

# Restored grave of city benefactor unveiled

THE restored grave of Ballarat benefactor James Russell Thomson was unveiled on Thursday, almost 90 years since it was last tended to.

Ballarat mayor Judy Verlin unveiled the grave, which was attended also by members of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical

Gardens, who instigated the restoration.

The grave is located in the Ballarat Old Cemetery and is historically significant to the city.

Thomson was a Scottish miner who arrived in the Ballarat diggings in 1852 and made his fortune from

gold mining. He is said to have played an active part in the events of Eureka.

When he died in 1886, he bequeathed £3000 to the Ballarat City Council to be spent on statues at the Botanical Gardens.

The garden's Statutory Pavilion and the statue of

Sir William Wallace stem from Thomson's legacy.

Thomson's trustees transferred money to council in 1891 to cover ongoing costs of maintaining the grave, but it has been in a state of disrepair for many years.

As part of the restoration,

the headstone lettering has been regilded, the cast railing repositioned, the marble vase mended and the monument cleaned.

Cr Verlin said the unveiling was an opportunity to celebrate Ballarat's history and pay homage to one of the city's great benefactors.



**GRAVE:** Ballarat mayor Judy Verlin and Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens' Jennifer Burrell and president Joan Garner.