

**Public Record Office Victoria  
Sir Rupert Hamer Awards**

# **Case Study**



## **The Gold Museum**

Onsite and online: Expanding access to the Gold Museum Collection



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Office Victoria**



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## Sir Rupert Hamer Awards Case Study 2015

# The Gold Museum



As part of a complete upgrade of buildings and systems, Sir Rupert Hamer Award recipient, Gold Museum implemented a new Vernon collections management system. This enabled all of its data to be published on the web providing online access to this incredibly important historic collection to users all over the world.

### Key Topics

Museums, Collections Management System, Vernon, storage, preservation.

### Key Discoveries

- **Online access to the collection transforms the number of people who are aware of and using the collection, especially researchers.**
- **Utilisation of a classification scheme and collections management system increases accessibility of collection items for staff, volunteers and researchers.**
- **The redevelopment and updating of a physical site leads to a collection being much better cared for and ensures long term preservation.**

### About

The [Gold Museum](#) is a regional museum in Ballarat and is part of the [Sovereign Hill](#) experience. The museum opened in 1978 and cares for a collection of approximately 100,000 items that ranges from military and mining items through to costumes and photography.

### The Challenge

In 2011, the Gold Museum received a grant of \$3 million from [Regional Development Victoria](#) as part of the Sovereign Hill Museums Association to renovate and upgrade the Museum's buildings.

*The challenge for the Gold Museum was to provide broader access to their extensive collection.*

The challenge for the Gold Museum was to provide broader access to their extensive collection with this grant. The museum was looking to provide this access in both a physical and an online digital environment. They wanted their collection to be available to a wider audience, including the international community.

The museum also sought to ensure the ongoing survival of their collection by storing the items in an environment that complied with the national standards for museum and archive control and by providing digital access to the items so physical access was not always necessary.

Additionally, the Gold Museum also

### Sir Rupert Hamer Awards

The [Sir Rupert Hamer Awards](#), recognise excellence and innovation in records management within the Victorian Public Sector.

The Awards seek to highlight the importance of good recordkeeping in ensuring the accountability of governments and the efficient operation of public administration in the state of Victoria.



### The Gold Museum wins Sir Rupert Hamer Award

The Gold Museum received a 2013 Sir Rupert Hamer Award in the following category:

**Places of Deposit Category 1**  
'Preservation of records of significance to the local community and the State.'



desired improved working areas for staff, volunteers and researchers.

## The Solution

The solution for the Gold Museum was to use the grant from the government to upgrade their physical facilities so that the collection was stored correctly and in a much larger facility.

The two new storage buildings, which added 350 square metres to the existing 300 square metres of storage space, also encouraged and allowed the continued storage of other institutions' collections.

Additionally, the Gold Museum installed more computers onsite to allow more extensive and useable electronic access and introduced the Vernon Collections Management System (CMS) to catalogue their collection to provide easy digital access online to both national and international users.

## Approach

A systematic approach was undertaken by the Gold Museum. For the physical upgrade, demolition was conducted in late 2011 and construction began in early 2012. The new buildings were then launched in 2013.

For the digital upgrade the need for a scoping study was identified. Collections consultant, Dr Meghan Cardamone, was appointed by Gold Museum to assist with transition

and training. A license to operate Vernon CMS was obtained and computers were acquired.

The existing data, built on 25 years worth of volunteer work, was transferred onto Vernon and six staff, three volunteers and a number of student interns were trained in the use of Vernon. Vernon was set up as 'online ready' which meant that all the data catalogued on it could be simply published on the web.

A blog was also established and a formal agreement with the National Library of Australia was reached so the data from the website could be harvested by [Trove](#) searches, which resulted in the Gold Museum's information being available to an even wider community.

## The Result

The results have been very encouraging with interest in the museum and its resources rising.

*Since May 2013, 64,277 records have been published online and over 6000 have an accompanying image.*

Since May 2013, 64,277 records have been published [online](#) and over 6000 have an accompanying image. The ease of access to the extensive collection has also been very

popular. Many people have become aware of both the very existence of and the wide-ranging nature of the collection for the first time.

Additionally interest in 'back room' tours, as in the new storage facilities, has risen significantly. The new buildings themselves have meant that the collection now has the space to be correctly cared for.

The website, with an accompanying [blog](#), has also been very popular and has received 29,559 hits since it launched in July 2013 and averaging 140 visits per day.

Researchers from Australia and around the world have been the predominant people from which there has been an increased interest.

The feedback for the website has been enthusiastic, both from those who already knew about the Gold Museum's collection, and were appreciative of the greater access; and those who had found the collection for the first time. This was specifically highlighted by the very enthusiastic response from one international researcher who, with the help of Gold Museum staff, used the online access to track down a photograph for which he had been looking for two years.

For further information about the Sir Rupert Hamer Awards please go to <http://prov.vic.gov.au/government/sir-rupert-hamer-awards>

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