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Grampians gold search as miners granted exploration licences

By PETER COLLINS Sept. 24, 2013, 4 a.m.

AT least six mining companies are keen to tap into potential multi-billion-dollar reserves of gold, silver, copper and other base metals under farmland near the Grampians.

Three new exploration licences have been approved by the state government since December and several other companies have applications pending or active.

All are interested in a geographical area known as the Mount Stavelly and Black Range volcanic complexes where research indicates significant deposits across an area including Ararat, Glenthompson, Tatyoon, Willaura and Stawell.

Indications show the region is part of a buried ancient magmatic arc, similar to the Andes with gold and base metal reserves.

Watchdog group Environment Victoria has cautioned about the flurry of exploration licences close to the national park and warned open-cut mining posed a risk to water resources.

According to a recent report by Department of Environment and Primary Industries, previous exploration has found "massive" sulphides, epithermal and porphyry copper mineralisation.

"An Andean-style arc and the possibility of associated gold and base metal mineralisation-styles that the modern Andes is famous for, is worthy of persistent exploration," the report says.

The department also points to promising untapped reserves in Victoria's north-west and east.

"Much of Victoria's original gold wealth came from nuggety reef gold deposits and placer deposits and statistics show that big new discoveries of both these types will occur again," the department says.

One mining company, the Queensland-based Diatreme Resources Limited, announced this month its subsidiary Chalcophile Resources had secured a five-year exploration licence at Glenthompson in the Mount Stavelly belt.

Its project has been estimated to be worth up to \$2 billion.

"Ground preparations are scheduled for late September to secure access for drilling to start later in the year when weather and ground conditions are more favourable," Diatreme's executive chairman Tony Fawdon said.

Slightly south-east of Glenthompson, Navarre Minerals has identified copper and molybdenum and is also planning test drilling for copper and gold on its other exploration tenements across 130 kilometres extending to Chatsworth.

Navarre also reaffirmed its commitment to apply for a gold exploration licence at Tatyoon adjacent to the Ararat goldfield.

Northern Platinum has acquired tenements to assess potential of known copper deposits between Glenthompson and Willaura.



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