



Gold samples discovered

LOUISE SHANNON

THEY'RE keen not to trigger any unwarranted excitement over the discovery of gold in the region just yet, but exploration company Impact Minerals has found "quite large samples" and encouraging signs of gold at Blackridge, 25km north of Clermont.

Impact Minerals managing director Dr Mike Jones said recent results in the second phase of bulk sampling from 12 trenches had shown "two unique geological features have combined at Blackridge" which could lead to further bulk sampling mining and the discovery of more gold.

Mr Jones said a large volume of very weathered oxide material, which was soft and easy to dig, contained gold and, secondly, it was "easily recovered" using simple gravity processing.

He said that while the gold was low grade, it could be cheap to mine and process.

The challenge now was to determine the overall grade of the gold found and look at options for larger scale sampling.

"We have one granted mining lease and four mining lease applications in progress that cover all this extensive area."

In the past, people have avoided taking large bulk samples as it was difficult to do, however at Blackridge the weathered rock breaks up easily making the process of recovering the gold easier.

"If you've got one nugget

that weighs 10 grams in a tonne of rock, that's 10 grams per tonne and very high grade for a mine," Mr Jones said.

"But the problem is you've got to mine a tonne of rock to find it.

"The bigger the nugget the bigger the sample you have to take.

Mr Jones said the area was currently closed off and the next phase of sampling, which was being discussed with specialist contractors, would determine the future for any small scale mining.

"We will be working on this for next 6-12 months," he said.

"This has certainly got a lot of promising merit in it and there's more than enough encouragement to go to the next step."