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\$5000 for Macalister Demonstration farm study

Maffra's Macalister Demonstration Farm (MDF) will undertake a feasibility study and business case for the construction of a new office and training facility with the help of \$5000 in Coalition Government funding, said Member for Gippsland East, Tim Bull.

"The MDF fulfilled a unique role within the dairy industry in Gippsland by demonstrating best practice on a commercially profitable farm to the region's farmers and beyond.

"An important link between industry development and farmers, the MDF demonstrates the practical application of industry research and development to the farm business community to assist in increased productivity and profitability.

"It is a very good practical example of industry workforce development in one of Gippsland's key economic sectors, and is unique in that it provides an on-farm learning facility for the transfer of theoretical and practical skills.

"The MDF is a resource of immense value, as it builds the capacity of the region through effective extension activities and transfer of skills to make the industry more productive and profitable," Mr Bull said.

Sandie Brown, MDF Co-operative Manager, said, "the project is an excellent demonstration for the effectiveness of partnerships, with funding from Regional Development Victoria to be pooled with funding from GippsDairy and the Department of Primary Industries."

Deputy Premier and Regional and Rural Development Minister, Peter Ryan, said Coalition Government funding towards the \$18,000 Macalister Demonstration Farm Feasibility Study would be provided through the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund's *Putting Locals First Program* to Macalister Demonstration Farm.

"Putting Locals First is a \$100 million initiative that enables regional communities to devise and deliver service and infrastructure responses that reflect local priorities," Mr Ryan said.

"It is supporting stronger and more sustainable regional communities by building their capacity to drive development in their region."

Mr Ryan said the Macalister Demonstration Farm had served the dairy industry well over the past five decades.

"However, to increase the skill needs of farmers to conduct business in the 21st century the MDF needs a suitably equipped facility in which the board, farmers and other allied groups can conduct meetings and in which visitors can be hosted," Mr Ryan said.

"These activities are currently undertaken in a very dilapidated shed, which has no kitchen facilities and a run-down toilet block, which are not appropriate to the image that the MDF needs to present to the dairy industry to ensure its credibility."



Tim Bull with Sandie Brown and Brad White from the Macalister Demonstration Farm discussing the proposed new office and training facility