

21 October 2019

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
GPO Box 2392
Melbourne 3001

Removing the Gold Royalty Exemption - Submission by the City of Greater Bendigo

Introduction and Summary

The City of Greater Bendigo welcomes the opportunity provide a submission to this consultation process.

Please note the submission has not been endorsed by the Greater Bendigo City Council.

1. There should be an exemption from the royalty for exploration.
2. There should be a phased introduction of the royalty.
3. The proceeds from gold mining royalties should stay local, contributing to regional initiatives that strengthen jobs and communities.
4. The State Government recognises that under current and likely future scenario of gold mining in Victoria, that:
 - Mines in the City of Greater Bendigo will:
 - Produce the most gold; and
 - Employ the most people (currently about 70% of the State's workforce directly working in gold mines);
 - Most gold miners will live in Greater Bendigo;
 - A very high proportion (if not the majority) of the support industries for gold mining will be based in Greater Bendigo; and
 - The mines in Greater Bendigo will generate the most revenue for the State from the royalty.
5. The City of Greater Bendigo recognises and appreciates that the likely future scenario for gold mining means that there will be substantial benefits for Greater Bendigo through increased population growth, jobs and investment. It is important that the

benefits of this growth and investment is shared across the City and region and that everyone has opportunities to thrive and succeed and benefit from this development.

6. If proceeds from the royalty go to consolidated revenue, then that is a source of income derived largely from the City of Greater Bendigo. Few if any 'taxes' that potentially raise revenue are largely sourced from one part of the state let alone one municipality.
7. Where substantial revenue is raised from one locality in the State then government should support the principle that; where proceeds are gained from one part of the State then due consideration should be given to supporting projects in that part of the State. This should particularly apply where projects can be identified that are targeted to; support disadvantaged families, households and communities, generate jobs for long term unemployed and those with limited skills and training, and generally improve the liveability of communities.
8. The case for directing proceeds from the royalty revenue back to the gold producing areas of Victoria has strong merit when it is considered that many of those communities are experiencing a range of disadvantages when compared to other parts of the state such as; high unemployment, high youth unemployment particularly in the category of under 25 years of age and unemployed for five years or more, multi-generational poverty, high waiting lists for social housing, high levels of food insecurity, large numbers of people who have left school at 16 years of age, and low levels of persons with Year 12 or equivalent educational attainment. The goldfields regions contain extensive areas with households in the lowest 5% in Australia under the SEIFA classification.
9. There is a series of projects across the central Victorian goldfields that revenue from a gold revenue could be directed to. Four are highlighted below. One involves the whole of the central Victorian goldfields region and three specifically relate to the City of Greater Bendigo:
 - Supporting the bid being jointly led by the Cities of Ballarat and Greater Bendigo on behalf of the thirteen municipalities comprising the central Victorian goldfields region for world heritage recognition of the goldfields. This is through a serial listing of a limited number of sites across the region. See below '*The case for UNESCO World Heritage listing of the central Victorian goldfields*' for a summary of the bid and how it is positioned to address many of the regional development needs of the region;
 - Supporting the decontamination and reuse of a large number of surplus former gold mining government owned sites across urban Bendigo to provide development opportunities for a range of uses including the provision of affordable housing and building great neighbourhood communities;

- Supporting solutions to the rising ground water problem in parts of urban Bendigo; and
- Supporting the implementation of the 'Re-imagining Bendigo Creek' project which is a City, government agencies, Dja Dja Wurrung and community led and supported project to recapture the essence of the creek's heritage. It support a new vision which celebrates the creek's history, environmental, social and cultural roles and its place in the life and liveability of 21st century Bendigo following the city's gold mining legacy.

All four projects relate to building on opportunities or tackling issues from our gold mining heritage and legacy.

The case for UNESCO World Heritage listing of the central Victorian goldfields

The nineteenth century global rush for gold changed the world forever. The Central Victorian goldfields played a major part in this never-before-seen wave of globalisation and modernisation. This legacy is still strongly and uniquely represented across the whole region today.

Victoria's Central Goldfields region possesses the world's most expansive and intact representation of a nineteenth century gold rush settler landscape. It is an area of about 40,000 square kilometres (17% of Victoria) with a current population of about half a million people, embracing over 40 historic cities, towns, settlements and rural landscapes and parts or all of thirteen local government areas.

Background

The idea of pursuing World Heritage Listing of the central Victorian goldfields was first initiated three decades ago by the Hon John Brumby MP and has since received expressions of support at state and federal levels from both major parties. The Hon John Brumby is a Patron of the current bid.

Our Ask

- \$620,000 from the State Government to further refine and develop the business case for a World Heritage Listing for the central Victorian goldfields. Investment to secure World Heritage Listing will unlock the full potential of the region, bringing economic diversification, jobs, investment and tourism, and raise the socio-economic outlook for cities, towns and communities across the region. State government funding to be supported by \$100,000 co-contribution from local government authorities and a minimum of \$50,000 from other regional stakeholders.

