumby today unveiled a \$10 million Commonwealth and Victorian government stimulus package to create new jobs and attract business investment in communities affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires.

Mr Brumby said the new Victorian Bushfire Business Investment Fund would make available grants to support capital costs involved in setting up new businesses and expanding existing businesses to drive jobs, business confidence and economic growth in bushfire-affected regions.

Under the \$10 million fund new businesses can apply for grants of between \$50,000 and \$4 million with the grants also available to support the expansion of existing businesses.

The criteria for funding from the Victorian Bushfire Business Investment Fund will include:

- The level of economic benefit the project will bring;
- The number of sustainable, new full-time equivalent jobs created;
- The applicant's access to skills, experience and resources; and
- The project's longer-term sustainability without need for ongoing Government support.

"We will continue to stand by communities as they rebuild their lives, homes and communities after the worst natural disaster in Australia's history," Mr Brumby said.

"In the immediate aftermath of Black Saturday the Commonwealth and Victorian governments partnered to provide a \$51 million assistance package for small businesses damaged or destroyed in the bushfires which made available low-interest loans and cash grants.

"One year on, some businesses have re-opened, over 1500 building permits have been issued, 6500 kilometres of fencing has been replaced, more than 400 kilometres of road restored and 3000 properties have been cleared.

"Work is also underway on rebuilding community facilities such as schools, kindergartens, community halls and iconic tourism attractions which have been identified by local communities as their rebuilding priorities and are being backed by a \$193 million recovery package.

"This fund is the next step in recovery. It is about encouraging large-scale and small-scale investment in areas like tourism, agriculture, food, forestry and energy to generate new jobs and grow economies and I encourage businesses to apply."

The Premier, Commonwealth Parliamentary Secretary for Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction Bill Shorten and Regional and Rural Development Minister Jacinta Allan today visited the Marysville Central Shopping Centre transformed from the former Marysville Motor Museum last year.

**Media contact: Jessica Harris 0409 188 743 (Premier) or Ben Ruse (Shorten) 0407 030 808**

The Commonwealth and Victorian governments invested \$2.3 million to purchase and fit out the motor museum to attract business activity back to the town by offering low-cost rent to tenants while they rebuild on permanent sites. There are now 10 businesses in the shopping centre.

Mr Shorten said the grants were available for capital works projects of any size which boosted the economy of a bushfire-affected region or local area.

"While a survey of businesses indicated that 95 per cent expect to continue or re-establish their business in the same place, many businesses have said they need some help to get their businesses back on track," Mr Shorten said.

"The grants are available for capital works such as buildings for new industries, as well as tourism facilities which help drive economic recovery.

"Rebuilding of towns and communities impacted by the fires is well underway. But we need to ensure residents of town's like Marysville can work locally, and for that we need to support local businesses."

The Victorian Bushfire Business Investment Fund is part of the \$193 million *Rebuilding Together* statewide plan for bushfire rebuilding and recovery, released by the Prime Minister and Premier in Flowerdale last year.

The *Rebuilding Together* plan sets out the rebuilding priorities which have been driven by local communities, to rebuild their essential town buildings and services, to generate business growth and investment and to rehabilitate key local attractions central to their future prosperity.

Applications for the Victorian Bushfire Business Investment Fund are now open and will close on June 30 this year.

The application forms are available on the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery VBBRA website, [www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au](http://www.wewillrebuild.vic.gov.au) or by contacting VBBRA on 9092 5875.