



"Tim Barker"
<barker@vicnet.net.au>

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Please respond to
<barker@vicnet.net.au>

To "mc annie paterson" <annetapaterson@optusnet.com.au>,
"mc Barry & Rosemary Fitzgerald" <homevale@dcsi.net.au>,
"mc Barry Hicks" <rightyo76@hotmail.com>, "mc Bill

cc

bcc

Subject FW: Press release - FYI

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[IMAGE]

FROM THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM

DATE: Tuesday, November 8, 2005

HIGH COUNTRY GETS \$200,000 TO CELEBRATE CATTLEMEN HISTORY

The Minister for Tourism, John Pandazopoulos today visited Mansfield to announce funding of \$200,000 over four years to three events in Victoria's High Country that celebrate the life and times of the Alpine cattleman.

Speaking at the construction site of the new Mansfield Visitor Information Centre, partly funded by the Bracks Government Mr Pandazopoulos was joined by Mansfield Shire Council Mayor, Councillor Tom Ingpen, Acting CEO Kaylene Conrick, members of the Mansfield Shire tourism advisory board, Mansfield Mt Buller High Country Festival organisers and other representatives of the local tourism industry.

Mr Pandazopoulos said the funding was part of the Bracks Government's High Country Initiatives Program announced in May. It also follows the decision not to renew cattle grazing licences in the Alpine National Park, and has been provided through Tourism Victoria's events program.

"These festivals are important to the local community. I'm please to announce that the Bracks Government is recognising these important events and will keep alive importance of the cattlemen. Cattle grazing will be preserved with grazing continuing in high country State Forests," Mr Pandazopoulos said.

Funding of \$17,500 per year for four years has been allocated to the 2005

MansfieldMt Buller High Country Festival . The festival has been held annually in the Mansfieldregion for 22 years on the Melbourne Cup weekend and grew out of the *Man From Snowy River* films that were produced in the local region.

Funding of \$27,500 per year for four years has been allocated to the 2006 *Man from SnowyRiverBush Festival* , established in 1995 and held annually in late March-early April. The festival traditionally comprises of an art and photography exhibition, The Man from Snowy River Re-enactment, Bush Poetry, Bush Music, Outdoor Bush Concert and Riley's Ride and Ute Muster.

Funding of \$5,000 per year for four years has been allocated to the *Mountain Cattlemen's Association of Victoria Annual Get-Together*, held annually on the second weekend in January. The program will include music and entertainment along with a variety of related events including the annual Cattlemen's Cup, a poet's breakfast, a whip cracking event and a dog high jump competition. In 2006 Cheshuntwill host this annual event.

"These three events are not just a celebration of bush folklore, they are an excellent way to boost the profile of a destination while delivering economic benefits and generating business for local restaurants, cafes, retail and accommodation providers," Mr Pandazopoulos said.

The Bracks Government's decision to cease grazing in the park is supported by a \$7.4 million package, which includes \$1.8 million to help repair the park, promote tourism and protect the culture of the cattlemen.

Media release

