THE VICTORIAN
GOLDFIELDS
WORLD HERITAGE BID

## What

World Heritage is the designation for places that are of outstanding universal value to humanity and have been placed on the UNESCO list for protection and appreciation.

The bid for the Victorian Goldfields provides an opportunity to raise the socio-economic profile and outlook of the region's cities, towns and local communities.

## Why

World Heritage listing will share the extraordinary story of the Victorian Goldfields with people from across the globe and create social, economic, cultural and economic opportunities for every community and person across the region.

The Victorian Goldfields are a multi-layered story about our shared history and heritage and a global event.

## When

The collaborative bid commenced in 2019 – however has been brewing since 1989.

The first formal step, Tentative Listing, was achieved in February 2025. From this point full World Heritage Listing can take three years.

## Who

Fifteen local governments, led by the City of Ballarat and City of Greater Bendigo, along with the Victorian Government, the Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive, Traditional Owners and other key stakeholders, have partnered to progress the listing and unlock its full potential.

## Where

The Victorian Goldfields region which spans Ballarat, Bendigo, as far north as Echuca, west towards the Grampians, Beechworth and Gippsland.

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## What is Australia's World Heritage Tentative List?

Australia's World Heritage Tentative List is a list of 'properties' that the Australian Government intends to nominate for the World Heritage List sometime in the future.

It's an important step because the World Heritage Committee can't consider a nomination unless the 'property' is already on the Tentative List.

The World Heritage Tentative list has no legal or other implications. It's simply the first formal step in a long journey towards achieving World Heritage.

## What happens now that the Victorian Goldfields is on Australia's World Heritage Tentative List?

The Victorian Goldfields needs to be on Australia's World Heritage Tentative List for a minimum of 12 months before a nomination can be submitted to UNESCO.

Developing the nomination requires further research in potential areas for the proposed World Heritage Site and then preparing a full nomination dossier and a management plan. This requires extensive engagement with local communities and regional stakeholders.

## When can the nomination be submitted and how is it assessed?

The earliest a nomination can be submitted is 1 February 2029. The next step on the road to potential World Heritage Listing is called Preliminary Assessment.

Preliminary Assessment is a desk-based assessment focused on ensuring that the proposed Victorian Goldfields nomination can make the strongest possible case for Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). It allows us to collaborate with World Heritage assessors to explore our proposed nomination's claim to Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), test possible protection and management mechanisms, and address topics such as authenticity and integrity.

The Preliminary Assessment process is a new mandatory step on the journey to World Heritage Listing. The bid team is busy working hard to ensure the Victorian Goldfields is ready to proceed to this phase. Following this, if all future steps are successful, the earliest the Victorian Goldfields could be inscribed on the World Heritage List is 2030.

## Why does Ballarat, Beechworth and Whroo not feature in the current Tentative List submission in detail, like Bendigo?

Research and meaningful engagement are underway on refining and identifying the potential areas for the proposed World Heritage Site.

Some of these areas are further progressed, such as Bendigo, than others, such as Ballarat (including the history of Eureka). All get a mention in the Tentative List submission, in recognition of their potential for achieving World Heritage status.

As it was crucial that the Tentative Listing happen now, the way they are written in is a reflection on their current state of readiness only. This won't impact the final nomination.

## Will other locations be added to the nomination in the future?

Decisions about which places will form the World Heritage nomination have not been finalised. Places identified for Tentative Listing do not constitute the final nomination.

For example, there may be other areas not mentioned in the Tentative Listing submission at all that still need to be assessed for the final nomination. Research and consultation will continue up to the time of nomination to identify these and to understand the existing ownership, protection, condition, and management of these places.

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GOLDFIELDS
WORLD HERITAGE BID

## How does the nomination incorporate First Peoples heritage and perspectives?

Many people, including First Peoples and local communities have been coming together to tell their shared story and to make sure everyone benefits from World Heritage. Together, these voices shape the nomination.

