



Adelaide Advertiser

Tuesday 22/3/2011

Page: 36

Section: Business Journal

Region: Adelaide

Circulation: 190,665

Type: News Item

Size: 69.47 sq.cms.

Published: MTWTFSS-

Bin: 0000  
Brief: URANIUMSA  
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# Water into uranium

URANIUMSA is claiming a world first in extracting uranium from hyper-saline water.

The breakthrough, announced by UraniumSA Limited's managing director Russel Bluck, would help with the company's Mullaquana project southwest of Whyalla.

"The formation waters at our Blackbush prospect in the Mullaquana project area typically contain >30,000 parts per million (PPM) total dissolved salts (TDS) and this had been recognised since discovery as a potentially limiting factor," Mr Bluck told the Paydirt 2011 Uranium Conference in Adelaide.

"However, our test work with commercially available chelating resins

has established that they are able to extract uranium from saline solutions with loadings of up to 30 grams uranium per litre."

In existing in-situ recovery mining operations, conventional resins extract uranium from formation water with salinities in the range of 2000 to 10,000 PPM TDS.

"The problem of saline water has been a challenge for some Australian uranium projects because of the intolerance of conventional resins to the chlorine in the water," Mr Bluck said. The results were achieved after collaborative research with international and Australian suppliers of special chemicals used to help extract uranium.