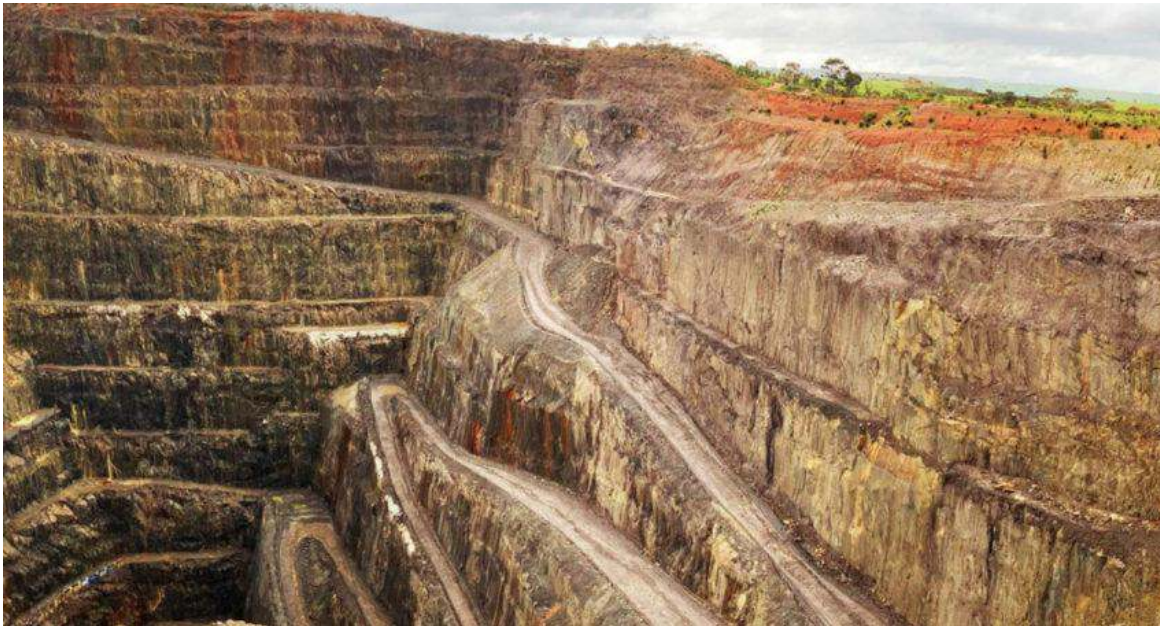


Hi-tech digger trial to fast-track Adelaide Hills mine reopening

BUSINESS

Hillgrove Resources has been awarded a \$2 million State Government grant to trial underground technology aimed at reducing the costs, carbon emissions and the number of explosions required to restart operations at its Adelaide Hills copper-gold mine.



SA miner Hillgrove Resources is looking to convert its open pit Kanmantoo mine into an underground copper-gold mine.

The company is looking to develop an underground mine at the former open-pit mine site about 55km east of Adelaide and is approaching a Final Investment Decision with production potentially re-commencing as early as next year,

The underground technology is being developed in Australia by global manufacturer Komatsu, which says the MC51 continuous mining machine has the potential to revolutionise underground mine development by making underground operations safer, faster and more cost-effective, in addition to reducing operational emissions for mine sites.

The electric driller will be used to develop a portal and 500m underground decline at the Kanmantoo Mine.

The trial will focus on demonstrating the commercial viability of the machine and trial new materials handling and ground support processes that will potentially bring forward first copper production and reduce development costs.

Hillgrove says the use of commercial machines also has the potential to remove blasting from mining development, improving safety and community outcomes, as well as reducing blast-related operational delays.

CEO and Managing Director Lachlan Wallace said the trial at Kanmantoo was an important collaboration between the State Government, Komatsu and Hillgrove.

“The development of an underground decline and drill platforms represents an exciting milestone for the Kanmantoo Underground which ultimately brings forward the potential restart of copper production and further reduces what is already a relatively low-cost mine development,” he said.



The Komatsu MC51 will be trialled at Kanmantoo.

More than 137,000 tonnes of copper was produced at Kanmantoo between 2011 and 2020.

Hillgrove ceased large-scale mining at the open pit copper-gold mine in May 2019 and completed processing ore stockpiles there in March last year.

It entered an agreement with energy retailer AGL in April 2019 to sell the right to develop, own and operate a pumped hydro energy storage project at the site but that deal was terminated in February 2020 after conditions could not be agreed to by both parties.

The Kanmantoo site was then mothballed to preserve the processing assets, and a small core group retained to focus on growth through the advancement of the Kavanagh underground studies and the continuation of a measured exploration and development program.

