

SOVEREIGN HILL

FACT SHEET

A close-up photograph of a gold pan being used for panning. The pan is tilted, and a stream of water is visible, with some gold particles being caught in the riffles at the bottom.

Sovereign Hill is a re-created goldfields township set over 25 hectares on a site which forms part of the richest alluvial goldfields the world has ever seen. Australia's favourite outdoor museum has been delighting visitors since it was officially opened to the public on Sunday, 29 November 1970. Today, with an average of 500,000 visitors annually, Sovereign Hill contributes an estimated \$35 million each year to the Ballarat economy and is a major attractor of tourism to the goldfields region.

Sovereign Hill is an inductee of the Victorian Tourism Hall of Fame, having won the state award for Major Tourist Attraction in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Following on from the 2005 state award, Sovereign Hill was named Australia's Major Tourist Attraction for 2005, and was a finalist in the Victorian awards for 2009 and 2010.

Sovereign Hill is one of the best places in Victoria for visitors to immerse themselves in the rich and lasting legacy that the discovery of gold has endowed upon our nation.

Sovereign Hill actively preserves Australia's rich, living history and heritage, providing visitors with an accurate and thoroughly researched experience of the goldrush era. Visitors step back in time – experiencing the working lives of Australia's gold miners, re-living the exhilaration of the Gold Rush and discovering the lively day-to-day activities that made up life on the goldfields. No matter how old or young, visitors to Sovereign Hill will always find something that will enchant and excite, creating memories to treasure for years to come.

Sovereign Hill offers visitors a wide range of activities, as well as the chance to chat and be photographed with costumed staff and volunteers – many portraying some of the behaviours and prejudices of the 1850s!

These activities include:

- Panning for real gold in the diggings creek.
- A stunning, pure gold ingot worth \$160,000 is poured at the Gold Smelting Works.
- A 10-minute, self-guided underground adventure tour of the Red Hill Mine, which depicts the discovery of the 69 kg Welcome Nugget – still the second largest gold nugget ever found.
- 'Trapped', the latest multi-sensory show in the Gold Mine, presents the story of Australia's worst underground mining disaster, which killed 22 men at Creswick, near Ballarat, in 1882.
- 'Journey through the Labyrinth of Gold' is a fully-guided mine tour introducing visitors to the story of 19th century mining in Ballarat. Like 'Trapped', it commences with a ride on the inclined tramway.
- 1850s-style shopping on Sovereign Hill's iconic Main Street.

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- Regular demonstrations of 19th century trades and crafts such as wheelwrighting, candlemaking and sweet making.
- Performances in the Victoria Theatre and on the streets by Sovereign Hill's own actors and musicians.
- A visit to the Gold Museum to come face-to-face with even more real gold.
- 'A Night in the Museum' is a special weekend package inviting visitors to enjoy luxurious accommodation inside Sovereign Hill at Steinfeld's. During their stay, visitors wear period costume and join a Sovereign Hill lady or gentleman to experience goldfields life as it was for the elite in 1850s Ballarat.
- 'Blood on the Southern Cross' – a multi-million dollar sound-and-light show – explodes across the evening skies.

Situated in the historic city of Ballarat, Sovereign Hill is located in Bradshaw Street and is easily accessed by car, train, and tour coaches operating daily from Melbourne. Sovereign Hill is a comfortable 90-minute drive from Melbourne along the Western Highway, or only an hour from Melbourne Airport! Once visitors arrive in Ballarat, it is easy to follow the brown and white tourist signs to Sovereign Hill.

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