

Bluebird on song for Tennant treble



Drilling started at Bluebird in September

Tennant Minerals Ltd has started drilling at the Barkly project – 45km east of Tennant Creek – to triple its potential resource ahead of an estimate early next year.

Drilling and IP surveying completed in July suggested open mineralisation on either side of Tennant's Bluebird prospect and prompted the company to embark on a 4,000m RC and diamond drilling programme.

Tennant is looking to shore up its understanding of Bluebird and will be releasing a maiden resource early in 2024, before pressing ahead with a scoping study.

"The first stage will be to put a resource estimate together," Tennant technical director Jon Dugdale said.

"We'll be drilling a couple of metallurgical holes this programme, which we can test for gold, copper sulphides, bismuth, cobalt and silver. That will allow us to generate a resource model we can put a scoping study around, looking at a standalone mining and processing project.

"The best deposits in the area are in the range of 4-6mt at about 4% copper and 3.5 g/t gold. That's the range we'd like to get to and we're about halfway there with the current drilling we've done."

In March this year, Tennant announced an intersection of 5.7m @ 49.4 g/t gold at Bluebird, having previously hit 30.5m @ 6.2% copper and 6.8 g/t gold.

Stage 3 drilling extended mineralisation to shallower depths within 60m of surface and increased the strike length to 500m.

Intercepts of 5m @ 38.6 g/t gold and 6.1% copper from 142.7m, including 2.25m @ 64 g/t gold and 9.57% copper led to the company defining drill targets to the east and west.

Dugdale confirmed the September drilling programme had run smoothly and said Bluebird was exceeding expectations.

"The 4,000m RC and diamond drilling is only one focus of the current programme," Dugdale said.

"The next key part of it is that we've outlined geophysical targets immediately along strike from Bluebird based on gravity measurements, IP and geophysics. This technique has defined a geophysical target which is three times as long as the current geophysical footprint.

"Previous RAB drilling indicated that the eastern part of that target could even be better than Bluebird. We will be drilling that target shortly and are confident we can double or even triple the footprint."

Shallow RAB drilling geochemistry at Bluebird East, which coincides with low IP resistivity and high gravity could indicate the prospect's potential to be developed into an open pit operation.

"The July phase found an extension to the east and the important part is it projects to within 30-40m of the surface, which means we could have an open pit," Dugdale said.

"We're trying to define that shallow resource zone so we can get the whole of Bluebird to the point where we could convert it to a maiden resource."

Dugdale said his confidence in Bluebird centered around the project's geology and IP surveys which confirmed the continuation of the prospect's thick ironstone anomaly over the potential strike length.

"Deposits in the Tennant Creek field, including Bluebird, are hosted by an ironstone, which is quite a dense and magnetic rock unit," Dugdale said. "These deposits are associated where mineralising structures intersect the ironstone."

"Previous intersections have been up to 30m @ 6.2% copper and 6.8 g/t gold, so if we can find another lode immediately along strike, then we could be looking at one of the larger deposits in the entire Tennant Creek field."

Major deposits near Barkly include Nobles Knob (1.1 moz @ 17.3 g/t gold), Peko (414,000oz @ 10 g/t gold, 147,000t copper) and Warrego (1.2 moz gold, 80,000t copper).

"The interesting thing about Warrego is that it was a deposit that hadn't been eroded at all, it was fully preserved and it went down about 600m," Dugdale said.

"Bluebird is similar in that it is completely preserved. Our footprint is telling us we're on to a big one and it's high grade."

– Michael Cameron