

Tatyoon's golden prospect



TATYOON
By SAM SHALDERS

TATYOON could be the source of the region's next gold boom with Navarre Minerals commencing a drilling project this week in search of the precious commodity.

The project includes a reverse circulation and diamond drilling program totalling up to 2000 metres across a stretch of land about 1.5 kilometres long near Tatyoon.

The focus will be to collect samples for testing from an interpreted basalt dome structure deep below the surface, with studies suggesting the potential of mineralised sediments which lead to the formation of gold.

Navarre Minerals managing director Geoff McDermott said the exploration project should last three to four weeks.

"We are trying to have it all done before the cropping season begins, so we are working in with the farmers of the area to make sure we are off the ground and have everything tidied up before they start their operations," he said.

"We will be doing roughly 2000 metres of drilling over about 10 to 15 holes. Individual holes will be anywhere from about 60 metres deep through to about 300."

Mr McDermott said percussion drilling is a quick process which sees the equipment hammer through rock to the basalt dome where the sample will be collected and logged with geologists.

While Navarre Minerals is hoping to emulate similar grades of gold that have been discovered at Stawell, Mr McDermott ensured that this is not a mining project.

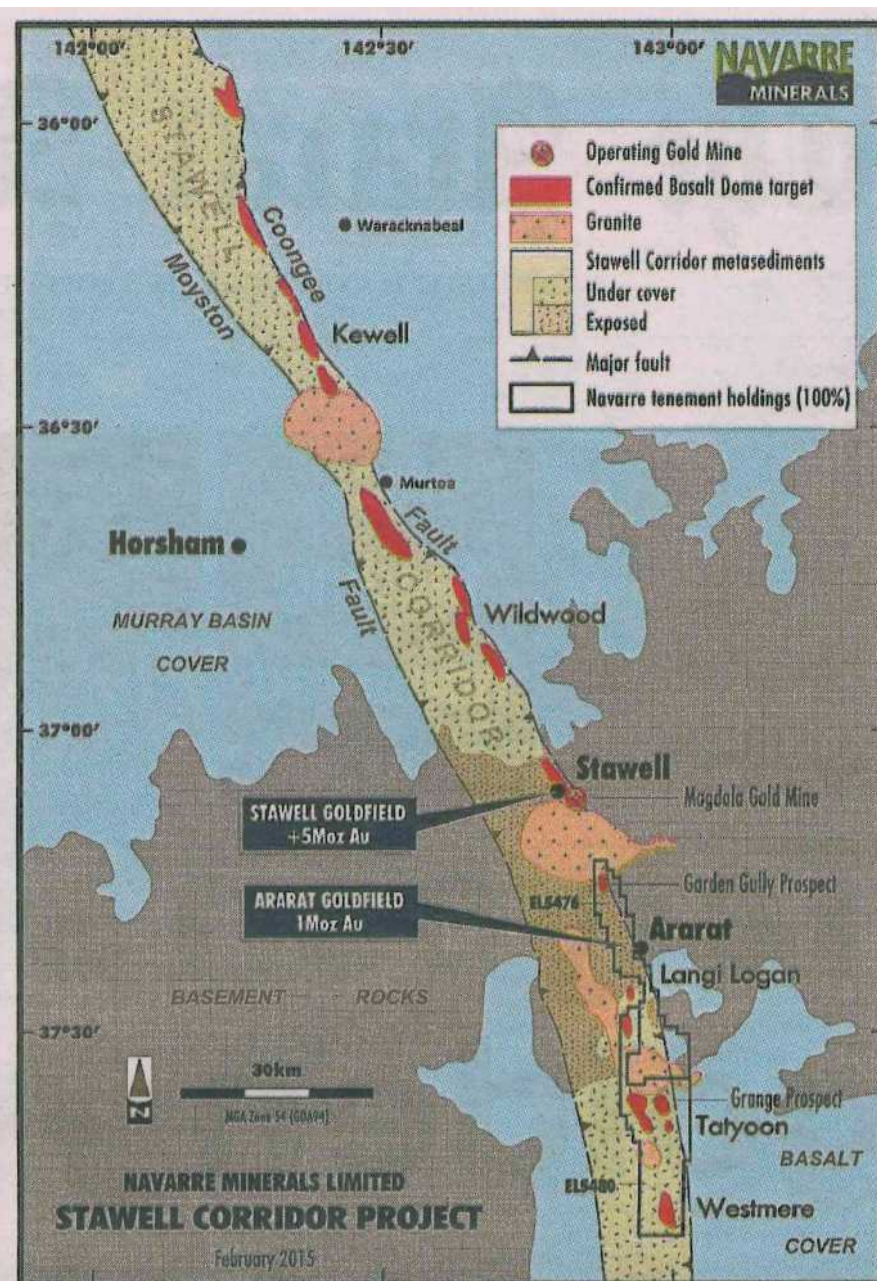
"We're not allowed to mine, we have an exploration license and our aim is to prove that there is or isn't gold in the rocks below," he said.

"We have done all the groundwork to believe that we have a target there. Stawell is the model that we have been using, the Magdala mine, and they are currently mining at roughly four grams of gold per tonne.

"So if we could see four grams over a distance of four or five metres down that would be pretty good. We are hoping to see not only the gold grade, but rock alteration, so minerals such as sulphide."

Navarre Minerals held a community consultation meeting last month where representatives informed local residents of the exploration procedure.

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Navarre Minerals diagram showing confirmed basalt dome targets in the region (highlighted in red) including at Tatyoon where drilling commenced this week.



Navarre Minerals' exploration manager Wess Edgar surveying the Tatyoon area.

Golden opportunity lies beneath Tatyoon

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If enough gold is discovered in the samples collected at Tatyoon that mining is warranted, one suggestion is transporting potential ore by rail or road to the Stawell Gold Mines for processing.

Mr McDermott said Navarre Minerals, based in Stawell, and landholders at Tatyoon had cooperated well during the testing phase and hoped that continued as drilling commenced.

"We had some really good discussions with the Tatyoon people and while they are concerned that exploration is going to lead to a mine, we have been able to allay a lot of their fears about what we are trying to do. We have been working very closely with one of the key landholders that we plan to drill on," he said.

"I think one of the important points is that Navarre Minerals is a local company that lives and works in the area. We are not from Perth or Melbourne, we are a part of the community and I think they take comfort from that fact and that our reputation means a lot to us.

"Without the landholder consent and them being happy, we can't do our business. That is what we pride ourselves on."

Ancient seafloor basalt domes are where elements in the Earth's crust are mineralised into gold.

A large section of Western Victoria, including Stawell and Ararat, sits along a major structure fault which houses a number basalt domes with potential gold in them.

Mr McDermott said Navarre Minerals was keen to explore a number of sites in the area to see what lies beneath.

"We have just been granted an exploration license that covers from Ararat to Great Western and we believe we have another couple of these types of targets (similar to Tatyoon) that sit around there, which we will be looking into over the coming weeks and months," he said.

"We are excited and have our fingers crossed. We call the drill rig the 'truth machine' and we are hoping that it comes up with some good results."