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MEDIA RELEASE

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World Heritage bid for Victorian Goldfields

Victoria's Goldfields – home to the most extensive and best-surviving goldrush landscapes in the world – has today been added to Australia's World Heritage Tentative List.

This is the first formal step on the path to World Heritage status, celebrating the extraordinary history, culture, and heritage of Victoria's goldrush era.

From hard rock open cut mines at Castlemaine to the Victorian era buildings of Bendigo, the region is considered the most extensive and best surviving goldrush landscape in the world.

Covering more than 20 per cent of the state's landmass, the Goldfields bears the imprint of hundreds of thousands of migrants who took part in successive gold rushes from 1851 onwards.

The Goldfields continue to shine as a cornerstone of Victoria's identity, with diverse gold mining infrastructure, vibrant townships, and enduring cultural markers of First Nations communities, including the Dja Dja Wurrung and Gunaikurnai peoples.

This region already welcomes millions of tourists each year, contributing over \$1.8 billion to Victoria's regional economy. Gaining World Heritage status is expected to boost tourism even further, attracting an additional 2.2 million visitors within ten years of being listed.

The project has been a partnership between the Albanese and Allan Governments, First Nations groups, 15 local councils and other organisations, who will now continue to work together to develop the nomination and begin the World Heritage process.

Six key areas have been included in the Tentative List submission, with the possibility of more areas being added as the nomination is developed. They include:

- Bendigo Historic Urban Landscape
- Castlemaine Goldfields and Historic Townships

- Creswick and the Deep Lead Landscape
- Great Nuggets Historic Landscape (Tarnagulla, Moliagul, and Dunolly)
- Lalgambuk (Mt Franklin)
- Walhalla Alpine Mining Landscape

Australia already has some remarkable properties on the World Heritage list, including the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and the Sydney Opera House.

Quotes attributable to the Premier of Victoria and Member for Bendigo East Jacinta Allan:

“From the historic streets of Bendigo to the grand buildings of Castlemaine and the untouched mining landscapes of Walhalla – the Goldfields stand as a living testament to those who came to Victoria, seeking a better life and how they transformed the state.”

“World Heritage sites are on bucket lists of tourists worldwide, and our historic Goldfields are on their way to be right there among them – helping to draw in more visitors from all corners of the globe and inject millions into our regional economies.”

Quotes attributable to the Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon Tanya Plibersek:

“The Victorian Goldfields tell so many stories. Of waves of immigration. Of building beautiful towns from a harsh landscape, that have stood the test of time. Of the local First Nations people who cared for and tended the land for tens of thousands of years. It is the most extensive, coherent and best-surviving goldrush landscape in the world.

“It deserves to be celebrated and protected. Just like the unique landscapes of Cape York, the deep history of Murujuga, or the mining towns of South Australia, our Government is supporting a diverse range of truly special places to be recognised on the world stage.

“Australia is home to some of the most spectacular places in the world. These places tell our unique story. We want to better protect those places so they can be enjoyed by our kids and grandkids. International recognition protects our heritage and attracts visitors from all over the world.”

Quotes attributable to the Federal Member for Bendigo, Lisa Chesters:

“Regional Victoria is a vibrant community with a rich history. The Victorian Goldfields region achieving World Heritage status will encourage more visitors to stay in our region and learn more about our story.

“Every town has a unique story, from the Chewton Monster Meeting to the Bendigo Chinese Association’s much-loved dragons that have had a profound impact on modern Australia.

“A successful World Heritage bid will be great for many local businesses in our diverse and dynamic hospitality and tourism industry.”

Quotes attributable to the Minister for Planning, Sonya Kilkeny:

"The Goldfields are home to the most extensive and best-surviving gold rush landscapes in the world and represent a transformative moment in Victoria's history, this is an opportunity to share its stories with people from all corners of the globe."

"As we progress toward a World Heritage nomination, we are honouring every part of the Goldfields history, the triumphs, the struggles, and the profound impacts on all communities - including our settlers, migrants, and First Nations people."

Quotes attributable to Member for Bendigo West, Maree Edwards

"Today's announcement is a remarkable recognition and celebration of the history, spirit and landscape of Victoria's Goldfields. There are thousands of individual stories to tell from this historic region, and international protection will help ensure these stories continue to be told for generations to come."

ENDS

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