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MEDIA RELEASE

THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA'S (VIC) PASSIONATE VOLUNTEERS ARE ACKNOWLEDGED FOR THEIR WORK, IN PARTICULAR DURING THE 2009 BUSHFIRES, AT THE MELBOURNE AIRPORT 2009 VICTORIAN TOURISM AWARDS ON 16 NOVEMBER, 2009 .

Thanks to the Trust's 36 Gulf Station Volunteers, part of more than 600 of its dedicated volunteers, The National Trust of Australia (Vic) has taken out the **Outstanding Contribution by a Volunteer (s) Award** at the Melbourne airport 2009 Victorian tourism awards. The Trust previously won the same award in 2007.

It was the work of the Trust's volunteers, in particular the contributions made to the restoration and invigoration of the Gulf Station pioneer farm in Yarra Valley, and their brave role in saving Gulf Station from fire on Black Saturday, 7 February that assisted in clinching this prestigious award.

National Trust of Australia (Vic) CEO, Mr Martin Purslow said: "While the fires roared, the Victorian community would have lost a part of its heritage if it had not been down to the bravery of the Trust's volunteers who moved the horses, hosed down the roofs and walls, and battled grass fires with wet carpet."

The Trust's volunteers began their work at Gulf Station in 1986, and since then – in a cumulative effort – they have restored, cleaned, and now maintain the buildings, stables, fences, grounds, and gardens. Moreover, they have returned horses to the property, restored horse drawn grinding machinery, activated bore water, and run the school house for visiting school groups.

"The work of the Trust, as a service organisation, simply would not be possible without the energetic and creative contributions made by our hundreds of volunteers currently numbering almost 600. All of them play a vital role in the promotion and conservation of Australia's natural, historic, and indigenous heritage, especially those who helped out during the bushfires of February 2009. All the work that our volunteers engage in, simultaneously supports the tourism industry," said Mr Purslow.

The National Trust of Australia's (Vic) volunteers also assist in the running of the Trust's more than 20 heritage tourist attractions throughout the State.

"Our volunteers help keep our Victorian cultural and heritage properties alive, if they didn't invest their precious time in helping to run these places, than visitors and children would miss out in learning about our precious history," said Mr Puslow.

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The National Trust of Australia's (Vic) is a non-government community funded organisation that is dedicated to preserving our cultural heritage.

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Photos available on request.

For further information and requests for photos please contact Paola Ghirelli, Media & Communications Manager
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