

Manganese market makes moves

Manganese's primary use remains as a steel additive, but the resources industry has been steadily reflecting the commodity's use in EV batteries with increased exploration and corporate activity.

Manganese is a key component of the nickel-cobalt-manganese batteries which currently dominate the EV market, but manganese's use in construction cannot be underestimated.

India's construction market, for example, is expected to grow by 7.1% each year from 2025 onward. Last year the Biden Administration announced a \$US2 trillion plan to upgrade the country's infrastructure.

Across the manganese-rich provinces in Western Australia, a number of explorers have been sharing their success.

Bryah Resources Ltd released the maiden resource from its Bryah Basin manganese JV with OM Holdings Ltd in early March, north of Meekatharra.

The company revealed a 1.84mt @ 21% manganese resource with 1.08mt @ 22% indicated and 0.75mt @ 20% inferred.

Bryah chief executive Ashley Jones said the grades outperformed the company's peers in the manganese sector.

"We're currently finalising yields from the resource...it's a lot better than other operations with a 15% cut off," Jones told **Paydirt**.

"A lot of those other operations have very low yields around 7-8% manganese, so we're looking pretty strong."

A third of the total resource is situated on a granted mining lease and the company is now focused on securing the rest with applications at the Brumby Creek and Black Hill tenements.

The prospective areas are currently undergoing gradient array induced polarisation (GAIP) surveys with RC drilling to hit the ground later in the year. Drill rigs were expected to arrive on site by the middle of March.

Jones called the use of GAIP as the "future of the industry".

"We're going to roll out another five surveys over the next short period," he said. "Basically trying to find that conductive material under cover."

As Bryah works on the follow-up drilling, Jones expects increased attention in the sector due to manganese's use in EV batteries.

"The battery market is always increasing which is wonderful. Manganese in that market can create a big premium for not that much more effort.

"We're definitely heading towards the production pathway and the price is really positive."

Further north in WA's manganese province, Black Canyon Ltd recently completed the purchase of Panther Exploration.

The acquisition sees Black Canyon add



Bryah non-executive director Brian Davis surveys the Bryah Basin

625sq km of surrounding tenements to its flagship Flanagan Bore manganese project in the Pilbara.

Previous drill intersections from the new tenements include: 6m @ 18.3% manganese from 7m including 3m @ 27.7%, 12m @ 16.4% from 3m including 4m @ 29.2% and 10m @ 21.2% from 3m including 5m @ 31.4%.

"It's a really good land package," Black Canyon executive director Brendan Cummins said. "That southern part of the basin is a growing area for resources."

Neighbours close to Black Canyon include Element 25 Ltd and Firebird Metals Ltd.

Firebird released an upgrade to its Oa-kover project's mineral resource in early March with 172mt @ 9.9% manganese – an increase of 170%.

"Our style of mineralisation is very similar to Element 25 and Firebird's," Cummins said.

Black Canyon plans to get drill rigs up to the new tenements in May.

"Last year, we turned up with our drill rig in early December and we went pretty hard," Cummins said. "I was actually on the rig myself."

"We drilled about 6,000m at the time with an RC rig and diamond rig. We made a discovery and we're still waiting on the full assays back from that programme. I'm planning to be out there for the infill drilling in May."

Ongoing assays from Flanagan Bore

have revealed a bevy of shallow, high-grade manganese zones such as 39m @ 13.5% manganese from surface, 40m @ 11.9% from surface, 29m @ 14.5% from surface and 34m @ 13.7% from surface.

Black Canyon is working towards a scoping study to be out by mid-year.

"We need to upgrade to indicated resource and that just means more infill drilling," he said. "The strategy there, once we've got an upgraded resource to indicated, is that we can use those resources later this year to go into a feasibility study because we're only doing a scoping study at the moment."

– Fraser Palamara



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