

1. INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to summarise and evaluate all previous mineral exploration activity within the Natone Area and to assess its mineral potential. A programme for further exploration is recommended.

The study area, hereafter referred to as the Natone Area, comprises the western margin of the Mt. Black E.L. 1/62 south of the Pieman River (Fig. 1). The area extends westwards from the aerial ropeway between Williamsford and Rosebery and west and southwest of the gridded areas of Primrose Pyroclastics to the south of Williamsford. Thus rocks of the Rosebery Group, Crimson Creek Formation, Donah Quartzite and Slate and ?Dundas Group predominate.

Much of the area has been held under mineral lease since mineralisation was first discovered in the early 1890's. The original E.L. 1/62, extending only as far south as Moores Pimple, was taken out by E.Z. in 1962. The area south of Moores Pimple formed the eastern sector of E.L. 7/68 held by Texins Development from 1968 to February, 1974, when it was dropped. E.Z. immediately picked up this block as S.P.L. 132 but reduced it in November, 1974 to the eastern sector of 11km². S.P.L. 132 was incorporated into E.L. 1/62 prior to the signing of the Mt. Black 1/62 Joint Venture agreement between E.Z. and Getty Oil in April, 1978.

2. ACCESS

Vehicle access within the area is restricted to the Williamsford road, the tracks into drill sites near Natone Creek and on to the Colebrook Ridge, the track from Mt. Read towards Moores Pimple and logging tracks south of Moores Pimple. Because of rugged terrain and dense vegetation in most areas foot access is largely confined to the old Northeast Dundas Tramway on the south bank of the Ring River, the Moores Pimple track (east and west of Moores Pimple) and other minor old walking tracks. Creek traverses are possible.

3. MINING HISTORY

Mining activity in the Natone area dates back to the 1890's when numerous small mines were developed on silver-copper-lead veins. The mineralisation, locally referred to as "fahlore", comprised tetrahedrite-tennantite and chalcopyrite and was usually associated with pyrite and sometimes with arsenopyrite, jamesonite, galena, sphalerite and bismuthinite. The ore was worked primarily for the silver. These workings were mostly in the vicinity of the Ring River (see Fig. 9). The Fahlore Mine and the Ring River Valley Mine, both of which commenced operations in 1893, were the largest of these but production was not very great. The copper-pyrrhotite deposit on Colebrook Hill was first explored about 1896 but no great quantity of copper was mined and the workings were abandoned by 1909 although further mining was carried out between 1915 and 1917; no production is recorded.

Tin was mined from pyrite-cassiterite veins in the Olympic and Athenic workings on the western slopes of Colebrook Hill (Fig. 9). The presence of tin was first realised at the Olympic Mine in 1911 but no worthwhile ore was found and the leases were dropped after a number of years. Existing adits were