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## **Earth moves for Lucas in SA mining rush**

Adelaide's Lucas Earthmovers Pty Ltd is again looking to expand after a period of rapid growth fuelled by the local mining boom.

Lucas has won a large civil engineering contract to prepare infrastructure for Iluka Resources at the huge Jacinth Ambrosia heavy mineral sands deposit in the far west of the State.

The contract includes building a 92km access road from the Eyre Highway, a 2.2km airstrip and underground services for the mine township to carry power, water and sewage.

General manager Ben Lucas said recent mineral discoveries across South Australia were starting to pay dividends for heavy industry in the State. Lucas is currently involved in mining earthworks worth about \$80 million.

"The State Government has been flagging a mining boom for some time and local companies like ours are now beginning to notice the flow through from recent discoveries and mining approvals," Mr Lucas said.

"We've spent the past 18 months undertaking major civil works for OZ Minerals' Prominent Hill copper-gold mine and have also been involved in the Cairn Hill iron ore project near Coober Pedy."

Over the past five years the South Australian-owned business has quadrupled in size from about 50 employees to well over 200. The mining boom, earthworks for the Air Warfare Destroyer project and the company's involvement in the Cape Jaffa Marina Development are all playing a part in the growth.

Mr Lucas said the Jacinth Ambrosia mineral sands mine was another major project for his company that would require further expansion.

Iluka Resources is spending up to \$420 million in developing its mineral sands mine, with mining and processing scheduled to begin by mid 2010. A feasibility study at the Jacinth Ambrosia site indicates this is one of the largest zircon deposits in the world.

Lucas joint project manager Nick Matthews said the civil works contract would take about eight months to complete.

“We’ll need to hire about 20 experienced and unskilled workers for the Jacinth Ambrosia mine and we hope to recruit from the Ceduna area and the local indigenous community,” he said.

“We’ve already started preparatory work at the Jacinth Ambrosia site, which includes building temporary accommodation for our workforce.

“As well as the need to hire experienced supervisors and operators, we will also be providing in-house training for skilled and unskilled workers.”

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