

Friday 3 August



Reimagining Ned:

Concept development project spotlights new drivers for destinational Kelly tourism

A comprehensive report, funded by Regional Development Victoria, into the tourism potential of the life and times of Ned Kelly was released today at a joint announcement by commissioning partners, the Rural City of Wangaratta, Indigo Shire, Mansfield Shire and Benalla Rural City.

The final report, *Ned Kelly Alive - Concept Development & Business Case* - was project managed by Tourism North East and delivered by internationally respected cultural heritage tourism consultants, Earthcheck, on behalf of stakeholder partners. It provides clear direction for new ways each local government area can enhance existing and create new Ned Kelly experiences in a contemporary and immersive way that will drive visitation to their destinations.

The report highlighted key areas of focus, identifying priority projects for future funding and including cost estimates for delivery. Some of the most significant projects include:

- **Developing a new Ned Kelly Experience in the Old Beechworth Gaol.** This concept proposes moving (and expanding) the excellent and extensive Ned Kelly collection of objects, artwork and artefacts currently exhibited in the Ned Kelly Vault in the Sub-Treasury building of the Beechworth Historic Precinct to the Old Beechworth Gaol. Kelly, his family and associates had strong links to the Gaol. He served six months behind bars there in 1870/71 and his mother Ellen and several associates including the 'Gentleman Bushranger', Harry Power, also spent time there. The new *Ned Kelly Experience* concept recommends enhancement of the Vault collection with immersive, contemporary experiences including a theatrette space and AR/VR technologies. The Gaol also has the space and capacity to accommodate visual art exhibitions, music performances and film screenings as well as debates and discussions that would keep the Kelly Story alive both now and into the future as a major national and international focal point for cultural tourism in Beechworth.
- Paired with this would be a **Beechworth Courthouse Activation**. Also located in the Historic Precinct, this concept would create a high quality, immersive, digital interpretation of the Kelly Gang and family's real-life trials and experiences at the Courthouse. The experience would be based on audio-visual projections and recreations, culminating in a powerful digital experience of Ned Kelly's committal hearing to stand trial for murder.
- A new concept for a **striking, architecturally designed tower in the centre of Glenrowan** equipped with state-of-the-art virtual and augmented reality technologies. The tower would provide a much-needed focal point for viewing the town's famous historic locations including the site of Ned and the Gang's 'last stand' with police. It would also frame different perspectives of the Glenrowan landscape, providing an elevated vantage point from which to view the places that were pivotal to the Ned Kelly story. Each landscape would then be enhanced with Virtual

Reality (VR) overlays, accessed via VR viewfinders bringing the stories to life for visitors. Added to this would be an augmented reality offering, an interactive map located within the tower and other audio elements triggered as visitors enter certain areas.

- **Augmented reality would also be used to bring the actual Siege Site to life**, in an immersive experience controlled by visitors using their own mobile devices to explore the intricacies of the stories of each of the characters who took part in the Siege as well as the actual place it happened.
- **Expansion of the Benalla Art Gallery** to accommodate a new exhibition space for significant Kelly artefacts and artwork to form a new permanent curated exhibition which delivers a professional, engaging and accessible Kelly tourism experience. The new space would be further complemented by the installation of Kelly-related public sculptures in the picturesque lake precinct and gallery surrounds.

The *Ned Kelly Alive - Concept Development & Business Case* also considered other tourism product ideas including sites across all areas with ties to the life and times of Ned Kelly with recommendations that these would be addressed as report findings were adopted in future. The combination of all the products highlighted in the report would lead to a greatly strengthened drawcard to the region for the cultural and heritage tourists inspired by this time in Australia's history.

In addition, the report recommends substantial investment in region-wide marketing and promotion of the story including interactive mapping and a new app which would link the sites, stories and perspectives of the Kelly story.

Tourism North East invites interested tourism operators to review the report and contact TNE for advice/ support on how the findings could be applied to their own businesses.

The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

For more information contact Tourism North East, 03 5728 2773.

SEE ATTRIBUTABLE QUOTES BELOW

Attributable quotes:**Jenny O'Connor, Mayor, Indigo Shire**

Indigo Shire Mayor Cr Jenny O'Connor has welcomed the Ned Kelly Alive Report today:

"The Ned Kelly story is such a big part of our history and it attracts many visitors to the region every year. Beechworth is also home to the most significant collection of historic buildings connected to the Kelly story in regional Victoria."

"We welcome the recommendations in the Ned Kelly Alive Report, including a proposed expanded Kelly Experience at the Old Beechworth Gaol and Beechworth's Historic Precinct Courthouse 'Kelly Trials' concept."

"It is exciting to see two concepts proposed for Beechworth; it recognises Beechworth's existing Kelly credentials and collection as well as future tourism opportunities," Cr O'Connor said.

Amber Gardner, CEO, Tourism North East:

Tourism North East CEO Amber Gardner today welcomed the report. She said the project provided "clear strategies and pathways for stakeholders to develop the Ned Kelly story into a coherent, exciting, contemporary cultural tourism offering."

She said "it takes an an objective look at the current Ned Kelly tourism offering and removes the often polarising 'hero or villain' lens, with recommendations aimed at providing an immersive cultural heritage experience that would let visitors make up their own minds about Ned Kelly, his life and times."