



Plymouth ready to ramp-up 'W' exploration in Spain

Thursday, 16 January 2014

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THERE has been no shortage of global hotspots in the past 12 months – both in terms of political unrest and exploration investment – but there are a few Australian juniors who have shunned the high-risk, high-return business model and gone in search of quality projects in quieter corners of the world.

Where are these prospective mineral fields in relatively benign geopolitical settings? Well, they tend to overlap places where the average punter may enjoy a holiday, places such as the United States of America, Europe, Canada and select parts of Latin America.

That is if you can't find a similarly prospective opportunity on Australia shores, or are driven to more exotic location to build your business.



ROM material being taken from Alegria stockpile.

These destination were reinforced as desirable places for explorers to invest in the 2013 World Risk Survey published by *MiningNews.net's* sister publication, *RESOURCESTOCKS*, in October.

One such company employing a similar strategy is Perth-based Plymouth Minerals, which has spent the past three months advancing its Morille tungsten-tin project in the Salamanca province of Spain after acquiring an 80% interest in October last year.

Plymouth – headed by managing director Adrian Byass and chairman Charles Schaus – acquired the project from AIM-listed Aurum Mining, which retains a 20% free-carried stake until decision to mine.

The benefits of not having to make the regular commute to the developing world to advance your project aside, Morille covers five contiguous exploration licenses covering 57sq.km in known tungsten-producing terrain, with the major Los Santos tungsten mine just 30km down the road.

Byass has a proven record in tungsten, as a founding director of Wolf Minerals, and when he caught up with *MNN* late last year he made his intentions clear – Plymouth was squarely focused on developing Morille into a low-cost, shallow, open pit tungsten mining operation within the next three years.

Previous production records show the project produced a high-quality tungsten concentrate prior to its close due to a significant downturn in the price of the metal almost three decades ago.

Byass said exploration had started on the project with fieldwork underway at Morille and plans for percussion drilling activity to start this quarter and diamond drilling next quarter.

He said the company had access to significant desktop exploration data including some limited historical drilling results; field mapping; analyses of exposed ore in pits; Spanish Geological Survey data; and a compilation of historical reports.

Based on this information, the company has composed an in-house, conceptual, tungsten-only exploration target in the order of 4-11 million tonnes grading between 0.25-0.5% tungsten.

Plymouth announced in December that metallurgical test work would be carried out on a 20t bulk sample of mineralised ROM material from the Alegria mine – within the Morille project area – transported to Perth for process testing.

The material was selected from the 2000t onsite stockpile at the Alegria mine, which was the largest historical mine in the Morille project area. Of the transported sample, 18t was crushed using a secondary crusher prior to shipment and 2t was left uncrushed.

The test work will be conducted to confirm the optimum operating conditions for each stage of the process and will include a comminution circuit to achieve the particle size required for downstream processing.

Byass said this process would also investigate a range of traditional gravity concentration techniques including dense media separation, spiral classifiers, cyclones and circular jigs.

He said froth flotation cells, magnetic separation and dewatering test work would also be completed to enable the design of the most efficient cost-effective process available.

"This is advanced stage work given the recent acquisition of the project and shows the benefits of a brownfields project," according to Byass.

Results of the test work are expected this quarter, while the company plans to take additional samples for tin process test work from upcoming diamond drilling program.

"This test work is designed to confirm historical documented concentrate specifications, construct a pre-feasibility level process flow sheet and also examine the possibility of creating a pre-concentrate that could be transported to other operations in the region."

Morille is well situated with access to excellent infrastructure with power, water and roads in close proximity.

"We believe these benefits are a great advantage to a junior company and cannot be underestimated."

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