The \$2 million Jobs and Economic Growth Fund grant from the South Australian Government grant is awarded in two tranches in arrears and based on the achievement of milestones.

The first tranche is \$800,000 at the completion of the portal, initial decline and first corner, and a second tranche of up to \$1,200,000 at the conclusion of the trial.

Hillgrove has agreed to repay half of the grant proceeds received via a 0.25 per cent royalty 12 months after first copper sales from the Kanmantoo Underground if the trial is deemed successful.

Success is measured by the machine demonstrating a range of technical requirements and meeting a minimum production rate over at least 350m of decline development, and the subsequent development and production from the Kanmantoo underground mine.

Energy and Mining Minister Dan van Holst Pellekaan said the Komatsu equipment could extract high-value zones of economic copper ore more quickly, which was a key part of the government's plan to increase economic growth.

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“This has attracted widespread interest from Industry, which will observe the trial first-hand. I’m optimistic this trial will help develop ways of mining underground more safely, quickly and sustainably – all that would mean more copper, which means more jobs, more growth and more royalties back to taxpayers.”

The grant announcement coincides with the State Government’s Copper to the World Conference today at the Adelaide Convention Centre where Wallace is speaking about Kanmantoo, which Hillgrove is touting as Australia’s next copper mine.

Other speakers at the conference include BHP Olympic Dan Asset President Jennifer Purdie, Oz Minerals Transformation and Readiness general manager Katie Hulmes and Fleet Space Technologies CEO Flavia Tata Nardini.

South Australia produces more than a quarter of Australia's mined copper and includes a number of long-life deposits, including Prominent Hill, Carrapateena and Olympic Dam, which is the fourth largest copper resource in the world.

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Your views: on COVID readiness and more

READER CONTRIBUTIONS

Today, readers comment on SA ambulance and hospital preparedness, Aboriginal Cultures Centre leader and Fumbles.



SA Ambulance Service CEO David Place. Photo: Tony Lewis/InDaily

Commenting on the story: [SA 'well-placed' to cope with large COVID outbreak despite ramping: Ambo boss](#)

Outgoing SAAS CEO David Place must be describing a parallel universe from that inhabited by we mere mortals. There is no way we could cope with a significant COVID outbreak.

Ambulance ramping is a symptom of serious hospital bed shortages. Indeed the system has lost 262 beds in the four years to 2000. Sick COVID patients need to be in hospital, in a bed, not in one of the Government's fabled but mysterious 'treatment spaces'.

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In addition, the fall-back COVID hospitalisation previously offered by mothballed capacity at the previous Wakefield St Hospital has now disappeared back into the corporate development world.

Unrealistic comments on our struggling hospital system are unhelpful at least, and dangerous at worst. We need more hospital beds. – **Warren Jones**

Commenting on the story: [New leader appointed to drive Aboriginal Cultures Centre vision](#)

Brilliant choice! I had the privilege of working with Lee Ann many years ago and was so impressed by her integrity, creativity and vision as well as her practical can-do attitude. She got things done, motivated her colleagues and by example developed cultural awareness and sensitivity. – **Angela Burford**

This is a great appointment of an outstanding leader with excellent arts experience to boot. – **Ruth Rentschler**

Commenting on the story: [Touch of the Fumbles: The Dark Side Rises](#)

As an avid reader of Touch of the Fumbles I always look forward to the article and, I must admit, this week has been one of my favourite articles and I can only hope Tom's predictions for Port are correct.

From the Dark Side – join us Tom! – **Emma Lendrum**

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Third infectious NSW truck driver sparks new SA alerts

NEWS

The number of COVID-positive truck drivers from NSW who have entered South Australia and sparked alerts and quarantine orders has risen to three in a week, as the state lifts its border restrictions for travellers arriving from southeast Queensland and Katherine.



Police Commissioner Grant Stevens. Photo: Tony Lewis/InDaily

Police Commissioner and state emergency coordinator Grant Stevens told reporters after this morning's transition committee meeting that the arrival of another COVID-positive truck driver from New South Wales yesterday was a "timely reminder that we're not through this (pandemic) yet".

The driver travelled through Oodla Wirra in the state's mid-north yesterday, before stopping in Port Wakefield and metropolitan Adelaide.

He has since returned to New South Wales.

SA Health late last night added two new exposure sites – the Port Wakefield BP at 22 Snowtown Road, which is owned by On the Run, and Metcash Distribution Centre at 50 Port Wakefield Road, Gepps Cross.

