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For immediate release

FUNDING BOOST FOR RICHMOND FC

Richmond Football Club CEO, Steven Wright today welcomed the announcement by Premier John Brumby to provide a \$10.5 million boost for Victoria's suburban AFL grounds.

The Brumby Government has committed \$2.5 million of this money to the Richmond Football Club. Mr Wright said that the funding would go towards the development of a new indoor facility, ground improvements and drought proofing of Punt Road Oval. This builds on a previous commitment announced last year by the State Government and brings the total to \$4.5 million.

"Punt Road Oval is an iconic landmark in Melbourne. For the better part of the last century it served as the hub for the Richmond Community. This injection of much needed funding will enable the ground to be restored to its former glory. Most importantly, this money will be used to repair the damaged oval so that the Richmond Football Club will once again have a permanent training base," Mr Wright said.

A key outcome of this funding will be the introduction of a significant environmentally sustainable management system for maintaining the oval surface and community facilities at Punt Road Oval.

Mr Wright said it is envisaged that these environmental initiatives will reduce RFC use of mains potable water by up to 50% - a massive 6 mega litres. Mr Wright added that in the future RFC will become a showcase for environmental sustainability.

These initiatives include:

- Relaying and reshaping the playing surface at PRO to include drought resistant grasses, new drainage to minimise leakage and to capture water seepage for recycling.
- Harvesting water from the roof of the Jack Dyer Grandstand and other buildings at PRO.
- Utilising bore water.
- Introducing solar hot water systems.
- Using grey water on the surrounding gardens.

Work on the project is due to start within the next six months and this funding will significantly close the gap on total construction costs. The club is now in a position to prepare plans for council, Mr Wright said.

"Our vision is that in 2008, the centenary of RFC's involvement in the AFL and the AFL 150TH Birthday, Punt Road Oval will once again become a centre of community life for the residents of inner Melbourne," Mr Wright said.

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