

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



Monday, 11 January 2021

IMPORTANT BUDJ BIM WORKS BEGIN ACROSS FIVE SITES

Works have started across the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, as part of the Andrews Labor Government's support for the Gunditjmara Traditional Owners to protect and develop the land so more Victorians can celebrate its history and cultural significance.

Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas today visited the site in Victoria's south west to inspect the progress of works, alongside the region's Traditional Owners and representatives from Glenelg Shire Council.

The Labor Government is investing over \$12 million in the project, including \$8 million through the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, to improve the tourist infrastructure of the area. The Government investment also contributed to Budj Bim's successful bid in 2019 to become a UNESCO World Heritage listed site.

The works include a new eel aquaculture and information centre, art installations, new raised walkways, a new cantilevered lookout, an upgraded information centre, entrance infrastructure, carparks and interpretive signage.

Construction has started on all five project sites within the cultural landscape, including Tyrendarra Township, Kurtonitj, Lake Condah, Tyrendarra Indigenous Protected Area and Budj Bim.

Budj Bim hosts the remains of over 300 Aboriginal stone houses – evidence of the Gunditjmara People's permanent settlement in the area, as well as a sophisticated system of channels, fish traps and weirs used for farming eels. It is the only Australian site to be listed on the UNESCO World Heritage list solely for its Aboriginal cultural values.

The new works follow extensive consultation with Traditional Owners over the past 18 months. The *Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund* is designed to help grow and realise the potential of regional Victoria's visitor economy which attracts more than 14 million domestic and international visitors every year.

In further exciting news for the region, internationally acclaimed street artist Adnate has been commissioned as the lead artist to create a large-scale Indigenous war memorial on the water tower in Heywood. A local Indigenous artist will work alongside and be mentored by Adnate.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"Budj Bim is historically and culturally unique, a place of global significance, which all Victorians can be proud of. Making this cultural landscape a better place to visit will help to educate Australians about the deep history of the Gunditjmara people and the connection they have with this land."

"We will continue to work with Traditional Owners to make sure these works are respectful and illuminate the historical significance of Budj Bim."

Quote attributable to Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation Acting CEO Denis Rose

"The Gunditjmara people welcome the Victorian Government's assistance in our journey to protect Budj Bim and encourage more people to learn about and understand the history of this significant landmark. These works will help to ensure that this land continues to be visited and looked after for many years to come."

Media contact: Casey Lodge 0410 964 928 | casey.lodge@minstaff.vic.gov.au