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MEDIA RELEASE

Local businesses to benefit most from Committee's vision

The Melbourne East RDA Committee means business over the next six months as it embarks upon an active agenda that will build on the economic growth and stability of Melbourne's East.

The Committee has an overarching role to identify and address issues affecting growth in the region and has selected a number of key projects to fulfil the priorities set out in its 2013-2016 Regional Plan. In the coming months the Committee plans to promote growth and stability in the region, and forge a lasting association between industry and the hugely valuable research and education sector in Melbourne's East.

Businesses across Maroondah, Knox and the Yarra Ranges are expected to be substantially impacted by the much anticipated Ford, Holden and Toyota closures, and with this in mind, Melbourne East RDA will contribute \$45,000 to the development of an Action Plan that aims to revitalise the business precinct and encourage business and industry growth to strengthen job security for people in the region.

Another project will promote collaboration between research and education institutions and local business to advance the vision that Melbourne's East is the centre of Australia's innovation and knowledge industries. The East is home to many of Australia's foremost research and education institutions and a series of open days at campuses of Swinburne University of Technology will provide local businesspeople with a fresh perspective of the university sector as useful business partners and reveal how combined education and research resources can assist the competitiveness of local businesses.

Small to medium businesses will also benefit greatly from a project supported by the Melbourne East RDA that will give local businesses the opportunity to up-skill their use of digital technology. The scale of the digital economy has the potential to impact every part of business and this series of workshops and mentoring sessions will boost confidence in the use of digital technology so businesses can operate more efficiently and reach new markets.

RDA Melbourne East Press Release: For information or photo opp. contact Gaby Nime, Executive Officer Melbourne East RDA, on 9938 0159 or gaby.nime@dbi.vic.gov.au.

With 80,000 jobs across 40 square kilometres, the Monash Employment Cluster is a significant contributor to Melbourne's position as a global city and has been identified by the State Government as one of six clusters of national significance. . Melbourne East RDA will invest \$47,000 this year to future proof the employment cluster with the *Monash Employment Cluster 2050 Project*, a joint initiative of the Melbourne Planning Authority (MPA), DSDBI and the City of Monash.

Melbourne East RDA Acting Chair, Professor Rod Hill believes "the *Monash Employment Cluster 2050* project is a necessary precursor in the preparation of the MPA's Framework Plan that will include targeted strategies to improve the growth of business activity, and the ability of businesses to leverage their export and innovation potential to grow jobs in the region."

Other projects to be supported by the Melbourne East RDA in 2014 include a Sport and Recreation Strategy to guide future planning, provision and development of regional sport and recreation facilities, and last but by no means least the Committee will explore the potential for a unified voice for the East's primary industries through the establishment of a regional network that would perform as an independent, non-governmental advocacy group for the East. A regional forum will be held on May 29th and details about this forum can be found at <http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-development-australia/committees/eastern-melbourne>.

Melbourne East RDA Committee invites members of the community to provide input and partnership in building growth in the region. To find out more about the work of the Melbourne East RDA Committee in 2014 visit www.rdv.vic.gov.au