



**Adelaide Advertiser**  
**27-Aug-2010**  
**Page: 13**  
**Edition Changes - Metro**  
**Market: Adelaide**  
**Circulation: 180853**  
**Type: Capital City Daily**  
**Size: 174.87 sq.cms**  
**MTWTFS-**

# Mine start of a new era

BUSINESS  
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A CHINESE millionaire, an enterprising Aboriginal group, mineral explorers and supportive government agencies have combined to unlock a new chapter in South Australia's economic history.

**IMX Resources'** Cairn Hill mine, 55km southeast of Coober Pedy, officially was opened yesterday – the first new iron mine in more than 100 years outside OneSteel's operations in the Middleback Ranges near Whyalla.

Cairn Hill signals the start of a new era. IMX is the first group of small mining companies which will open up iron ore deposits on Eyre Peninsula and the Far North for export to Asia.

“We have created a unique partnership between busi-

ness, government, traditional peoples, local communities and Chinese partners,” managing director Duncan McBain said. “This exciting project is on track for commencement of shipping in the final quarter of this year.”

IMX aims to export 1.7 million tonnes a year of ore through Port Adelaide. Mainly magnetite iron but including copper and gold, it will generate revenue of \$160 million to \$170 million at current prices.

Mr McBain said a \$49 million investment by Sichuan Taifeng, headed by entrepreneurial chairman Song Yuangang, had been essential to the project, especially with banks freezing credit in the global crisis.

Chairman of the Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation David Brown said Aboriginal people did not like to see the earth being ripped open but could see the

positives.

“It creates a lot of work and benefits for young people,” he said.

About 160 jobs will be created in mining services and many more in services. “It's a real boost to Coober Pedy and that's the case around the state (with mining projects),” Premier Mike Rann said. “It's the multiplier effect.”

Cairn Hill will pay about \$3.9 million a year in royalties.

Mr Song, a self-made multimillionaire who heads a group involved in property, education, trading and media, said he was keen to invest in SA.

“Investment in the mining sector is part of my business,” he said.

“I'm also looking for other businesses such as wine-making and tourism.”

On Tuesday, Mr Song inspected a couple of wineries near Adelaide with a view to possible investments.