



MINING FOR NEW EXPORT

Export opportunities grow as work gets underway to extract versatile mineral from site near Bundy

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WHILE it's not gold, the region is on the cusp of a Eureka moment with the mining of the mineral ilmenite, set to boost exploration and export opportunity.

And ilmenite is just the beginning. The Port of Bundaberg will add ilmenite to its list of exports in the near future from a mine at the High Titanium Resources and Technology Limited site 80km south-west of

Bundaberg. HTL chief executive David Li said the whole tenement of HTL's Wateranga Project was 77.6sq km, with the mining lease granted on the 'Central' area, which is 15sq km.

At the early stage of the project only ilmenite will be mined, but the project is planned to develop into a multiple products project that will also produce zircon, rutile and magnetite.

According to Geoscience Australia, ilmenite is slightly magnetic, which means magnets can be used to

separate it from other minerals in sand deposits.

It can withstand extreme temperatures and is used in the steel industry to line blast furnaces.

The mineral's hardness also makes it useful as an abrasive and is the main source of titanium dioxide used in paints, fabrics, plastics, paper, sunscreen, food and cosmetics.

"Currently we are looking at 20,000t - 25,000t for each shipment, this could

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Ilmenite set to join list of exports from Bundaberg Port

Untapped potential

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be increased as the port develops," Mr Li said.

"Most of our downstream end users are from Asia, such as Japan, South Korea and China.

"Meanwhile potential domestic users have approached us, therefore we will probably supply the domestic market also."

Mr Li said they were planning to use local companies for the haulage.

Having received proposals from a few companies, who transports ilmenite to the Bundaberg Port will be determined in the future.

There is no processing of the ilmenite done on site and the extraction process of this project is "conventional and also simplified".

Mr Li said the process involved gravity and magnetic separation, which was very environmentally friendly.

Based on their study, 800ML water a year will be needed for the extraction process.

"The mine life of Central area is 15 years," Mr Li said.

"The lifespan of the whole project is estimated at 30-40 years, this includes the development of Northern and Southern areas of the project."

The first ilmenite export is expected in the second quarter of 2021.

Port of Bundaberg manager Jason Pascoe said Gladstone Ports Corporation had been investigating this opportunity for several years and was excited to see it coming to fruition.

"This will bring new trade opportunities for the region, use of the common user facilities being investigated by GPC and Sugar Terminals Limited and new storage facilities," Mr Pascoe said.

"The Goondicum mine in Monto is a potential option for the future."

"GPC proposed a vision in September 2019 that sets out priorities for how we develop the land and attract business and investment to make the most of the unprecedented op-

portunities offered by the next wave of globalisation, new energy and technology.

"The Port of Bundaberg is a hub for growth with 'green fuel' wood pellet exports set to double and growth in mineral exports from the region planned to commence this year, bringing jobs, economic growth and international trade for Queenslanders."

He said GPC was committed to exploring new opportunities for expansion at Bundy's port.