

Astron wins government approval to commence mining Donald mineral sands deposit

17 March 2009: Astron Limited (ASX:ATR) has received Commonwealth Government approval to mine and process fine-grained mineral sands at the Donald mineral sands deposit in western Victoria.

This notification comes after three years of consultation including the Victorian Minister for Planning, various stakeholders and regulatory authorities to fully assess the project's impacts and mitigation measures.

The site is 50km east northeast of Horsham in Victoria and first stage mining will commence in the northern section of the project area. DMS intends to export up to 500,000 tonnes of heavy mineral concentrate per annum to China for further refined processing and product manufacture.

Development Manager for Astron, Emma Vogel, said the approval gives DMS the green light to take the next major step in the project.

"This is a substantial milestone prior to production. Operations and environmental procedures will match world's best practice," said Ms Vogel.

"The project is one of the largest undeveloped zircon projects in the world and with Astron's advanced capabilities will see greater success than previous failed attempts to exploit these resources. The project is also expected to create 75 direct and 255 indirect jobs for the Wimmera community."

An Environmental Effects Statement (EES) was lodged by Astron in December 2007. The notification allows for the Donald Mineral Sands Project to proceed provided it follows the minister's recommendations which the company considers to be acceptable.

DMS owns exploration rights to the large WIM-style mineral sands deposits Donald and Jackson, about 240km northwest of Melbourne and 66km northeast of Horsham.

The Commonwealth Government decision comes with the provision that threatened listed species and communities are not affected by the mining activities, with approval effective until March 2034.

Enquiries:
Emma Vogel
Development Manager, Astron Ltd
(03) 53857088
Emma.vogel@bigpond.com

For personal use only



About Donald Mineral Sands (DMS) Pty Ltd

DMS is a 100% subsidiary of Astron Ltd and was formed after the successful acquisition of Zirtanium Limited in 2004.

DMS owns the exploration rights to the very large WIM-style mineral sands deposits, Donald and Jackson, located 240km northwest of Melbourne and 66km northeast of Horsham. DMS has delineated an area for development of the Donald Mineral Sands Project and is in the process of performing the required metallurgical, engineering and environmental studies to develop a large, low-cost and long-life mineral sands operation.

www.donaldmineralsands.com.au

For personal use only