



HILLS HOPE

High grade find 'quite exciting'

By Craig Brealey

The Red Hills on the Menindee road rise so suddenly on otherwise fairly flat land that they have long attracted interest.

First it was from the prospectors, then the artists and filmmakers and now the rock hounds are having another look.

About six weeks ago Impact Minerals Ltd announced that they had found the highest grades of platinum group metals ever recorded in Australia, about 20 kilometres north-east of the hills.

Yesterday the company revealed another surprise; high grade silver, lead and zinc in among the roller coaster hills themselves.

Broken Hill's Line of Lode is famous among exploration companies everywhere and the search for at least something like it near the city has never ended.

There would have been about 100 strikes within a 10 kilometre radius of the Silver City, Dr Mike Jones, the managing director of

Impact Minerals, told the BDT yesterday.

But Dr Jones described the latest results from the company's drilling in the hills, about 15 kilometres from town, as "quite exciting".

"What is unusual is the thickness of the zone intersected. It's 60 to 80 metres thick and we have had some very high grade zinc/silver results," he said.

A one metre-deep drill hole gave a result of 26.8 per cent zinc, 2.8 per cent lead and four ounces of silver.

At 27 metres down it was 2.46 per cent zinc with correspondingly smaller percentages of the other minerals.

In reporting the results to the Australian Stock Exchange yesterday, Impact Minerals described them as "extremely encouraging for the discovery of a significant silver/zinc deposit".

"In particular, the mineralisation may represent a halo to a larger massive zinc sulphide deposit."

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Dr Jones said more drilling was planned and that they hoped to do another hole before Christmas.

It takes a long time to get a mine up to the point where it can be shown to be worthwhile and then there is the long process of getting the permits from the government.

“It’s early days but if we are fortunate enough to find something I’m sure we’ll get very good local support to fast-track it,” Dr Jones said.

“The minerals are quite close to the surface so it might start off as a small open cut and we’ll see how it goes from there.”

This week Impact will also resume

the search at its Platinum Springs prospect, where the top grade nickle/copper/platinum deposit was reported in late October.

“Between that and Red Hill we’ve had a successful few months,” said Dr Jones.

Copper and platinum was mined in the Red Hills between 1906 and 1936.

The area is marked with shafts and diggings and in 1981 the unusual hills drew the attention of the producers of Mad Max 2.

They built an earthen ramp, still there today, from which they launched some of the movie’s spectacular motorbike stunts.