The process for working with and engaging with First Peoples is guided by the UN's Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which is applied to World Heritage.

This process is ensuring the nomination will celebrate the stories, strength and value of First Peoples on a global stage and around Australia with First Peoples telling their own story on their own terms. These stories have often been silent in telling's of the gold rush era.

## What benefits will UNESCO World Heritage status bring to the Victorian Goldfields region?

World Heritage Listing will share the extraordinary story of the Victorian Goldfields with people across the world.

An economic benefits assessment (TRC, McA) prepared in 2022 and updated in 2024 has found that a potential Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Listing offers the potential to accelerate regional recovery and provide long term economic, social, and cultural benefits to Victoria.

## How will World Heritage status impact local tourism and economies?

The economic benefits assessment has conservatively estimated tourism and economic impacts across the 15 local government areas in the Victorian Goldfields region to be:

- 2.5 million new visitors over 10 years
- Increase in visitor spending. Average of $52.6 million each year ($526 million over 10 years)
- Increase in accommodation rooms over 10 years by more than 5000
- Investment in new visitor accommodation of more than $680 million over 10 years
- More than $400 million total regional income generated over 10 years.

## What job opportunities might arise from this listing?

The economic benefits assessment projects that there will be more than 2000 new local tourism jobs over 10 years and approximately 2000 additional construction phase jobs.

How can local communities participate in the nomination process?

The bid has been involved in ongoing advocacy, community consultation and meetings, as well as engagement with regional leaders in Ballarat, Bendigo and surrounds to gather support for the nomination.

Engagement opportunities associated with the bid include a dedicated website, newsletter, social media posts, radio broadcasts, newspaper articles, community events including public talks, public surveys, regular meetings with key stakeholders, and an open invitation to request a meeting with the bid team.

Local communities can get involved by registering as a member on the website **goldfieldsworldheritage.com.au** to stay up to date – and participate – with all the latest happenings, activities, and events.

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WORLD HERITAGE BID

## Will there be public consultations during the nomination process?

Absolutely. The World Heritage Operational Guidelines encourage States Parties to ensure that all relevant people with rights and interests in the property be included in building a consensus of support for World Heritage nominations.

This includes Traditional Owners, local communities and owners and occupiers of the area.

## How will this bid impact recreational and prospecting activities within the Victorian Goldfields region?

There is no impediment to existing land uses unless they threaten the property's Outstanding Universal Value. For instance, the Royal Exhibition Building continues to be used for exhibitions, the Sydney Opera House continues to host opera and the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape still has recreational activities.

The 'Miner's right' is a Victorian tradition traceable to 1855. The living tradition of prospecting and fossicking continues to this day.

World Heritage Listing will not introduce new controls in relation to the activities of prospectors and detectorists that don't already exist under legislation such as the Heritage Act 2017, which already provides strong protections for historical archaeological sites.

## Will the World Heritage status lead to changes in local development or infrastructure?

Until specific locations are identified that will be included in the final nomination it is difficult to determine what potential heritage protections may or may not be required.

Many of the places under investigation already have a high level of heritage protection, which could possibly mean no change is required.

What we do know is that World Heritage doesn't stop development or infrastructure – there are entire cities on the World Heritage list that continue to evolve.

## How will the Victorian Goldfields be protected and conserved after achieving World Heritage status?

A management plan is required for World Heritage properties in Australia and will be prepared in consultation with key stakeholders, property owners and managers, and local communities.

These plans help guide all parties on how the Outstanding Universal Value of the property can be conserved.

**For more information visit goldfieldsworldheritage.com.au or scan the QR code**

Ararat Rural City · Baw Baw Shire Council · Campaspe Shire Council · Central Goldfields Shire Council · City of Ballarat · City of Greater Bendigo · Golden Plains Shire · Hepburn Shire Council · Indigo Shire Council · Loddon Shire · Macedon Ranges Shire Council · Moorabool Shire Council · Mount Alexander Shire Council · Northern Grampians Shire Council · Pyrenees Shire Council