

## Pilbara lithium deposit upgraded

Ben Harvey and Jarrod Lucas - The West Australian on July 12, 2016, 2:19 am

**Ken Brinsden-led Pilbara Minerals believes it is sitting on the second-biggest lithium deposit in the world after yesterday announcing the resource it controls in the North West is 60 per cent larger than estimated.**

Pilbara Minerals is seizing on the upgrade of its Pilgangoora tantalum-lithium project to next month push ahead with the definitive feasibility study which Mr Brinsden says will pave the way for mining the 3.89 million tonnes of lithium carbonate equivalent at the site.

“Pilgangoora has all the attributes to become a low-cost, long- life producer,” Mr Brinsden said in a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange.

Lithium is a key component in new-generation batteries. There are 40 companies chasing deposits in WA. The purity of the Greenbushes operation, 250km south of Perth, makes it the world’s biggest lithium deposit.

Tawana Resources joined the lithium race yesterday with former Perseus Mining boss Mark Calderwood installed as chief executive to explore prospective ground in the Goldfields. Tawana shares surged 93.54 per cent to a nine-month high of 6¢ after emerging from a trading halt.

Mr Calderwood said the lithium boom “still has some legs in it”, though many lithium exploration stocks were overvalued.

He said Australia had room for fewer than 10 producers of the super-charged commodity.

Tawana’s Yallari project is on adjoining tenements to the Mt Marion lithium mine, 40km south-west of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. Yesterday, Mt Marion co-owners Neometals and Mineral Resources released a feasibility study described as a major step towards commercialisation of their patented ELi process.

Neometals boss Chris Reed said the technology converted spodumene concentrate into a lithium chloride solution, then used electrolysis to produce lithium hydroxide and carbonate.

The feasibility study claimed it would cost \$US158 million to build a processing plant, achieving payback within 2.6 years and generating \$US4.04 billion revenue over its 20-year life.

Shares in Neometals were 7.69 per cent lower at 42¢, while Mineral Resources gained 2.43 per cent to \$9.25.