

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Environment
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Friday, 23 August 2024

BRINGING VICTORIA'S NEXT TOURISM WONDERS TO LIFE

Regional Victoria will have even more amazing tourist attractions for people to visit with exciting local projects getting off the ground thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today visited the Art Gallery of Ballarat to announce 29 projects across regional Victoria that will receive funding through the *Enabling Tourism Fund 2024*.

The grants of up to \$500,000 will support regional tourism projects to reach investment-ready status by funding feasibility studies and designing future infrastructure.

Australia's oldest regional gallery, the Art Gallery of Ballarat, will use the funds to develop a masterplan that will help it put on blockbuster exhibitions that will bring more visitors to the area.

Other projects to receive funding include Bendigo's Great Stupa, which will use the money to create a detailed masterplan for a new visitor centre with a cafe and museum, as well as a wellness hotel and spa.

Masterchef's Simon Toohey, through his Sustainable Earth Network, will use the funding to investigate a permanent market in the Geelong and Bellarine area that will promote local food producers, growers and manufacturers.

Visitors to Phillip Island will have even more wildlife adventures at their fingertips with funding going to Reptile Encounters to develop plans for a new state-of-the-art zoo on the island, which is already renowned for its nature and wildlife experiences.

The *Enabling Tourism Fund* is part of a \$170 million investment to create more local jobs, support our important tourism businesses and attract more people to the incredible experiences on offer across regional Victoria.

The *Fund* is helping strengthen and grow Victoria's tourism industry and is a key part of the Labor Government's *Experience Victoria 2033* strategic plan. The plan outlines five priority areas that leverage Victoria's competitive advantages – including First Peoples'-led experiences, Wellness, Arts and Culture, Food and Drink, and Nature.

All projects awarded funding under the *Enabling Tourism Fund* demonstrate alignment with these priorities.

To see a complete list of the Enabling Tourism Fund projects, tourism.vic.gov.au/grants-and-support/enabling-tourism-fund

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos

"Regional Victoria has so many unique attractions and this funding will ensure we have new and exciting tourism projects in the works for years to come."

"This is great news not just for our tourism operators, but for jobs and local economies in each of these regional areas."

Quotes attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"The Art Gallery of Ballarat is a cultural treasure, and this funding will ensure it continues to captivate visitors with world-class exhibitions."

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"The masterplan supported by the Allan Labor Government will help bring more tourists to our city, boosting local businesses and jobs and promoting Ballarat to the global stage."

Quote attributable to Member for Eureka Michaela Settle

By investing in the planning and development of key attractions, we're ensuring that Ballarat remains a must-visit destination for years to come. This is a significant win for our community, driving economic growth and showcasing our unique heritage."

Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

"Ballarat is renowned for its rich history and vibrant arts scene, and this investment will not only support this beloved cultural institution but elevate our region's tourism offering even further – boosting the local economy and creating jobs."