

MEDIA RELEASE

The Great Walk Parliament Reception

23 May 2017

A group of Chinese Walkers has retraced the footsteps of the original Chinese gold diggers from Robe (SA) to the Victorian Gold fields in 1857 following an introduction of a racist 10 Pounds Poll Tax. To avoid the tax, imposed only on the Chinese, they disembarked in Robe in South Australia and walked over land. Many died through exhaustion and sickness and suffered discrimination and race riots when arrived at the goldfields.

The 12 walkers who commenced the walk in Robe on 6 May, will be walking 552 Kms in 20 days, arriving in Parliament house, passing through China Town in Melbourne, at **12:30 pm on Thursday 25 May** to be joined and greeted by hundreds of Chinese well wishers, including community leaders, with lion dance and performances at the front of Parliament house.

This re-enactment of this epic walk, organised by the Chinese Community Council of Australia Victorian Chapter (CCCAV), is to pay special tribute to the original walkers and to honor their heroic courage, tenacity, bravery, sacrifice, suffering and resilience. Most importantly it is also to recognise and celebrate the role and contribution of the Chinese community in the growth, development and prosperity of Victoria and Australia going back 160 years.

The walkers will be received by the Premier at 1pm. At the reception to welcome the walkers, who included 4th generation of the original walkers, we understand that the **Premier would offer an apology** to this past wrong doing similar to the New Zealander, Canadian, Californian and US Congress's apologies during the past 15 years.

Quotes attributable to Hong Lim MP, the Chair of CCCAV Advisory Council

The Chinese community, which now constitutes 4.5% of the Australian population, is now the biggest ethnic group in Australia's multicultural society, numbering more than 1.2 million residents. This project is to reflect the unique place of Chinese Australians and recognises their cultural and historical roots in Australia. The project aims to recognise the special role of the Chinese Australian community in contributing to the growth and prosperity of Victoria and Australia over these 160 years.