

\$125,000 to help bushfire victims replace infrastructure

Thursday 26 November 2009: Bendigo and Adelaide Bank's philanthropic arm, Community Enterprise Foundation™, has contributed a further \$125,000 in funding to assist local people affected by the Black Saturday bushfires.

The money will go towards the Essential Infrastructure Replacement Project that will be managed by New Horizons Welfare Services and Our Place in Eaglehawk.

The total cost of the project is \$300,000 with the remaining funding currently being considered by the local Community Recovery Committee and other funding bodies.

New Horizons Welfare Services Executive Manager, Anne Baker, said the funding will play an important role in the rebuilding and recovery process.

"The project will see residents who lost everything in the fires receive a grant of \$3,500. Those who lost outbuildings and shedding will receive \$1,000 to go towards replacing water tanks, fencing, shedding or hardware.

"Those affected by the fires have told us this is what they need and all of the items will be purchased from local Bendigo businesses, many of which have been very generous throughout this trying time," Ms Baker said.

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Regional Manager, Phil Whiting, said the bank is pleased to have played a key role in uniting charities with local bushfire victims and funding.

"By working together we are able to ensure fire affected people can access the money donated by so many generous individuals.

"This has been an unique approach where the bank has been proud to play a lead role in bringing these groups together to collaborate in a way that has not been done before – matching donations raised with appropriate and well thought through and managed projects.

"So far, the Community Enterprise Foundation™ has contributed more than \$750,000 to bushfire affected communities throughout Central Victoria," Mr Whiting said.

The grants will be available in the next few weeks, with letters about to be sent out to those eligible to receive the grants. Funding will be available until February 2011.

"We are aware that residents are at different stages in the rebuilding process so leaving the grants open for an extended period," Ms Baker said.

More projects will be announced in the coming weeks, with other projects still being review by the Community Recovery Committee.