

## Donald touted as zircon giant

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**ASTRON'S Donald mineral sands project in Victoria is laying claim as one of the world's largest zircon deposits after heavy mineral resources were bolstered by 15 million tonnes or 8% to a contained 194Mt.**

The upgrade followed the inclusion of drilling and subsequent re-modelling based on a 1%HM cut-off grade which pushed out volumes to just over 4 million tonnes at an average grade of 4.8%HM for a contained 194Mt, versus 179Mt previously.



Drilling at Astron's Donald mineral sands project in Victoria

"Based on available mineral assemblages data the deposit contains about 37Mt of zircon – sufficient for 30 years for total world consumption assuming a global demand for 2010 or 1.25Mtpa," Astron managing director Alex Brown said in a statement.

"The project's development to production is also urgently needed to meet serious looming raw material shortages."

Meanwhile, progress continues to be made at the property with a feasibility study continuing and a work plan submitted, covering the first five years of production, to the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, along with the initial phase of the cultural heritage plan.

Final government approval is dependent on the finalisation and acceptance of the heritage plan and a net gain offset management plan.

The company also purchased 699 hectares of land in the mining area and basic designs for the four plants while discussions in terms of water supply continue.

The proposed processing plants will capture the fine-grained mineral sands from the deposits and include a mining unit, a wet concentration plant, a concentrate upgrade plant and a mineral separation facility.

In the company's annual report, Brown said over the next 12 months the group planned to complete technical feasibility work at the property and secure financing.

Shares in Astron were unchanged on \$A2.85.

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