

Mediaportal Report

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▶ **150 E JOBS**

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150 NEW MINE JOBS

- Galaxy to employ local workforce
- Project to boost region's economy



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THE Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun communities are set to receive a boost after Galaxy Resources announced its Mount Cattlin mine workforce was expected to reach 150 by next month, with a major proportion of workers coming from Ravensthorpe and surrounding areas.

The lithium tantalum project, 2km north of Ravensthorpe, has started a four-month pre-strip mining project well ahead of schedule, guaranteeing a supply of mine ore for the Mt Cattlin processing plant during the third quarter of this year.

Galaxy Resources managing director Iggy Tan said both the company and mining contractor Orionstone Pty Ltd had worked diligently to implement all elements of a Business Readiness Plan and this had allowed mining to commence early.

"As well as a workforce expected to grow to 150 by April, there will be significant economic benefits to the

south-east coastal region," he said.

Just more than a year ago the Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun communities were left devastated after the shock closure of the Ravensthorpe Nickel Project meant more than 1400 local and fly-in, fly-out workers and contractors lost their jobs.

However, in the past few months the towns have emerged stronger and face a brighter future with a number of new mining projects opening the way for more jobs.

Ravensthorpe Shire president Ian Goldfinch said both towns were gearing up to service the new mines, but some were "still a little hesitant".

"Everyone is looking forward in a positive manner," he said. "This time we have three different mines, with three different deposits, meaning mining in the area is going to be much more solid in the future." Mr Goldfinch said the shire was also in a better position this time around.

"Infrastructure we were trying to get going is now in place and ready, so we are able to offer much better services in the towns," he said.

"Fortunately, we haven't lost any businesses; most of them have just hunkered down and were waiting for mining to return to the area."

With Galaxy Resources already renting housing in Hopetoun as well as a few mining contractors coming into the area, Mr Goldfinch said while it was early days yet, things were really starting to move forward for the communities.

Other mining projects set to start in the Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun areas include Tectonic's Phillips River, which is expected to start production by the middle of next year and First Quantum, which recently took over the Ravensthorpe Nickel mine and expects to have the project up and running successfully within the next two years.