

**ASX Release**

**MARKET UPDATE**

**BRISBANE, Australia 5 December 2011:**

**Aston Resources Ltd (ASX: AZT)** today announced that it has had discussions with Whitehaven Coal Limited (ASX: WHC) regarding a confidential, incomplete, non-binding merger of equals proposal.

No agreement has been reached in relation to the proposal and there is no guarantee that agreement will be reached or that a transaction will eventuate.

Aston remains committed to its stated strategies and growth of the company on a standalone basis. However, the Aston Board continues to explore other alternatives available to it to maximise value for Aston shareholders.

Aston has made this announcement in the interests of informing its shareholders and the market, in light of recent speculation in this morning's press. Aston will make a further announcement in the event of any material developments.

**Further information:**

**Media inquiries**

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**Investor inquiries**

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General Counsel & Company Secretary  
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**ABOUT ASTON**

Aston Resources owns 85% of the Maules Creek Project. Maules Creek is considered to be one of only few remaining "Tier-1" undeveloped coal assets in Australia. Maules Creek is located in the Gunnedah Basin of New South Wales.

Maules Creek's production mix is expected to comprise a majority of metallurgical coal and a premium, low ash, export thermal coal.