

media release



MASTERS OF OUR INDUSTRY

Master Builders Association of Victoria
ABN: 38 004 255 654

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Disadvantaged Big Winners In State Budget

Master Builders has welcomed the Bracks Government's commitment to housing Victoria's disadvantaged with the largest single State Government investment in social housing in Australia's history.

Master Builders Executive Director, Brian Welch, said the government's record \$510 million investment in social housing will be enthusiastically welcomed by the building industry as a sensible step towards addressing Victoria's public housing shortfall.

The \$300 million investment in 1,550 new public housing dwellings and \$200 million redevelopment of existing housing stock will both alleviate Victoria's extensive social housing pressures.

Builders will also welcome the \$167 million reduction in WorkCover Premiums which will improve Victorian business competitiveness and reduce operating costs.

The Government's \$555 million down-payment on its State-wide school infrastructure upgrade program is also a sound investment in Victoria's future. Builders will welcome the opportunity to help upgrade Victoria's education facilities.

The \$508 million reduction in land tax will also be beneficial to the community as it will relieve pressure on rising rental, housing and land costs.

Master Builders positively notes the Government's ongoing commitment to prudent economic management through its budgeting of a \$324 million surplus in 2007-08.

We are also glad to note the Government has used debt financing to invest in Victoria's substantial infrastructure backlog. In sound economic times, we support the Government borrowing funds to build Victoria's future – a key recommendation in our pre-budget submission.

Disappointingly, there are no new initiatives in the budget for addressing the planning and development shortcomings of the Government's Melbourne 2030 vision.

While funding for the \$3 million 'expert planner teams' election promise is welcomed, and the \$46 million investment in 'Transit Cities' helpful, more funding is required to address the structure planning, future land release assessments and new development problems which require urgent government attention.

Today's budget represents a sound financial and economic investment in Victoria's future.

The building industry now awaits the Planning Minister's forthcoming Melbourne 2030 Statement, which hopefully will outline the government's vision for the future of Melbourne 2030.

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Further information: Brian Welch, Executive Director, 0411 501 075

Media enquiries: Cyril Jones, Communications Coordinator 0434 306 146
cjones@mbav.com.au

www.mbav.com.au