

Tuesday, 30 June, 2009

FUNDING BOOST FAST TRACKS RURAL CFA STATIONS IN NAPOLEONS/ENFIELD AND MUSK

Geoff Howard MP, State Member for Ballarat East was thrilled to announce today that a \$26 million funding package will fast track the construction and upgrade of 60 rural Country Fire Authority (CFA) stations across the State over the next two years, benefiting communities in the Ballarat East Electorate.

Mr Howard said the funding boost will bring forward building schedules for CFA stations in Napoleons/Enfield and Musk.

He said priorities for this year include the Musk area severely impacted by the recent fires and the Napoleons/Enfield area which has also seen the severe impact of fire in recent years.

“The Brumby Government is committed to providing modern, updated facilities to assist our CFA volunteers in doing their important work,” Mr Howard said.

“The design of the new stations will be determined by local needs and will include bigger areas to house vehicles, environmental design features, and meeting rooms which could be used by the broader community.”

Mr Howard said the funding was part of a state-wide Government priority of supporting and upgrading Victoria’s emergency services.

“Our CFA volunteers embody the spirit of what it means to be a part of a community and display the qualities we all value – courage, commitment, compassion, self-sacrifice.”

“Local volunteer agencies are the backbone of Victoria’s emergency service response and the Brumby Government is proud to support the dedicated men and women who give up so much to help keep our community safe.”

“These new fire stations will also stimulate the local economy through providing work to local builders and other trades.”

Mr Howard said the recent 2009/10 State Budget delivered a significant boost to Victoria’s emergency services including:

- \$21.1 million to replace 87 CFA appliances over the next year which included tankers for Ballan, Fiskville and Creswick.
- \$10.3 million to replace 15 heavy rescue vehicles, 7 four wheel drive vehicles, 9 rescue boats and 11 road crash rescue kits at VICSES Units across Victoria; and
- \$10.3 million for 42 ultra light tankers.

Further to this, an investment of \$20.7 million is being made to improve communication blackspots across the State, plus enhancements to the bushfire information line.

“Since Labor came to power in 1999, the combined emergency services core budget has more than doubled, and we continue to invest heavily in this area,” Mr Howard said.

“Victoria’s expenditure per person on fire services is the highest in the nation.”

There are 30 rural stations announced this year with the CFA to determine another 30 for next year.