

Tuesday, 5 May, 2009

\$60.6 MILLION BOOST TO SUPPORT VICTORIA'S SENIORS

A **\$60.6 million** package to support senior Victorians is part of the Brumby Labor Government's action to remain independent at home.

The Minister for Senior Victorians, Lisa Neville said today said personal security, independence at home and planning for more accessible aged care were key features of the Brumby Labor Government's 2009 State Budget package for senior Victorians.

"The Brumby Labor Government's 2009 State Budget builds on our strong record of investment in social services to provide a social safety net for senior Victorians," Ms Neville said.

"We're providing leadership to meet the challenge of the Global Financial Crisis, to deliver jobs and to support Victorian families.

"The additional funding I am announcing today will build on the substantial reforms and funding commitments the Government has already made to support senior Victorians."

Central to the package is increasing access to support services, including:

- **\$49.8 million** four year boost to employ 250 additional staff for the Home and Community Care Program which provides help at home to do cleaning, shopping, minor maintenance, bill payment, personal care, meals on wheels, podiatry, physiotherapy, dietetics, occupational therapy and many other supports to ensure that senior Victorians can live safely and happily in their own home;
- **\$5.8 million** over four years to provide more personal alert units to an additional 4000 senior Victorians through Personal Alert Victoria Program. The Brumby Labor Government-funded Personal Alert Victoria (PAV) is a personal monitoring service for seniors. It includes emergency response and daily monitoring. A pendant, with an alert button direct to the PAV service, is worn around the neck or wrist. When pressed, the button sends a signal to a receiver unit which then automatically contacts the PAV Service, which has trained staff on call 24 hours a day. The number of PAV units for seniors will increase to 22,255 by June this year, up from 8,200 in 1999;
- **\$3 million** in 2009-10 for stage four of the *Aged Care Land Bank* to help establish more residential aged care services in middle and inner ring suburbs, allowing senior Victorians to access residential aged care without having to move away from their family and local neighbourhoods. Under the program, the Government purchases surplus Government land in the middle and inner suburbs and gives it to not-for-profit agencies to build aged care facilities; and
- **\$2 million** over the next two years to boost to the already successful *Men's Shed* program, providing a relaxed place for men make new friends, talk things over, learn new skills and get involved in their local community, with great benefits for their health and wellbeing. In the past two years the Brumby Labor Government funded the establishment of 50 new Men's Sheds across the Victoria.

"These investments come on top of \$1 million recently allocated to expand seniors' registers, which look out for senior Victorians and people with a disability living alone – as a response to this January's heatwave," Ms Neville said.

Media contact: Peta James 9651 5799/0400 176 356

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Ms Neville said the Brumby Labor Government was providing more high quality support and services for senior Victorians, with the state's population ageing.

"In 2006 there were more than 685,000 people in Victoria aged over 65. The number of people aged over 65 in Victoria is expected to rise to over 1.1 million by 2021," Ms Neville said.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action now to ensure Victorians have the support they need and access to quality services.

"These new initiatives in the Brumby Labor Government's 2009 State Budget will provide more accommodation, more in-home support and safety and opportunities for senior Victorians to engage with their community to reduce isolation."