

RURAL COUNCILS FUND CREATIVE (f)route HUB

From small 'fruit breakfast' beginnings in a local orchard one Sunday morning, (f)route a rapidly growing movement of artists and fruitists, has now attracted funding under a Rural Councils Victoria program to support the use of technology in creative industries.

(f)route, an incubator for creative entrepreneurs, collectively run by (f)route Inc and the East Gippsland Shire Council is one of four projects to receive funding under the program.

East Gippsland Council's Manager of Major Projects and Economic Development, Tim Ellis said (f)route is a social enterprise that values art, fruit, environment, good travel, slow conversations and regional communities.

"The (f)route hub is an exciting project that will create great opportunities for economic development and tourism in the region. (f)route will become a community hub for learning the business and IT 'ropes' necessary to build financial sustainability from their own creativity - with a lot of help from the whole (f)route team," he said.

Rural Councils Victoria Chair, Cr Rob Gersch said the \$40,000 Technology Supporting Creative Industries program attracted some fantastic projects with (f)route already attracting state wide and even global interest. The four projects received \$10,000 funding each.

Andrea Lane, (f)route's Project Leader said the program was about creating an (f)route artist-made Travel Bureau which will help participants build business skills, strengthen networks and create a strong online presence.

"This Rural Councils Victoria funding will allow us to launch a hub built on five years of network building and concept development. And a ton of volunteer effort," she said.

Cr Gersch said the other projects receiving funding through the program include:

1. A co-working hub for creative industries in the Hepburn Shire
2. Baw Baw Shire Council's creative hub's inclusion in the Warragul Arts Centre refurbishment
3. Corangamite Shire's teleworking initiative and a trial creative hub

RCV is the alliance of Victoria's 38 rural councils. It advocates for sustainable, liveable and prosperous rural communities and delivers projects that provide support and solutions on issues shared by the state's rural councils.

Rural Councils Victoria is supported by the Victorian Government's \$3.3 million *Networked Rural Councils* program.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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