Andrea Johnston

**Focus switch away from Chandler mine project**

Justin Raymond

THE company behind the $676 million Chandler salt mine planned for Central Aus-

tralia says it is going to redirect its focus and give first priority to its proposed Sandy Ridge Western Australia project.

Tellus Holdings group managing director Duncan van der Merwe, pictured, confirmed his company’s change of focus was from the Chandler project to Perth’s Sandy Ridge at the Central Australian Regional Mining seminar held at Alice Springs’ Double Tree

Hotel on Monday. Both pro-

jects have received Environment Protection Authority recommendations with work expected to begin on the Sandy Ridge dual kaolin (clay) mine and waste facility in August this year, while Chandler awaits further key milestones to be cleared.

Mr van der Merwe said: “We started the Chandler project with the view of it being our main project, our flagship project, but the smaller project has leapfrogged this one.” Mr van der Merwe said. Success-

ful companies don’t wait for the grass to grow. We now have three other projects in the pipeline, so I wouldn’t like one of those three to jump over this one again.”

He said focusing on Sandy Ridge will have an overall ben-

efit when it comes time to begin work on Chandler, 120km south of Alice Springs, which he hoped would be by 2020.

“Most of the Thursday afternoon was devoted to talk on the topic of nuclear waste, with presentations from a range of local experts, while the Mining Services Expo in the next room allowed local businesses to showcase how they could support the mining industry.”

“Tellus’ project is considered controversial as it not only in-
cludes a salt mine, but also a storage component for hazard-
ous waste. But Mr van der Merwe stressed at the seminar that nuclear waste would not be stored at Chandler.”

We’re not taking nuclear waste, contrary to some re-
ports in the local media,” he said. “We are predominantly taking chem waste – oil, gas mining and heavy industry.

“Here in the NT an example is asbestos.”

He added the Chandler pro-

ject could see local business benefit as $260 million of the $676 million could stay in Alice Springs during the build phase.

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