

MAJORS CREEK MINE UPDATE

Shannon Green, General Manager Dargues Gold Mine brings us up to date

We're approximately 700m from the portal, so that's about 90 metres vertically underground.

The process plant construction kicked off this week. We've also started some work around the sediment dams for the longer term infrastructure. We're also working on infrastructure to support surface works such as office buildings and drainage. But the main work's on the process plant, underground and the sediment erosion controls.

The process plant is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year, with January 2020 the start of some pre-commissioning. By the end of March we should have a fully commissioned plant up and running.

I've been here eight weeks now, I have moved to Braidwood from Bendigo with wife and three kids.

We have currently got a workforce of around thirty people working for the Dargues Gold Mine. The majority of those people are local to the area, so they're either living in Majors Creek, Reidsdale, Araluen or Braidwood.

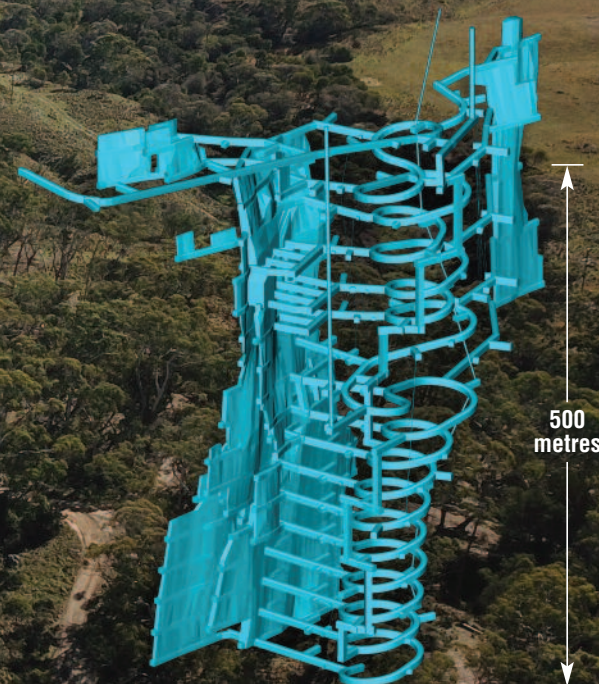
A lot of our workers are locals but those, such as myself, who moved to the region have faced a challenge find-

ing accommodation, but it is available if you know who to ask and where to look.

As the project goes on and we put on more staff it's going to become more challenging, but for now we've been able to find accommodation for the staff that are here.

In full swing we are looking to have an overall workforce of around a hundred people. So there are still a fair few families to come into the area, and accommodating those people is definitely one of our challenges going forward. But we are well aware of that and have been working on it nearly every day.

PART OF THE PYBAR TEAM.
SHANNON GREEN, KATIE MCCrackEN, CARA PATTON AND LEN SHARP.



THE MODEL [ABOVE] REPRESENTS THE PROPOSED TUNELLING. THE DISTANCE DOWN IS ABOUT THE SAME AS FROM THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS TO THE BWD OFFICE NEXT DOOR TO BRAG.



Based on the exploratory drilling that's been done up to now, we have a solid five-year mine plan. Our intention is to explore other areas around the current resource once we get suitable platforms underground. This drilling will test low-confidence resources that are not currently in the mine plan, the aim being to convert them into minable inventory. This is within the current underground footprint, what we can access from where we're working. We're not thinking about exploration outside of that footprint at present.

I am not saying that it might not be considered at some stage, but for now

we are trying to focus on what we are committed to and really improving the confidence of what we know is there. At present we are only running day shifts, there is no night shift. Each day we will aim to get at least one blast cycle. So that's involves drilling, charging, firing, bogging and then get in and re-support it.

We have more than one heading, or area of work, so these activities are cycling between these headings.

We're working down a one in seven grade, eventually getting to approximately 500 metres deep, so the decline itself will be a good part of three and half kilometres long.

The mining method is based on back-filling the voids that are created from extracting the ore, using predominantly cemented hydraulic fill. Part of the tailings from the process plant will be mixed with cement to create this cemented hydraulic fill.

We can then use this fill as a platform to conduct mining. The mine will be broken up into multiple sections and will basically be mined from the bottom of each section upwards. The backfill process will also use some of the waste rock that is generated with the benefit being that it lessens our footprint on surface.

Once the processing plant is commissioned and producing concentrate then we'll be in position to start exporting it. We've got some reasonably firm plans that it will go to Port Kembla. Exactly how that happens is to be finalised.

There are designated hours to do trucking in our approvals. There are two periods which align with the school bus run at the start and end of the day, where we won't be trucking. It's part of the traffic management plan that we had to have in place to minimise the impact of those logistics.

We actually will never see a gold bar. It's unlikely we'll even see visible gold underground.

It just not that sort of ore body. The gold is tied up with pyrite, and that's why it's amenable to the use of flotation to produce the concentrate. There are no nuggets and the ore looks no different to a lot of the rock we see underground.

The mine will source its power from the grid. Essential Energy have told us that there's a set grid allowance and we are working with them to upgrade the grid, at great expense to ourselves, to make sure that the amount we need is available.

I think it's important to recognise that we know there are options to the grid, in terms of power supply. We are all aware that renewables are growing and we need to see if there are opportunities for us to get involved with that. So we will evaluate that and if the opportunity arises, and it makes sense, it wouldn't surprise me that we will see something there.

We understand that those opportunities exist in terms of looking at what legacy we leave, knowing that the mine is a finite resource.

Editor's note: At the end of the interview I told Shannon that some locals are working towards community-owned renewable electricity for Braidwood. The criteria for finding land to put solar panels on are: A, that it's not used for anything else much, and B, it's close to a high-voltage power line. They've got both — and the mine is going to use bulk power, but not for ever. Watch this space.