

# Fortuna's future is one step closer

FORTUNA Villa is likely to be ready for sale early next year, as the Department of Defence continues its thorough research into the iconic Bendigo property.

The doors to the former mansion of quartz king George Lansell were thrown open to the media yesterday ahead of tomorrow's public showing.

Inside awaited dozens of eclectically decorated rooms, breathtaking

By **NINO BUCCI**

stained-glass windows, and ornate ceilings.

The grounds are reasonably well maintained and the unique styling favoured by Lansell throughout the property rarely fail to amaze.

Several rooms — such as the conservatory — must simply be seen to be believed.

Department of Defence director of property disposals David French yesterday put a tentative date on the sale

of Fortuna Villa for the first time.

“There are a number of assessments to be done to understand the characteristics of the site . . . and that will take some time,” he said.

“Hopefully they will be finished by late December, but more than likely in the new year.

“They do take a long time to do and we want to make sure they are done properly.

“We anticipate the vast majority of them will be done in their first draft by Christmas.”

Mr French said the open day formed part of the community consultation being undertaken prior to the sale of the Villa.

He said other elements of the community consultation process were yet to be finalised.

“There's nothing established at this stage, we've had a number of consultation processes running through, particularly the heritage and environmental aspects of the site.

“But we don't have any-

thing else planned at this stage.”

Mr French said the City of Greater Bendigo has an important role to play in the disposal process of the property, which is yet to be valued.

“It has certainly been an interested party, and it is a key stakeholder.

“But it's sort of in the dark as well at the moment, it needs to understand the characteristics of the site as well, and we'll provide it with that information.”