



Potential for Poochera site

DEMAND for ceramics and increasing premium prices for one of the key kaolin minerals will prove to be among the main future drivers for the development of a high grade kaolin project near Poochera.

Speaking at the Paydirt 2018 South Australian Resources and Energy Investment Conference in Adelaide late last month, Mi-

notaur Exploration executive director Tony Belperio said other key factors included the potential of the project to produce high purity alumina and the halloysite component to act as a speciality strengthening additive and as a natural nanotube, competing against more conventional carbon-based nanotube projects.

The project will benefit the Kaolin-Halloysite deposit near Poochera, subject to a

recent joint venture between Minotaur and Andromeda Metals, which already has a measured resource of very high quality and bright kaolin which is widely used in ceramics and new battery technologies.

“Recent marketing by Andromeda has confirmed increasing demand in China

for Poochera’s halloysite kaolin,” Mr Belperio said.

“In addition, a high halloysite product is currently commanding a significant price premium over conventional kaolin.

“Selective mining at Poochera offers the opportunity to service different market segments including those for a high halloysite product.”

Mr Belperio said this demand was coming from the premium porcelain, ceramic, catalytic converter and strengthening filler applica-

tions in the polymer, board, mortar and cement markets.

Referring to the project’s high purity alumina (HPA) potential, Mr Belperio said smelter grade alumina was fetching about \$400 per tonne, with HPA pushing that to \$6000 a tonne, while

super high purity HPA was attracting an even higher price, ranging from \$23,000 to \$50,000 per tonne.

“The new era battery market is fuelling this HPA demand,” he said.

He also pointed to emerging demand for halloysite nanotubes instead of carbon nanotubes in a range of commercial and future energy related applications.