

11 August 2005

## 7 REASONS FOR OTWAY COMMUNITY GROUPS TO CELEBRATE

Funding to improve public land has been granted to seven Committees of Management in the Otways as part of government efforts to strengthen tourism in the region and to provide economic growth and jobs for local townships.

Under the New Future for the Otways Tourism Initiative more than \$100,000 worth of grants to support works such as revegetation, improved signage, new toilets, a new tourism website and local hall upgrades in the Otways hinterland have been granted.

“These grants will help the managers of public land in the Otways take advantage of public land tourism opportunities and raise them to a better standard,” said Elaine Carbines, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment.

“The idea is to help communities take control of their future and their future prosperity.

“The recreational and tourism facilities on public land reserves in the Otway hinterland provide community and tourism enjoyment and it’s important that they remain attractive and safe for local users and visitors,” Ms Carbines said.

Funding for the grants is from the government’s \$7 million commitment to tourism in the Otways, one of Victoria’s largest ever, public land tourism investments.

The following projects in the Otways have been granted funding:

- Carlisle River Public Hall Reserve - improved visitor access including disabled facilities (\$4,000)
- Lavers Hill Swimming Pool Reserve - visitor walkway and interpretation facilities and vegetation rehabilitation (\$10,000)
- Horden Vale Hall - Glen Aire Recreation Reserve - complete Hall restoration (\$44,172)
- Carpendeit Public Hall and Recreation Reserve - new toilets including disabled facilities (\$24,000)
- Forrest Public Hall Reserve - upgrade main hall entrance, new roof and toilet facilities (\$13, 420)
- Simpson Recreation Reserve - safety fencing for visitors (\$2,500)
- Great Ocean Road Coast Committee - building a tourism web site (\$5,000)

“These grants recognise the vital role volunteers play in the management of public land, especially in small communities, and will hopefully provide confidence in a tourism future for the region,” Ms Carbines said.

Combined with the \$7 million already spent on buying back sawlog licenses in the Otways, the government’s investment in Otways tourism will support the transition to a nature-based tourism future with Parks Victoria and DSE jointly undertaking management and implementation of 19 tourism projects.