

Tuesday May 6, 2003

\$11 MILLION TO HELP PARENTS GET BACK TO WORK

Victorian parents are being helped to get back into the workforce with an **\$11 million** allocation over four years to assist with re-training costs.

The *Parents Returning to Work* program will provide \$1000 grants for eligible parents who have been out of paid work for at least two years caring for children and who wish to return to paid work.

The Minister for Education Services and Employment, Jacinta Allan, said the program would begin in July and help up to 9900 parents.

“This innovative program is designed to meet the varied needs of parents seeking to re-enter the workforce by providing practical assistance,” she said.

“Parents who have been raising their children can make a valuable contribution to the community and the economy by returning to work.

“The Bracks Government is getting on with the job of building a smarter Victoria.”

Ms Allan said parents would have discretion in the way they used the grant for retraining purposes, with options including:

- Training (accredited training or short course) provided by an adult community education centre, neighbourhood house, TAFE institute or private registered training organisation;
- Registered child care while undertaking the training;
- Support materials required for the course; or
- Part payment of first year HECS fees.

“Training should be aimed at increasing work-related skills or improving job prospects,” Ms Allan said.

Ms Allan said the grant was available for many types of vocational training. It may be in a particular industry, such as hospitality or office administration, or be more general, such as job-search skills, assertiveness training or basic computer training.