

Thursday, 19 March, 2009

## **GRANT TO HELP BETHANY COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROW**

Bethany Community Support will be able to deliver even better community services, thanks to a \$200,000 Brumby Government grant to extend its North Geelong premises.

Community Services Minister and Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville announced the funding at Bethany Community Support's central office saying the *Victorian Community Support Grant* would go towards a \$1.8 million extension of the building used by the not-for-profit agency.

"The Brumby Government is taking action to develop strong communities where people want to live, work, invest and raise a family," Ms Neville said.

"This funding will be added to significant community fundraising and philanthropic contributions so the support service can continue helping the community."

Ms Neville said the Geelong community had relied on Bethany for more than a century, but an increased demand for services meant the organisation had outgrown its current premises.

"Working from remote rental properties and temporary accommodation is expensive and not in the best interest of the children, young people, families, and older citizens that rely on the services of Bethany Community Support every year" she said.

Bethany Community Support chief executive officer Grant Boyd welcomed the grant saying that it would assist with the expansion of the vital service.

"The extension to the North Geelong home of Bethany will provide confidential counselling rooms and improved meeting space for community use," Mr Boyd said.

"Staff and volunteers will be able to work in proper administrative areas, meaning they can continue to deliver quality services such as counselling, education sessions and social events for people working through personal issues, overcoming disadvantage, or improving their skills."

Ms Neville said the Brumby Government is proud to be able to support an organisation that has done so much for the Geelong community for 140 years.

"I commend those people and organisations that have contributed to the building appeal, and thank everyone involved for their commitment to improving the lives of people in their community."

Community Development Minister Peter Batchelor said the Victorian Community Support Grants were provided through the Community Support Fund to communities that needed them most and to projects that delivered the best results.

"These grants help communities achieve the outcomes that mean the most to them, from the development of plans and priorities for the future through to the creation and upgrade of community facilities," he said.

Since 2004, the VCSG program has supported more than 446 projects worth almost \$75 million.

For more information about the *Victorian Community Support Grants*, visit [www.grants.dpcd.vic.gov.au](http://www.grants.dpcd.vic.gov.au)

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