



9

PRIME MINISTER

7/93

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP MOUNT TODD GOLD MINE

I welcome today the final go ahead for Zapopan NL's Mount Todd gold mine near Katherine in the Northern Territory.

Environmental clearance for the project was confirmed today by Minister Ros Kelly. It follows last Friday's historic agreement between Zapopan, the local Jawoyn Association, and the Northern Territory Government to resolve all outstanding land issues through a package that includes land, employment, and training incentives for the local Jawoyn people. The Commonwealth, although not a signatory to the deal, participated in its negotiation.

Today's announcement means that Federal and Territory environmental requirements have now been fulfilled. Together with today's foreign investment approval it means the path is cleared for development of the \$100 million mine that is expected to employ 200 people in the construction phase and 150 when operational.

Export earnings from the project are expected to be in the range of \$50 to \$100 million a year or up to \$1 billion over the life of the project.

Since it was proposed to the Federal Government in August, Mt Todd has benefited from the One Nation Major Project Facilitation arrangements administered by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Laurie Brereton. It is also expected to be eligible for the Federal Government's 10 per cent Development Allowance also announced in One Nation.

This mining project raised a number of complex and at times contentious environmental and aboriginal issues. That all issues were able to be effectively addressed is a credit to the cooperative spirit which prevailed in the project negotiations.

The resolution of aboriginal issues was achieved because of a willingness on the part of Zapopan and the Jawoyn to find ways to meet the legitimate desire of local people to benefit from the mine. The negotiated settlement shows that where there is a preparedness to sit down and consult on aboriginal issues, a cooperative approach to development is possible.

Despite all the issues involved in the project, government approvals were delivered efficiently and within the company's commercial time frame, as they were with the previously announced McArthur River and Chagcurs projects.

Yet in spite of this, the project was included in Dr Hewson's Fightback II mythical list of projects allegedly blocked by government approval.

CANBERRA
20 January 1993