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Tawana set for lithium production

Josh Chiat

The Goldfields lithium boom is showing no sign of slowing, with a fourth local player insisting it could have a mine commissioned by the end of 2017.

Yesterday, Mark Calderwood's Tawana Resources announced it had started a feasibility study on its Bald Hill lithium mine near Kambalda, targeting commissioning by October.

It has contracted plant engineering company Primero Group, which was involved in the commissioning of Galaxy Resources' Mt Cattlin lithium mine near Ravenshorpe, to undertake the study with a one million tonnes a year processing plant at its centre.

Galaxy Resources recently exported its first concentrate from Mt Cattlin, while the Mt Marion joint venture between Mineral Resources, Neometals and Ganfeng is expected to send off its first

shipment within days. Martin Donoghue's Kidman Resources anticipates entering production at its Mt Holland project before the end of the year as well.

Tawana, which raised \$7 million in October to fund the study, expects to have it completed by the end of the March quarter, along with a maiden resource and reserve statement; the award of a construction contract; metallurgy test work; and shortlisting of off-take partners.

Mr Calderwood said the company was "well-positioned" to become a producer by the end of the year, having only moved into the space in July.

"The company continues to be well positioned to become a spodumene producer in 2017," he said.

"The company is also fully funded to complete the feasibility study; detailed design; any deposits required for long lead capital

items; and the ongoing resource and exploration drilling."

Tawana entered a joint venture and farm-in agreement last year to earn up to 50 per cent of Singapore-listed Alliance Mineral Assets Limited's Bald Hill tantalum mine, 50km south-east of Kambalda.

Under the terms of the agreement, Tawana is required to spend a minimum of \$7.5 million on exploration and \$12.5 million in capital expenditure to upgrade the Bald Hill tantalum processing plant.

Tawana stock jumped 0.5¢ or 3.57 per cent to 14.5¢ yesterday.