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MEDIA RELEASE

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HERITAGE LISTINGS FOR BEN HALL SITES

Six sites linked to legendary 19th century bushranger, Ben Hall, have been given the State's highest level of heritage protection.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said the Ben Hall sites had been placed on the State Heritage Register and would be a boost to tourism in the Cabonne, Blayney, Goulburn Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan and Forbes shires.

"Ben Hall is one of our best known bushrangers and part of folklore," the Minister said.

"The heritage sites, which are spread across the central west of the State, have been listed because of their historical significance in showing the impact of bushranging on colonial NSW."

They are:

- **Escort Rock, Eugowra** - a natural rock formation and old coach road was the site of the first crime Ben Hall can be linked to where a gold coach on its way from Forbes to Bathurst was robbed of 14,000 pounds worth of bank notes and gold;
- **Cliefden homestead** - a 1842 homestead near Carcoar raided for horses by hall. It had been fortified with thick walls and gun slots to see off attacks by bushrangers;
- **Wandi, Narambulla Creek, near Marulan** - a former Colonial Georgian coaching inn was successfully defended by a local magistrate attending a wedding in a shootout with Hall's gang;
- **Bushranger Hotel, on the Hume Highway near Goulburn** - built in 1860, it has been in continuous use as a hotel since Hall and his gang held up a publican in the public bar on 26 January, 1865. It's the only surviving hotel of five inns in the district;
- **Ben Hall's death site, Ben Halls Road, Forbes** - a special stand of trees is associated with the Outlaws Act which allowed bushrangers to be shot rather, than arrested and sent to trial; and
- **Ben Hall's grave in Forbes cemetery** - was originally only marked by a picket fence.

Born in Maitland in 1837 of convict parents, Hall took up bushranging in his early 20s after two wrongful arrests and his house being burned down. He gained a reputation as a gentleman bushranger and by the end of the 19th century was referred to as an Australian Robin Hood.

He conducted more than 600 robberies but never killed anyone and included the 1863 bail-up of the entire town of Canowindra, shepherding residents into a hotel and instructing them to eat and drink for three days at his gang's expense. He was shot and killed by police in May 1865.

Mr Kelly said there had been extensive public interest in heritage listing the sites with the normal period for public comment extended by six weeks.

"The listings mean any major works proposed for the sites will be referred to the Heritage Council and the sites will now have increased access to Government funding," the Minister said.

These sites will be added to the Heritage Tourism online site which allows people to explore tourism sites in regional areas. This can be found at <http://www.visit.heritage.nsw.gov.au/index.cfm>.