

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Friday, 20 January, 2017

A STEP TOWARDS THE RECOGNITION BUDJ BIM DESERVES

The Andrews Labor Government today welcomed the news that the Budj Bim cultural landscape will be added to Australia's Tentative List World Heritage nominations.

The cultural landscape in Victoria's south-west – one of Australia's most culturally significant locations - was put forward for inclusion on the list by the Labor Government.

It will now stay on the list for 12 months before being considered for World Heritage nomination, which would place it alongside the Royal Exhibition Building and the Kakadu National Park in terms of International protection and significance.

The move follows an \$8 million investment in the site by the Labor Government to strengthen the area's key heritage management and infrastructure projects, giving it the protection and promotion it deserves.

Work on the site will begin this year, with Budj Bim Master Plan stages 1 and 2 to be complete by 2019.

Upcoming work will help the area host projected visitor numbers and support an expanding tourism sector with interpretative signage, improved pedestrian and vehicle access, accommodation and visitor information centres.

A key project of the Master Plan is the construction of a traditional eel aquaculture interpretation centre to support eel product manufacture and sales, which will be a drawcard for tourists to learn more about the Gunditjmara people's tradition practises and engineering.

Budj Bim is home to one of Australia's oldest and largest aquaculture systems and is evidence of a large, settled aboriginal community systematically farming and smoking eels for food and trade.

Gunditjmara people lived there in permanent settlements, dispelling the myth that Australia's first people were all nomadic.

Budj Bim has also been identified by scholars as the world's first engineering project, dating back at least 6,600 years, preceding the pyramids of Egypt and Stonehenge.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"Budj Bim is a special place for all Victorians. It's a Victorian treasure, and it should be recognised as an international treasure."

"The Gunditjmara people have a significant relationship with this land. Work will get underway this year on the improvements they've asked for as part of their vision for the site."

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Lisa Neville

"We want to increase Traditional Owner's control of their cultural heritage and that is why we are investing in a place as important as Budj Bim."

"This announcement provides greater recognition to this remarkable cultural and tourism asset making it a special day for the Gunditjmara and South West Victoria."