Golden Deeps humming in Namibia

Since joining Golden Deeps Ltd as chief executive in May, Jon Dugdale is already seeing positive results coming from the company's refined approach to exploring its Namibian projects.

The first hole of a 1,000m diamond drilling programme at the Nosib deposit intersected high-grade copper from 6.4m downhole, with associations of lead and vanadium. Copper mineralisation went as deep as 12.3m from 5.9m. Handheld XRF readings on the drill core averaged 6% copper with peaks as high as 12.5%. Further mineralisation of copper-lead-vanadium was also spotted 45.7m downhole.

Dugdale said the results were "encouraging" as the programme aims to define and extend the shallow mineralisation along a north-easterly strike.

"That first hole made it pretty clear that we hit what we have anticipated as the shallow part of the shoot where it's projected to come close to surface," Dugdale told **Paydirt**. "We also anticipate significant vanadium and lead which is harder to get from the initial XRF readings."

The XRF readings are an encouraging taste for Golden Deeps at Nosib where previous results of 24m @ 1.33% copper, 4.77% lead, 1.37% vanadium and 3.67 g/t silver, and 29m @ 1.54% copper, 4.49% lead, 1.19% vanadium and 6.97 g/t silver have been returned.

A total of eight holes are planned for the programme, with three targeting shallow mineralisation and the remainder targeting copper, silver and lead below a deeply set vanadium supergene zone.

"We have had deep results up to 45m, including 0.7% copper," Dugdale said. "Also, some very high-grade zones of up to 4m @ 2.3% copper and up to nearly 23 g/t silver. The final five holes of the programme will be the deeper ones where we'll be looking for high-grade strata bound copper and silver."

Such deep opportunities are theorised to be similar to the Khusib Springs deposit 15km away.

The historic Khusib produced 300,000t @ 10% copper and 584 g/t silver from the 1990s and eventually closed in 2003. Part of Dugdale's philosophy at Golden Deeps is capitalising on opportunities left after Khusib closed so early into the century.

Khusib's existing decline is still accessible, but only goes down to 300m after intersecting with a fault structure, and historic drilling has intercepted mineralisation on the other side of it.

"We see the potential to do some deeper drilling there," Dugdale said. "We want to follow up on that mineralisation on the other side of the fault, which might be the top of another shoot and the previous grades indicate there would be an exceptional prize that is still relatively shallow as 300m is not very deep for an underground deposit."

Golden Deeps plans to first complete downhole geophysics at Khusib, but the details are yet to be ironed out. Drilling at Nosib is currently using a man-portable rig only appropriate for shallow drilling. Work at Khusib will therefore require the company to go back to the drawing board.

"We haven't finalised the planning of [Khusib], or the timing and we need to make sure that we first have the drilling capacity to do it properly," Dugdale said.

Assays from Nosib as drilling progresses are being prepared in Namibia and later finalised at Intertek's Perth headquarters. The company is using the two-pronged approach to work around the backlogged laboratories across Western Australia.

"It gives us a little bit of a head start," Dugdale explained. "The backlog in Perth labs is because of sample prepping. If we get that done in Namibia and then send it over, it can be only a matter of weeks to get the results.

"We will start seeing results fairly soon, at least from the initial hole. Then they'll keep flowing through the coming weeks and months."

Having completed assays from Nosib will also allow the company to define the size of the deposit and work towards a resource estimate.

"The initial focus will be the shallow resource which is the copper, lead and vanadium because we want to add to that, and we'll do some additional metallurgy as well," Dugdale said.

The metallurgical testing will aim to extract vanadium from the lead and copper before going into a solution for leach work. Similar work has already been put into motion at the company's Abenab deposit.

"That process is aimed at producing a high-value vanadium product as well as separating out the lead, copper and in Abenab's case, the zinc," Dugdale said.

"If we can get the shallow deposit at Nosib and the Abenab resource, we can get a clear pathway to how we can mine and process those to produce high-value copper. Both copper and vanadium, and now zinc, are commodities that are really benefitting from the EV battery demand which is projected to go exponential by 2030. Those commodities are right in the crosshairs of that market.

"We've now brought a focus to these projects, to define the deposits and to develop a coherent strategy to get into production, as well as finding major new high-grade deposits that will really get Golden Deeps humming."

– Fraser Palamara

The Nosib deposit in Namibia has been the company's focus under a 1,000m drilling programme, where the first hole intersected high-grade copper