- Designation of the central Victorian goldfields region as a State Government ‘Priority Precinct’ – making it Victoria’s first regional priority precinct, and, the first priority precinct in an area of high social, economic and jobs disadvantage.

Crucially, in conserving and interpreting the story of the central Victorian goldfields through a World Heritage Listing there is a golden opportunity to use economic diversification to lift towns and rural areas and communities out of decline, address social disadvantage and environmental issues, and attract tourists and new businesses which will stimulate local economies and lead to sustainable local job creation.

Cross Boundary Collaboration

13 Municipalities:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ○ Ararat Rural City Council | ○ Loddon Shire Council |
| ○ Campaspe Shire Council | ○ Macedon Ranges Shire Council |
| ○ Central Goldfields Shire Council | ○ Mount Alexander Shire |
| ○ City of Ballarat Council | ○ Moorabool Shire Council |
| ○ City of Greater Bendigo Council | ○ Northern Grampians Shire Council |
| ○ Golden Plains Shire Council | ○ Pyrenees Shire Council |
| ○ Hepburn Shire Council | |

Impacts and Outcomes

- Regional development and diversified economies.
- Job creation and increased liveability.
- Transforming our small towns.
- Boosting education and training around trade skills, crafts and hospitality.
- Tourism growth and investment.
- Targeting marginalised communities that have entrenched disadvantage and unemployment.
- Rehabilitating mine-scarred and environmentally damaged landscapes.
- Working with Traditional Owners on healing the landscape and implementing their Country Plans.
- Building a sustainable future and inclusive growth in communities progressively being impacted by climate change.

Promoting a Unique History

- Heritage is the biggest tourism brand in the world, the full tourism potential of the central Victorian goldfields is relatively untapped. World Heritage designation is a global brand.
- The heritage and history of the central Victorian goldfields is an integral part of Australia’s story. The region played a major part in the wave of globalisation and

modernisation sparked by the world-wide rush for gold, a legacy which is still strongly and uniquely represented across the region.

An Internationally Recognised Future

The discussion around this region aspiring to World Heritage listing arose from a growing realisation that the Victorian goldfields is an area of outstanding universal value. It potentially meets two of the World Heritage required selection criteria:

- To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history.

Addressing Social Disadvantage

- Many parts of the central Victorian goldfields region are amongst the most socially disadvantaged in the state. For example, Central Goldfields Shire is the most socially disadvantaged municipality in Victoria and one of the most disadvantaged in Australia, while three other local government areas are in the top ten most disadvantaged in the state (Northern Grampians - 6, Ararat Rural City Council - 8, Loddon Shire - 9). There are pockets of extreme disadvantage throughout many parts of the region.
- Modelling, and experience in other disadvantaged areas – *World Heritage Listed Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape* <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1215> - shows a World Heritage Listing will have a positive impact on communities.

Project Scope

Developing a better understanding of the region's heritage assets and the potential national and world significance of the heritage of the whole region. Including:

- Scoping sites across goldfields;
- Researching the goldfields unique characteristics and the opportunities they bring;
- Scoping other models – what's happening in other areas that works;
- Understanding difficulties and opportunities – i.e. social disadvantage – can people afford to do things;
- Recognising the goldfields region as a 'Priority Precinct' - would be the first regional priority precinct in an area of high social disadvantage which is in line with the State Government's commitment to ending social disadvantage.

Why will tourists come?

- The central Victorian goldfields are the most authentic and intact in the world – you can still see the buildings and communities that gold built, the mullock heaps and mines, and historic townships abound.
- Talk to locals, hear their stories, visit the historical societies, wineries, galleries, hotels and local stores.
- You can still find gold in the goldfields - prospectors.
- Experience heritage accommodation and experiences – diversity of options across the goldfields.
- Genealogy element – one in three people in Australia can track their story back to the goldfields.
- To learn more about Australia's history – our Traditional Owners, the miners and the Eureka story.

The whole region features important elements and countless stories of Australia's indigenous heritage, intermingled with those from the frenetic period of European settlement when gold was found and dug up in vast quantities. The region is dotted with mining relics, simple and grand dwellings and large, often out of scale, public buildings and works, built on the back of gold-wealth and dating from its initial discovery in 1851. Although later eclipsed by South Africa, the Australian gold discoveries of the nineteenth century were the dominant fields of their time. In the twenty first century, the Victorian goldfields comprise a remarkable urban and rural landscape, as well as a mix of historic cities, towns, villages and settlements with many of their mid-nineteenth century, European-inspired architecture still in evidence with tree lined boulevards, parks and botanic gardens, all represented the grandeur of the times but also a desire to recreate a sense of the civilisation they had come from.

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The central Victorian goldfields forms an integral part of Australia's heritage and indeed the world's, containing buildings, features, sites, localities and areas representative of the core features of this extraordinary period in the settlement of our nation.

For further information, please contact the City's Manager Regional Sustainable Development, Trevor Budge on t.budge@bendigo.vic.gov.au or 5434 6148.