

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



Thursday, 9 December 2021

SHOPFRONT FACELIFTS FOR BASS COAST BUSINESSES

The Andrews Labor Government is backing businesses across the Bass Coast by investing in the revitalisation of their shop fronts to help welcome more visitors to the region.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today announced 40 businesses will receive \$2,000 *Shopfront Improvement Rebates* in Wonthaggi's town centre.

The rebates are being provided through a \$50,000 investment from the \$10 million *Regional Recovery Fund* and supported by the Bass Coast Shire Council.

The funding will provide practical support for Bass Coast's retail, hospitality and tourism businesses to entice more locals and visitors back to shopping strips to spend more locally to support jobs

The rebates can be used for new signage, fresh paint, repairs, awnings, better accessibility and other shopfront improvements. Successful applicants are expected to complete the improvements by May next year, with more recipients to be announced soon.

Family-owned Wonthaggi business Foons Photography is among more than 40 successful recipients, alongside Thai restaurant Souvanny and retail store Vortex, Surf and Skate.

The Labor Government is also working with East Gippsland Shire Council to offer similar support to the main street businesses which have faced the dual challenges of recovering from the 2019-20 bushfires and the pandemic.

The \$10 million *Regional Recovery Fund* is investing in priority projects that create jobs, encourage visitors and support local community needs. It is part of the Labor Government's almost \$30 billion record investment across regional and rural Victoria since 2015.

More information and the full list of successful applicants is available www.rdv.vic.gov.au/

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"We're helping Bass Coast businesses transform their shop windows to encourage more locals and visitors back to the main streets, enticing them to shop and dine locally, which will have a flow on benefits for the economy."

Quote attributable to Member for Bass Jordan Crugnale

"It has been heartening to see so much interest in this initiative from Bass Coast business owners and I am really looking forward to seeing the creativity, character and uniqueness of Wonthaggi come to life visually through this program."

Quote attributable to Bass Coast Shire Mayor, Cr Michael Whelan

"This program will help our businesses create more vibrant and attractive streets, shops and public spaces, helping our town centres recover following a really challenging few years."

Quote attributable to East Gippsland Shire Council Mayor, Cr Mark Reeves

"Our local shop owners take great pride in their businesses and what they offer the local economy. The Shopfront Improvement Rebate Program will further support them in being the face of our local streetscapes, boosting the appeal of our town centres and creating a lasting impression for locals and visitors."

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