

Alliance a winning formula at Tropicana

Having shared goals is a key principle behind the Tropicana Gold Mine Alliance between mining contractor Macmahon and AngloGold Ashanti Australia. This is achieved by integration of the team, alignment of goals and agreed accountabilities.

Working as a team, AGAA's Mine Geology and Mining departments, along with Macmahon, operate the open pit operation at Tropicana, which is currently centred on development of the Havana ore body.

Together, the Alliance team members were some of the first operational people to be permanently based at Tropicana.

First ore from Havana was extracted in February, only eight months after mining started in June last year, and five months since the first blast in September.

According to Manager: Mining, John Chow, the mining fleet at Havana – which comprises three primary excavators and 15 CAT 793F trucks – will extract around 60,000 cubic metres of rock each day. At the moment one CAT EX6040 excavator and five trucks are working, with the others being built and due to start mid-year.

Chow said blasting had been an early challenge, but this has since been overcome through the combined effort of the Alliance team.

The pit itself, when fully developed based on bankable feasibility study estimates, will reach a depth of 250 metres and span a length of about 2 kilometres.

However, this could change depending on the outcome of the Havana Deeps prefeasibility study which is examining the trade-off between open pit and underground development (see separate story on page 3).

The Tropicana deposit will be the next to be developed with stage 1 scheduled to start mid-year, once the additional mining equipment is mobilised to site, while Boston Shaker and Havana South have a five to six year development timeline.

Under the Alliance, which was formed in 2011 and is essentially a system of project management embodied in a legal contract, the parties have agreed to work together to deliver the project, while at the same time share any financial 'gain' or 'pain'.

Macmahon's rewards have been aligned with those of AGAA, but should the project objectives not be achieved, it has also agreed to take some of the risk, creating a win-win environment for both parties.

There are additional incentives for both companies and this has already led to the introduction by the Alliance Management Team of shared pre-starts, solar lighting, alliance workshops, shared seating areas, alliance promotions and senior meetings.

John said one undertaking that had also proven successful early on was shared risk assessments.

"This shared workshop identified a number of areas of opportunity in each area of accountabilities which we are now acting on," he said.

"Further initiatives include a common uniform, culture surveys and alliance culture development workshops."

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