

# Resource company ready to explore Herberton

By Andrew Molloy  
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PERTH-BASED exploration company Monto Minerals is set to start a \$5.2 million exploration program on its 532 square kilometre tenement holding at Herberton.

Monto has bought the Herberton tin project and Baal Gammon copper project from Conquest Mining for a cash payment of \$1.5 million, 300 million fully paid ordinary shares, 150 million options exercisable at 3¢ each on or before June 30, 2014, and a cash payment of \$1.5 million if a decision to mine Baal Gammon is made.

The deal was formalised at a meeting of Monto shareholders in Perth on April 28 and means Conquest will hold 23 per cent of Monto.

Monto Minerals believes it can utilise modern exploration techniques to analyse the site and turn it into a profitable mine for both tin and copper.

Monto Minerals executive director James Allchurch said: "We really like the area, we really like tin and we think the area that was originally put together by Don Walker just hasn't had the modern exploration that's warranted.

"It's modern techniques applied to an old tin field and the main point

is that previous to 2005 the tin field was made up of a lot of different sort of postage stamp-type size prospecting licences of less than a kilometre square."

There was a worldwide shortage of tin in 2010 with a deficit of 13,000 tonnes. The metal has traded at \$US31,875 a tonne and was the London Metal Exchange's best performing metal last year.

Monto said the shortage was caused by a lack of new mines worldwide, especially in Indonesia, and a decline in production in Indonesia.

The annual consumption of tin is about 350,000 tonnes and it is mainly used in lead-free tin solders. Monto said there was "new and growing demand for tin from the electronics industry".

The Baal Gammon copper deposit was mined between 1967 and 1983 and Monto believes mining could restart with six months once all approvals are in place. Monto is primarily interested in the potential for a tin mine on the site and may not establish the copper mine itself.

Mr Allchurch said Herberton was an ideal place to explore with many of the limitations of remote mining sites absent.

"The field itself is high-grade tin,



Monto Minerals executive director James Allchurch at the Herberton exploration site

infrastructure is good, it's not remote, it's within a 10-15 minute drive in most instances from Herberton town, roads are good, there's power all over the place, there's no problems with water.

"It's a great venue any way you look at it for exploration."

The company's presentation to potential investors sums up the reasons for pursuing the exploration of the area: "record tin prices with tight supply", "the Herberton tin field is a proven producer first consolidated in 2005", "a range of high grade drill-ready tin targets".

The Baal Gammon copper project is "development ready" with "good potential for satellite deposits".

Mr Allchurch is at pains to point out that the project is in its very early stages and world events including a slowdown in China, movements in currency prices and other factors could affect the dynamics of the operation. It is too early to talk about potential employment in the region or any benefits to local businesses.

Mr Allchurch will move to Herberton with his wife to oversee the project and the company has taken over an office site established by Conquest,

which he points out explored the site but did not move into production.

Monto is also committed to using local suppliers and workers.

"Tin is pretty hot at the moment in terms of commodity prices and we've raised a bit of money and we are going to spend it locally there. We want to keep local involvement as much as possible."

"In 2005 it (the site) was amalgamated and consolidated into the big exploration permits that we have bought. So the opportunity exists to explore the ground in a much broader fashion and approach the ground in a more wholesale fashion," Mr Allchurch said.

# Aged-care disaster looms over Tableland

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community care grants totalling \$66,587.

Blue Care declined to provide Mareeba Express with waiting list figures for Mareeba's Garden Settlement but confirmed the facility was full and there is a strong demand for occupancy.

Next month, Blue Care will begin refurbishment of the Mareeba Garden Settlement which will include the creation of a 16-bed wing for the care of people with dementia.

"The current level of demand in Mareeba suggests there is a need for more residential aged-care services and Blue Care, a not-for-profit provider, is refurbishing Mareeba Gardens, which will help to increase bed numbers in the area," Mrs Batten said.

Mareeba Express contacted Queensland Health for comment about what effect providing beds for people awaiting aged-care placements had on the Mareeba Hospital.

No comment was forthcoming but

DoHA said the Federal Government would provide \$13.5 million over two years to assist long-stay older patients in public hospitals who no longer require acute or subacute care and are waiting for residential aged care.

"This will improve the capacity for public hospitals to provide more age-friendly services, reduce inappropriate hospital admissions, improve inpatient services and improve the transition to appropriate long-term care," the spokesperson said.

"From July 1, 2011, the government is also providing additional funding of \$280 million over three years to assist state and territory governments with the costs of caring for older people who are in public hospitals, awaiting an aged-care place or package."

In 2009, the TRC released the report Aged Care in the Tablelands Region, which included feedback from 2605 people aged over 65 years.

Cr Gilmore said a response rate of almost 50 per cent of that portion

of the population showed how concerned residents were about aged-care services.

"A 50 per cent hit rate is extraordinarily high for a survey. Usually if you get 15 per cent you think yourself lucky. As a result of the response council has taken this issue very seriously indeed," he said. "There is only so much we can do at a local government level and we've done the work and put it in the hands of the people who can make changes. It is now up to them."

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