Anyone who was at the service station yesterday between 1.50pm and 3.20pm must immediately quarantine for 14 days and get tested today, on day 5 and day 13 of quarantine.

“If we are going to have incursions, then I think these are the sorts that we're most willing to have”

People who were at the distribution centre between 8.30am and 9.30am yesterday should monitor for symptoms and get tested as soon as they develop.

Stevens said health authorities were yet to find any other exposure sites, or determine how many people are now considered close contacts.

He said the truck driver had been “very cooperative” and provided a “wealth of information about his movements, which is just being verified at the moment”.

“It appears that we’ve got onto this very quickly,” he said.

“The truck driver was only in South Australia yesterday and we’re already moving to take action with those exposure sites.

“If we are going to have incursions, then I think these are the sorts that we’re most willing to have because I think we seem to be able to get on top of them quite quickly.”

It comes after two COVID-positive truck drivers, who came from New South Wales, travelled through Port Augusta and Ceduna on August 21, before doing a truck exchange at Nundroo in the state’s west.

SA Health on Sunday listed eight tier one exposure sites, all petrol stations or roadhouses, across Port Augusta and Ceduna, as well as one in Nundroo.

They identified 150 people who came in contact with the drivers, including 99 close contacts who have been ordered to self-quarantine for 14 days.

“We can’t ask much more of this sector”

Authorities last week imposed a requirement on truck drivers coming in to South Australia to provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of arrival.

Stevens said since then, “some” drivers had been caught trying to enter the state without a recent negative test result.

But he said overall, the heavy vehicle industry had done an “exceptional job of operating in a COVID-safe way” and truck drivers “by and large have done the right thing”.

“The three truck drivers who we’ve had in South Australia who were COVID-positive just recently, all of the evidence indicates that they’ve done the right thing,” he said.

“They’ve been wearing masks, they’ve been providing advice about where they’ve been.

“We can’t ask much more of this sector, but we are continuing to work with them to make sure we’re doing things as safely as possible and they can be as safe as possible as well.”

Chief public health officer Professor Nicola Spurrier on Sunday expressed frustration at over a dozen people who were identified as having visited the exposure sites without checking-in using QR codes.

She said as a result, some close contacts of the positive truck drivers may be unknowingly infectious while out in the community.

Stevens said SA Police monitored check-in compliance weekly and there had been “high levels of activity within QR codes, which is promising”.

“But, we do know that there are people who are not checking-in as they enter businesses,” he said.

“We can only encourage people to do the right thing.”

SA lifts restrictions for southeast Queensland, Katherine

It comes as South Australia lifts all border restrictions for travellers coming from southeast Queensland and Katherine in the Northern Territory.

Effective immediately, people coming from those areas are no longer required to get tested upon arrival.

“Those restrictions are coming off immediately on the basis that they’ve had sufficient periods of infection free days within their community,” Stevens said.

The state’s transition committee this morning also discussed lifting private gathering restrictions, particularly for weddings, but no decisions were made.

Stevens said SA Health would consult with industry stakeholders about potential “positive” changes in the coming days.

“It’s signalling to the industry and also the people who may be planning events over the next few days that there will be changes coming,” he said.

Currently weddings are capped at 150 people, but venues must maintain a one person per two-square-metre capacity limit if people are standing while eating or drinking, or three people per four-square-metres limit if they are seated.

Meanwhile, authorities have reversed a decision that would have required cross border community members to be vaccinated if they wanted to travel between South Australia and Victoria from September 24.

The decision to exclude people in the 70km border bubble from the compulsory vaccination direction was announced by SA Police yesterday afternoon, after they were included in the original direction published on Friday.

The backflip has been welcomed by several regional communities, particularly in the state’s South East.

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Stevens said cross border community members were “inadvertently” caught up in a direction change that required essential workers coming into South Australia to have at least one COVID vaccination dose.

“We made the change to relax them from that obligation to produce evidence of a vaccination, but I must qualify there is a potential for that requirement to be placed upon them in the future as we continue to manage our borders for South Australia,” he said.

New South Wales this morning reported 1164 new locally-acquired cases of COVID-19 and three deaths, including a woman in her 50s, while Victoria recorded 76 new cases.

New data released by the Federal Government this morning shows South Australia has the lowest percentage of fully vaccinated over 50s and 70s in the country.

Just 46.19 per cent of South Australians aged over 50 have received two doses, compared to the national average of 50.82 per cent.

Over 57 per cent of South Australians aged over 70 are now fully vaccinated, below the national average of 62.23 per cent.

About half – 52.2 per cent – of the total South Australian population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with 33.6 per cent fully vaccinated.

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