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Page 1 of 1

# Aboriginal jobs a priority for miner

**Josh Chiat**

The owner of a proposed mineral sands mine on the northern tip of the Eucla Basin says it will prioritise employment and training opportunities for a remote Goldfields Aboriginal community if the project is approved.

Diatreme Resources is chasing Chinese partners and funding to develop the Cyclone zircon project on the South Australian border after releasing a definitive feasibility study estimating it will cost \$135 million to develop an operation

with a mine life of 13.2 years. It is hopeful major Chinese companies will see the project as an opportunity to fill a deficit in the market for the material, which is used in technology applications and ceramics.

The mine site is about 130km south-east of the remote Aboriginal community of Tjuntjuntjara, and Diatreme Resources chief executive Neil McIntyre said 100-120 people would be engaged in the mine's construction, with 60-80 employed during operations.

He said the company would set targets on providing training and employment opportunities to people from the community.

Cyclone is subject to a native title agreement between Diatreme and Tjuntjuntjara's Spinifex people.

The community, about 650km east of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, counts art and landcare among its main industries.

"We're definitely looking at a preferred employment program," Mr McIntyre said.

"We'll be looking to train people from Tjuntjun and the traditional owner group to get involved directly in the project. There would be spin-off businesses too we'd be looking to get them involved in.

"Well before we open we'd be looking at doing some pretty extensive training programs to make sure they have the skills required for employment at the mine as

well."

Mr McIntyre said he remained confident Diatreme, with a market capitalisation of just \$28 million, would be able to meet its target of making an investment decision on the mine by the first quarter of 2019.

"I think we acknowledge that given our small balance sheet we'll be looking to bring in development partners," he said.

"Our ownership of the project will dilute but we see that as an acceptable outcome to see potentially a very large mine developed."

Diatreme is bidding to be the second junior mineral sands miner to emerge in Western Australia in the coming years, with Sheffield Resources expecting to begin construction of its \$350 million Thunderbird project near Derby early in 2019.