

# Media Release

**The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP**  
Minister for Mental Health  
Minister for Treaty and First Peoples



Friday, 8 July 2022

## NATION LEADING SUPPORT TO PROTECT CULTURAL HERITAGE

The protection and preservation of Aboriginal cultural heritage will be strengthened, ensuring it is managed by First Nations people, for First Nations people, backed by the Andrews Labor Government.

The Labor Government is investing almost \$13.5 million in frontline support to Traditional Owners to protect and manage Aboriginal cultural heritage, ensuring it is preserved for generations to come.

This funding will support Registered Aboriginal Parties to continue their work as the primary source of advice and knowledge on Aboriginal places and objects on their Country.

Registered Aboriginal Parties, such as the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, will benefit from this investment, supporting the protection of significant cultural sites like Dights Falls - an important Aboriginal place used extensively by Aboriginal people for ceremonial, economic and social activities.

Victoria is the only state in Australia where Traditional Owners have the final say in decision-making about the protection of heritage as part of planning processes.

Victoria's infrastructure and construction boom has increased demand for Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments and approvals by 883 per cent since 2007-08.

In carrying out Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments, Traditional Owners ensure that precious cultural heritage – often tens of thousands of years old and honoured this week during annual NAIDOC events – is protected and celebrated for the benefit of all Victorians.

All Registered Aboriginal Parties will receive new funding to appoint a Cultural Heritage Officer and a Government Heritage Liaison Officer, ensuring they are resourced to fulfil their statutory obligations over the next two years.

A further \$3.3 million will also support Traditional Owners to proactively assess and map Aboriginal cultural heritage on their Country, informed by a thorough understanding of the presence and likelihood of heritage in the landscape.

The investment supports the ongoing protection and management of cultural heritage, helping government and land users to avoid damage to Aboriginal places and objects. It also means that Registered Aboriginal Parties can continue to share their land, culture and knowledge long into the future.

The *Victorian Budget 2022/23* includes an investment of \$35.7 million in Victoria's Aboriginal cultural heritage system to support the promotion, protection and celebration of Victoria's invaluable Aboriginal cultural heritage.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Treaty and First Peoples Gabrielle Williams

*"Victoria's Traditional Owners are the knowledge keepers of our precious Aboriginal cultural heritage."*

*"Aboriginal cultural heritage – honoured this week during annual NAIDOC celebrations - is best maintained and preserved by First Nations People, so it can continue to be enjoyed and shared now and into the future."*

*"Through putting the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Aboriginal hands, we ensure that we can learn from, preserve and celebrate these beautiful places, long into the future."*

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