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# Plan to mine silica in SW

By **SEAN FORD**

A MINING explorer hopes to mine silica in the South-West Conservation Area.

If Kingston-based Macquarie Harbour Mining goes ahead, it may be the start for Destination Strahan chairman Mike Fry's idea of mining access opening the inaccessible wilderness area as a major tourist drawcard.

MHM said this week it recently acquired a new exploration area with "significant potential" for exploitation of a known quartzite silica deposit at Cape Sorell.

"This is a promising new development for MHM, building upon the company's philosophy of short to medium-term income-generating projects that will offset further exploration of enduring targets on Tasmania's West Coast," managing director Frank Rogers said.

Quartzite is used for plasma



and LCD television screens, in electronics, solar panels, some paints and glass products.

MHM said it was doing market research on a plan for production capacity and had started marketing the silica locally and into Asia.

It said there were early indications there would be commercial interest, although the project's economic viability would largely depend on a suitable agreement.

It said the area had easy

access to Strahan via boats or barges, allowing transport of workers and equipment.

"The company has identified several sites that show potential to establish a port to load silica onto ships," it said.

"Alternatively, 'ore' can be barged or pumped into Strahan and trucked or trained (sic) to Burnie."

Mr Rogers said: "The silica project will become one of the primary projects on the West Coast and we anticipate (test) drilling to commence in the upcoming field season (October to April).

"Until this time, the company is busy progressing the gold and tin programs in the North-East of Tasmania."

Comalco explored the quartzite silica in the mid-1970.

MHM has reviewed its reports from the time.