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# Australia's Pavdirt

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# Spotlight pivots towards Saturn

The Saturn team, anthropologist and senior Traditional Owners of Apollo Hill undertook a heritage survey in August

Perhaps drawing inspiration from the unheralded planet which bears its name, Saturn Metals Ltd has quietly gone about its business this year without a great deal of fanfare.

While most of the headlines have favoured the likes of Chalice Gold Mines Ltd, De Grey Mining Ltd and Musgrave Minerals Ltd for the significant discoveries each has made amid a global health and financial crisis, Saturn has continued to churn out one impressive result after another from its Apollo Hill gold project, 60km south-east of Leonora.

The latest results include shallow intersections such as 6m @ 5.17 g/t gold from 47m, 3m @ 3.68 g/t from 89m and 7m @ 1.21 g/t from 114m in the hanging-wall position, as well as multiple high-grade hits in the main lode, including 7m @ 5.55 g/t from 286m (including 3m @ 12.1 g/t from 287m), 19m @ 1.06 g/t from 230m and 24m @ 1.02 g/t from 280m.

All of those results sit outside Apollo Hill's existing resource (24.5mt @ 1 g/t gold for 781,000oz) which is poised for an upgrade this quarter.

Since listing in early 2018 as a spin-out from Peel Mining Ltd, Saturn has arguably been the industry's quiet achiever. With recent and ongoing exploration success all but certain to convert into a plus-1 moz inventory at Apollo Hill, the question now is just how much longer the company continues to fly under the radar.

For Saturn managing director Ian Bamborough, the arrival of some-big name institutions on the company's register in recent times suggests the spotlight is now hovering near the Perth-based explorer.

"I think at the moment we're about 38% institutional...maybe 15 months ago we didn't have a single institution on the register, whereas now we have a number of large North American technical, long funds who have done their homework and come in to support us," Bamborough told **Paydirt**.

"We've got Dundee Corporation on the register for 10%, 1832 Bank of Nova Scotia have steadily accreted their position and the most recent significant notice was Sprott who are well known for getting behind gold plays. There's a few others who sit behind that 5% level but in a substantial way.

"It always fills me with confidence when we get people ringing up and asking the right questions and giving us the opportunity to answer them technically and explain the details. And when those people start buying up after those answers it's very pleasing."

Saturn started the year on a positive note with two of the best intersections – 12m @ 9.98 g/t from 269m and 8m @ 12.9 g/t from 126m – ever drilled in Apollo Hill's history. Those two hits alone essentially saw the company's stock double through late January and early February before retreating just as quickly when financial markets closed ranks in March due to the outbreak of the coronavirus.

However, as the gold price grew stronger from April onwards, so too did the interest in Saturn. At the time of print, the company's share price was almost triple the mark it had pulled back to during the initial stages of the pandemic.

"If you take the recent gold price spike out of it, we've had this very nice, steady, accretive growth off the back of the work we're doing to build up that recognition in the deposit," Bamborough said.

"For me, persistence and the ability to keep pushing on pays in exploration. Every time we have a push there's always a nice little step and hopefully you can see that reflected in both our share price and market cap growth."

There is a clear glint of excitement in Bamborough's eyes when he starts discussing the big picture potential of Apollo Hill, which is now benefitting from being the single focus of a company for the first time in two decades. The project has twice

been reluctantly sidelined by previous owners – Peel and Battle Mountain Australia – due to significant discoveries being made by those companies in New South Wales and Queensland respectively.

Bamborough said the wider potential for Apollo Hill first started emerging in March 2019 when exploration manager Kathryn Cutler put down a hole under an old air-core collar and struck 13m @ 5 g/t gold from 74m (including 4m @ 9.8 g/t), providing confirmation of a new high-grade lode.

Fast-forward through more than 12 months of what he described as a "heck of a lot of drilling" and Bamborough is supremely confident "the game has changed" for Saturn in terms of what it had originally conceived for the project.

"It took us a while to feel through and find the plunging shoots and all that – and Apollo Hill can be quite unforgiving like that – but we've always had the belief in a much bigger system," he said.

"What is really evident to us now is that what was once considered the hanging-wall, we now think it's one big mineralised corridor and we're actually seeing quite a substantial pattern starting to develop in there. It's very under-drilled compared to the main lode.

"The width there is now around 600m and we're stepping out along strike. We're seeing the same kind of intersections coming together and I think it's earmarking a much bigger opportunity in one single simple spot. And obviously there's been much better grades out here than in the footwall, which is very exciting."

Despite the strong likelihood of a sizeable resource being defined at Apollo Hill, Bamborough and his team are not looking far beyond a current exploration campaign which will include 20,000m of RC drilling targeting high-grade trends and 4,000m of aircore drilling across regional and camp-scale opportunities.

Bamborough said while the temptation was there to start moving into technical





Ian Bamborough

study mode, he was more concerned with making sure the resource was sound enough to be phased into development.

"It's economies of scale that are going to make this pop, so the foreseeable future will be about size and expansion," he said.

"If everything goes according to plan – and subject to ongoing results and financing, of course – we could be looking

at a much-changed and very interesting picture by April/May next year...I can see it now, but we've got to do the work and the drilling first."

Saturn also expects to quietly chip away at the West Wyalong JV in NSW after entering into an agreement with the private vendors of the project earlier this year to earn up to 85% of a 91sq km brownfields tenement by spending \$1.9 million on exploration over four years.

Despite its proximity to the Cowal and Cadia mines, no gold has been extracted from the project since 1915. Historical records suggest about 439,000oz grading 36 g/t was produced between 1894 and the start of World War I when many of the workforce was called into battle.

"Since then, this thing has sat pretty much untouched and, in fact, I'd argue there is not a single drill hole around that main structure in the last 100 years," Bamborough said.

"Think of it as the sleeper agent in the company, but I'm not going to leave it asleep for too long."

– Michael Washbourne



A resource upgrade for Apollo Hill is due this quarter



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