

## MEDIA RELEASE

### The Great Walk—Parliament Reception

26 May 2017

The Great Walk organized by CCCAV has concluded with the walkers arriving at their destination in the Victorian Parliament. The team was greeted by hundreds of citizens and has received formal apologies from the Victorian government first time in Australian history.

The walk from Robe to Victoria began on May 6<sup>th</sup> has lasted 20 days along a route over 500km. It was a commemoration of the Chinese gold seekers who had to take the arduous trip as a result of a poll tax imposed solely on Chinese.

After the team arrived in Melbourne, they have visited the Heavenly Queen Temple and the Chinese Museum, walked through Little Bourke Street (Chinatown) – the home of Chinese earlier settlers, and arrived at the Victorian Parliament House at noon. They were greeted by lion dancing, Chinese folk dance and singing.

A reception was held in the Queen's Hall, during which the Premier and the Opposition Leader paid their respects to our Chinese ancestors while apologizing for the wrong-doing by the government 160 years ago. This discriminatory policy has been described by the Premier Daniel Andrews as 'a terrible injustice of the past'.

**"It is never too late to say sorry, particularly if you mean it,"** Mr. Andrews said. **"To every Chinese in Victoria, to every person hurt by that terrible policy decision, on behalf of Victorian government, on behalf of Victorian parliament, I express our deepest sorrow and I say to you that we are profoundly sorry."**

The Leader of Opposition Matthew Guy and the Minister for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott have also made their sincere apologies to the Australian Chinese.

Similar apologies have been made in New Zealand, Canada, and the United States in the past 15 years. Hong Lim MP, who has helped to organize this great project, believes this would be **'a start for the Chinese Community to make peace with the racist treatment'**.

The Great Walk started on 6<sup>th</sup> May was the first highlight in the series of commemorative events organized by CCCAV. Following the walk, CCCAV will hold 'Beyond the New Gold Mountain' Conference, "From Robe to Chinese Fortunes" exhibition, and a gala dinner in honor of this meaningful year.