

Wednesday, 1 April, 2009

GRANTS TO BOOST SKILLS AND JOBS IN BALLARAT

More than \$60,000 in grants from the Brumby Government will help two Ballarat firms increase employee skills and expand their businesses.

Small Business Minister Joe Helper today announced the Brumby Government was taking action to assist specialist agriculture and horticulture manufacturer Goldacres and Canvas and PVC goods manufacturer CE Bartlett.

Mr Helper said the companies, located in western Ballarat had been assisted to develop workforce plans which will now be implemented, including training.

“The Brumby Government is taking action to create jobs in rural and regional Victoria,” Mr Helper said.

“Funding of \$34,690 will assist Goldacres to train 35 staff in a highly specialised software package and to invest in new technologies and training.

“As a result, Goldacres feel confident that they can continue to expand their business and give career options to employees in areas facing skills shortages.”

Ballarat West MP Karen Overington welcomed the grants to CE Bartlett.

“The grant of \$25,725 to CE Bartlett will help them attract and retain skilled workers,” Ms Overington said.

“Through innovation, research and development, CE Bartlett has grown over recent years to employ more than 90 people manufacturing a wide range of canvas and PVC goods.”

Mr Helper said the grants were made under the *My Business My People* program which since 2006 has helped 693 businesses across Victoria with workforce planning and provided 27 training grants resulting in over \$960,000 of employee training support.

“Businesses receive practical on-site assistance from a workforce planning specialist, plus an online kit of human resources and workforce planning tools, templates and guides,” he said.

“There have been over 14,000 hits on the Business Victoria website to get information and use the online workforce planning tools.

“There will also be a big boost for businesses through the new \$52 million *Skills for Growth* program, which commences this month.

“Over three years 5500 small and medium sized Victorian businesses will develop workforce plans and place workers into 55,000 accredited training places under *Skills for Growth*.”