

Thursday 25 August 2005

BRACKS GOVERNMENT BOOSTS INTERNET ACCESS FOR COMMUNITIES

Sixty seven community groups across Victoria will benefit from grants awarded as part of a \$3.5 million funding boost for internet access, the Minister for Information and Communication Technology, Marsha Thomson, announced today.

“Through the Public Internet Access Program initiative, the Bracks Government will be funding up to half a million hours of free or affordable internet access for Victorians over the next four years,” Ms Thomson said.

“Recipients can use the funding for upgrades to existing computer hardware and software or to supplement Internet Service Provider costs.

“This will help these organisations to continue to provide free or affordable public internet access to the communities they serve and continue to reduce the remaining barriers to internet uptake in the Victorian community, delivering on the State Government’s commitment to bridging the digital divide.

“This means that increasing numbers of Victorians can access and use the internet, and benefit from the wide range of opportunities it can provide.”

The grants, which were offered in March, were awarded to 67 organisations targeting groups currently under-represented among internet users, such as people with a disability, senior Victorians, unemployed people and those outside the education system and workforce.

“More than 50 percent of Victorians in regional areas are now using the internet compared with 32 percent in 1999. These grants will also benefit people in regional areas with free or affordable access, as well as improved services as broadband infrastructure continues to rollout to regional areas,” she said.

Today’s funding announcement is part of the Bracks Government’s policy *Connecting Communities: the second wave*, released in December 2004, which aims to reduce difficulties for Victorians who continue to face barriers in accessing and using the internet.

For further information contact VICNET toll free on 1800 629 835 or visit the Multimedia Victoria web site at www.mmv.vic.gov.au/communities.

“The Bracks Government is also honouring its commitment of creating A Fairer Victoria,” Ms Thomson said.

“We are committed to working with local governments, communities and businesses to help remove barriers to opportunity, and provide access and choice for all Victorians.”

*A list of successful applicants to the Public Internet Access Program follows.

| Organisation | Town/Suburb |
|---|-------------------------|
| | METROPOLITAN |
| Brunswick Neighbourhood House | Brunswick |
| Duke Street Community House | Sunshine |
| Frankston community Support and Information Centre | Frankston |
| Broadmeadows Employment Project Inc. (Workforce Plus) | Broadmeadows |
| Cardinia Shire Council | Pakenham |
| CELAS - Spanish Latin American Welfare Centre Inc | Footscray |
| Community Information Diamond Valley Inc. | Greensborough |
| Flemington and North Melbourne Community Centres | Flemington |
| Glen Eira Adult Learning Centre Inc. | Ormond |
| Prahran Mission | Prahran |
| Preston Neighbourhood House | Preston |
| RecruitNet Career Skills | Box Hill |
| Sussex Neighbourhood House Inc | Coburg North |
| The Deafblind Association | Camberwell |
| Whittlesea Community Connections Inc | Epping |
| WIRE | Melbourne |
| Yarraville Community Centre Inc | Yarraville |
| Laverton community Centre & neighbourhood House Inc. | Laverton |
| Meadow Heights Learning Shop Inc - Visy Cares Learning Centre | Meadow Heights |
| South Kingsville Community Centre | South Kingsville |
| | WEST |
| Anglesea & District Community House | Anglesea |
| Glenelg Shire Council | Portland |
| Moyne Shire Council (on behalf of the Caramut Community) | Port Fairy |

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| Queenscliff and District Neighbourhood House Inc. | Queenscliff |
| Southern Grampians Adult Education | Hamilton |
| Torquay Primary School | Torquay |
| Coleraine Primary School | Coleraine |
| Corangamite District Adult Education Group Inc | Camperdown |
| Ocean Grove Neighbourhood Centre | Ocean Grove |
| Old Courthouse community Centre Committee of Management Inc. | Casterton |
| Pyrenees Shire - Beaufort Community Resource Centre | Beaufort |
| | NORTH |
| Kerang Learning Centre Inc. | Kerang |
| Wycheproof Community Resource Centre | Wycheproof |
| Quambatook Community Development Association | Quambatook |
| Echuca Neighbourhood House | Echuca |
| Nathalia & District Community Association | Nathalia |
| Kyabram Community & Learning Centre | Kyabram |
| Tongala Community Activities Centre Inc | Tongala |
| | EAST |
| Mirboo North Community Support Co-operative | Mirboo North |
| SgCIA Southern Gippsland Community Internet Access Inc | Leongatha |
| | NORTH EAST |
| Healesville Living and Learning Centre | Healesville |
| Bonnie Doon Community Group | Bonnie Doon |
| Bethanga Primary School | Bethanga |
| Yackandandah Community Education Network Inc | Yackandandah |
| Chiltern Primary School | Chiltern |
| Kinglake District Neighbourhood House Inc | Kinglake |

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|---|----------------------|
| MACE Inc - Mansfield Adult Continuing Education | Mansfield |
| Upper Murray Regional Library - Corryong Branch | Wodonga |
| Porepunkah Primary School | Porepunkah |
| | NORTH WEST |
| Bacchus Marsh Adult Education Centre Inc. | Bacchus Marsh |
| Melton Shire Council | Melton |
| Bealiba Progress Association Inc. | Bealiba |
| Birchip Business and Learning Centre | Birchip |
| Mallee Track Health & Community Service | Murrayville |
| Beulah Historical. Learning & Progress Association | Beulah |
| Dim E-Shop (Dimboola Community Enterprise Centre) | Dimboola |
| Dunolly Community Enterprises | Dunolly |
| Goldfields Employment & Learning Centre | Maryborough |
| Jeparit Community Education Group Inc | Jeparit |
| MADEC | Mildura |
| Melton Shire Council | Melton |
| Minyip community Enterprise Centre - Emma's Internet Café | Minyip |
| Northern Grampians Shire Council | Stawell |
| Rainbow Community Enterprise Centre | Rainbow |
| St Arnaud Community Resource Centre Inc | St Arnaud |