

# Mining review

## Northern Grampians looks ahead

By TED O'CONNOR

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NORTHERN Grampians Shire Council is creating a mining sector plan to evaluate how important the industry is to the region.

The plan's development comes at a time when mining changes and developments are happening across the shire.

Stawell Gold Mine's deposits are dwindling and the mine looks set to close within two years.

But earlier this year mining exploration company Navarre found deposits supporting its prediction of gold worth \$815 million along the Landsborough fault and in early May Bora Bora Resources began a \$1.7-million gold exploration project at St Arnaud.

Northern Grampians chief executive Justine Linley said the council wanted to develop a mining strategy encompassing minerals such as gold and mineral sands including zircon.

"The shire has significant mining potential," she said.

"We also want to work with Wimmera Development Association so we can focus on mining at a Wimmera level.

"A big industry like mining has flow-on effects for the whole region."

With Stawell Gold Mine currently employing more than 300 workers, Mrs Linley said it was important their skills stayed in the region if the mine ran out of gold and closed.

"I would encourage these workers to take up fly-in-fly-out work at mines

across Australia if they lost work at the gold mine," she said.

"That way they can make plenty of money in places such as the Pilbara, but spend it in Stawell where they still live.

"We want to make sure these skills are retained in the area, especially if deposits at Landsborough and St Arnaud attract enough investment to be mined."

She encouraged businesses which relied on the mine to diversify their operations.

"If businesses have 100 per cent reliance on the gold mine then they need to look to other income avenues to prepare for when it might close," she said.

"Otherwise they are like a farmer who is just relying on one crop."