



GARDINER FOUNDATION

## MEDIA RELEASE

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26 October 2010

### **Gardiner Foundation announces new \$1.65 million funding program**

The Gardiner Foundation today announced new funding which will invest \$1.65 million over a four year period in a “***Strengthening Small Dairy Communities Program***”.

The Program aims to build the ongoing capability of small dairy communities to direct and support their own advancement, attract and retain investment, and thus directly contribute to the growth and resilience of their communities and the dairy industry. Around two thirds of people engaged in the dairy industry live in and contribute to small rural communities of fewer than 5,000 people. With around 270 small dairying communities in Victoria, many facing significant challenges, this is an important issue for dairy.

The Program commences as a pilot in partnership with the **South Gippsland Shire Council** from December 2010 with design and development of the Program taking place through 2011. The South Gippsland Program will focus on the communities of Meeniyah, Dumbalk, Tarwin Lower, Fish Creek, Buffalo, Venus Bay, Stony Creek and Koonwarra.

The Gardiner Foundation/South Gippsland Shire Council Pilot Program will operate in collaboration with the Department of Planning and Community Development’s **Small Towns Adaption Program**, a new State-wide Program. *Ready for Tomorrow: A Blueprint for Regional and Rural Victoria*, is the Victorian Government’s long-term plan for regional development to support regions to manage growth, respond to changing environments and enhance their prosperity, liveability and sustainability.

Gardiner’s *Strengthening Small Dairy Communities Program* aims to grow the sustainability and vibrancy of small dairy communities by working with those communities to increase their ongoing capability to respond strategically to challenges and changes.

The four components of the Program are:

- Self-assessment and priority setting
- Skills development
- Community improvement projects
- Sustainable impact

After the initial pilot Program in South Gippsland, Gardiner's ***Strengthening Small Dairy Communities Program*** will also be implemented in the Northern and Western Victorian dairy regions between 2012 and 2014.

The Gardiner Foundation has built a strong reputation as a leading investor in dairy communities through its annual Community and People Development Program. This new funding in community strengthening is in addition to the Foundation's annual funding commitment to Community and People Development which will call for applications to a new funding round commencing 1 February 2011.



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South Gippsland  
Shire Council

**Gardiner Foundation and South Gippsland Shire Council**  
A partnership in ***Strengthening Small Dairy Communities***

In collaboration with the **Department of Planning and Community Development *Small Towns Adaption Program***

A community launch of the Gardiner Foundation/South Gippsland Shire ***Strengthening Small Dairy Communities Program*** will be held in Meeniyah on Monday 6 December.

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