

SYMPOSIUM COMMUNIQUE

A regional nomination for World Heritage Listing of the Victorian Goldfields,
Australia's premier heritage region: **Charting a way forward**

Thursday 28 April 2016





PART 1

Preamble

The Symposium was the result of collaboration between the Collaborative Research Centre for Australian History (CRAH) in Federation University, the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) (NTAV), and the Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive (VGTE).

These organisations have formally committed to work towards the development of the Victorian Goldfields –Australia’s Premier Heritage Region project which has as a key objective development of a regionally based nomination for World Heritage Listing (WHL) of the Goldfields.

This project and the WHL nomination development priority are well documented in a range of strategies and plans including Victoria’s Regional Tourism Strategy 2013-2016. The 2014 report of the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Heritage Tourism and Ecotourism recommended that a WHL nomination for the Castlemaine Diggings Heritage National Park be developed together with Budj Bim National Heritage Landscape, which the State Government has decided is its priority nomination.

The VGTE which is the lead agency for the Victorian Goldfields –Australia’s Premier Heritage Region project has the task of continuing advocacy for a WHL nomination for the Goldfields and entered into partnership arrangements with NTAV and CRAH through memorandums of understanding (MOU) and as a result Federation University proposed to the Premier in 2015 that it would be willing to invest substantial resources into the research and development of a WHL nomination for the Victorian Goldfields and sought a Government contribution towards that two year process. Constructive and positive discussions have been held with Government representatives including the Hon Jaala Pulford MP, Minister for Regional Development and Member for Western Victoria in relation to that proposal.

More recently the NTAV has strengthened its commitment to the Victorian Goldfields by establishing a Goldfields Strategic Advisory Committee, recognising the importance to NTAV of the strategic heritage significance of the region. The NTAV strives to maximize its facilitation, capacity building and advocacy role, recognizing the economic benefits of heritage as a major component of positive socio-economic change in the region.

We were delighted that 70 people attended the Symposium. Extensive participation was drawn from local government of the Goldfields region including elected representatives and senior strategic planning, heritage and

tourism staff, as well as several state government agency staff. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor of the City of Ballarat, the Mayor of Hepburn Shire and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Mount Alexander Shire and the Chair of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) Board were all in attendance.

Those speaking at the Symposium in order of their presentations were:

- **Professor John McDonald**, Executive Dean Faculty of Education and Arts, Federation University
- **Professor Keir Reeves**, Director, CRAH
- **Jeremy Johnson**, Chair, Victorian Tourism Industry Council and CEO Sovereign Hill
- **Chris Meddows-Taylor**, Chair, VGTE
- **David Bannear**, Archaeologist, Heritage Victoria
- **Paul Roser**, Acting CEO, NTAV
- **Susan Fayad**, Coordinator Heritage Strategy, City of Ballarat
- **Kristal Buckley AM**, Lecturer in Cultural Heritage, Deakin University
- **Dr Peter Brain**, Director, National Institute of Economic and Industry Research
- **Dr Matt Wagner**, Vice-President of Revitalisation Programs, National Main Street Center, [Subsidiary of National Trust for Historic Preservation]Chicago
- **Judith Isherwood**, General Manager, Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Regional Tourism Board and former CEO Melbourne Arts Centre
- **Cr Sharon Telford**, Deputy Mayor, Mt Alexander Shire Council



PART 2 Discussion & Conclusions

In this section we have attempted to summarise emerging issues, views and a consensus about a way forward:

1. Achieving WHL for a site involves a very difficult journey and considerable resources and research to develop a compelling Outstanding Universal Proposition (OUP) which ultimately will be accepted by UNESCO in a highly competitive environment.
2. The Hon John Brumby had a vision for WHL of the Victorian Goldfields and considerable progress was made at that time resulting in the Castlemaine Diggings Heritage Park receiving National Listing in 2005.
3. Despite this and the considerable work and advocacy undertaken in the broader partnership which has included 13 Goldfields municipalities through the Victorian Goldfields – Australia’s Premier Heritage Region project considerable research and development has still to be undertaken to identify the most compelling OUP for the Victorian Goldfields in order to secure listing on the Federal Government’s Tentative World Heritage List . We would then require Federal Government endorsement to advocate to UNESCO for that OUP to be accepted.
4. To live within or to visit a location which is considered to have WHL potential brings great status and benefits in itself.
5. We are fortunate in having a proposal with the Government for approval and funding to enable a two year intensive research and development project to be undertaken in CRAH to identify the OUP and develop the case to support it within a framework which Heritage Victoria endorses.
6. We recognise that extensive community and stakeholder consultation will be a key feature of that research and development period and the depth and quality of that consultation will directly impact the outcomes and the merit of the OUP.
7. Difficult decisions will need to be taken on competing interests and propositions and these may actually include a joint nomination with sites in other states or even countries. Even within the wider Goldfields region there are many potential attributes to be considered, but only those which best contribute to a winning OUP will be able to be embraced.
8. Although the process of community and stakeholder engagement has really positive benefits in terms of community confidence and visitor awareness, we are also aware that consistent well planned communication is important to avoid any misunderstanding and unwarranted concerns.
9. Taking into account global studies on the benefits of WHL and the work undertaken within the Victorian Goldfields –Australia’s Premier Heritage Region project (2012) scoping study we shared with the Symposium a conservative estimate of the economic benefits of increased visitation if the Goldfields obtained WHL as \$22 million each year into the wider region and local economies.
10. We also shared the research (Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP 2007) suggesting that other benefits of WHL included partnerships, additional funding, conservation, regeneration, tourism, civic pride, social capital and learning and education. These all have a major impact on regional development.
11. Critically, we recognise that although we believe our ability to develop a compelling OUP is high, there is no certainty in the process. Our best chance of securing success will be the strength of the partnerships which will develop and support the OUP nomination and we have deep confidence in the commitment of that partnership. We feel that the level of investment and resources required are better justified by making each step of the journey in developing the compelling OUP nomination value-added through the many benefits of added awareness and confidence.
12. We will seek a meeting with Regional Development Victoria to develop a formal proposal to the Government for approval of the two year research process to develop a regional WHL nomination for the Victorian Goldfields within CRAH along the lines proposed to the Premier by the Vice Chancellor of Federation University.

We will keep stakeholders informed of our progress and of key developments.



