

NEW FRONTIER: Twins Sienna, left, and Lilly Ward give each other a huge hug to celebrate the start of their school education, which starts today. The Horsham five-year-olds, attending Horsham West Primary School, are among the latest crop of youngsters across the region and beyond venturing into a new world of learning. Picture: PAUL CARRACHER



Gold still in future

BY DEAN LAWSON

Gold might again play a major role in the future prosperity of Stawell if exploration for the precious metal in the region continues to produce promising results.

While authorities are working with the business community to counteract the effect of Stawell Gold Mine ceasing operations, exploration company Navarre Minerals has been discovering gold at its nearby Irvine prospect.

Navarre Minerals managing director

Geoff McDermott said the hunt had intensified for a primary ore body after discovery of a new gold-reef system at the prospect, about 15 kilometres south of Stawell.

“If you can imagine these deposits like spots on a dog, we’ve found a large spot. What we’re looking for now is the dog,” he said.

Mr McDermott said if the company could locate the ore body, the potential would be significant for Stawell.

He added that the years developing a potential new mine might be sig-

nificantly less than usual because of nearby infrastructure.

“It would make sense to deliver the raw product to the existing plant at Stawell on a duplicated Western Highway and to use a workforce that knows how to operate the equipment,” he said.

“The mill at Stawell is tailor-made for the type of mineralisation we are finding so it is a perfect fit.

“Kirkland Lake Gold at Stawell Gold Mine is also our largest shareholder, which is significant.

“A lot of traditional time-consuming hurdles that would usually need to be overcome are already in place.

“This means any discovery at Irvine would result in a shorter time for it coming into production.

“Generally it can take between seven and 10 years for a mine to go into production. I’m estimating for Irvine we might be able to take two years off that time.”

The Irvine prospect is part of the company’s Stawell Corridor Gold Project. Drilling results completed in

December revealed a new reef system similar in geology and style of mineralisation to Magdala Gold Mine.

A drilling program is set to continue in February-March as part of the State Government’s Target Minerals Exploration Initiative.

The Stawell Corridor Gold Project, between 10 and 70 kilometres south-east of Stawell Gold Mine, involves two exploration licences – Tatyoon and Ararat – and includes historic Ararat Goldfield.

Continued page 3

Gold still in future

From page 1

The Irvine prospect occupies the northern end of Ararat Goldfield, estimated to have produced about a million ounces of gold, mainly from alluvial and deep-lead production between 1854 to 1925.

Production of primary hard-rock gold from Ararat Goldfield was relatively low given the richness of the alluvial deposits, in contrast with Stawell Goldfield. This is one of the reasons why Navarre Minerals is searching for primary gold mineralisation near the richest alluvial gold deposits.

Ararat and Stawell have produced about 6-million ounces of gold. Kirkland Lake Gold announced in mid-December it had stopped mining at Stawell Gold Mine and would cut 150 jobs as the mine started a transition into a 'care and maintenance' phase.

It added it would continue underground exploration drilling and environmental monitoring and keep a mill and pumps in operational condition to ensure the possibility of resuming operations.

In response, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Regional Development Victoria and Ace Radio joined forces to create a Jobs For Stawell project.