



Austral African
Survey Group



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AUSTRAL AFRICA

Combining Australian leadership with Africa



IN SURVEY GROUP

an excellence in project and mine surveying



Australian mining businesses have dramatically increased their involvement in the African mineral resources industry over the last three decades since the continent was formally opened up to private foreign investment, following the broad transition to stable, multi-party democracies across Africa during the 1990s. Today, there are over 200 ASX-listed companies with mining operations in Africa. This sustained Australian influx has transmitted layers of expertise from a mature sector to the high growth African market, while also creating prosperity in regions where little existed prior to the arrival of investment. The story of Austral African Survey Group (AASG) is one of many pertinent case studies that depicts the multi-directional benefits derived from deepening ties between Australia and Africa in the mining sphere.

AASG is a joint venture that was created in 2016 when long-term business partners Brad McGregor and Dela Matanawui decided to combine their respective surveying companies: McGregor Surveys, out of Western Australia, and Matanawui's Ghana-based MineDev Surveys.





The 50:50 JV provides professional surveying services to clients with mining projects and operations across Africa, through a unique business model that combines remote project management from Australia with African expertise on the ground.

One of the company's first significant contract wins was with Australian engineering group Lycopodium on the Mako Gold Project in Senegal. "From our initial beginnings in Senegal, we have worked in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Mali as well," says McGregor.

Australian leadership

McGregor currently resides in Western Australia along with the firm's other director Matanawui, but for project start-ups either director will visit the site to set operations up, before returning home to manage the project remotely.

During the construction phase, either director will also visit site at critical milestones of the project, to audit the progress of the surveying teams.



African excellence

On the ground, AASG deploys a large team of African project surveyors, all of whom are qualified professionals with the combined experience of working in 10 countries across the continent over the past 20 years.

At a project, these seasoned professionals deliver a wide range of surveying services based on the pre-arranged management plan agreed on by the directors and the client. The firm's project surveyors also pass on their knowledge to local nationals, offering roles as national survey assistants or technicians.

"Our teams often train up locals on-site. For

"We set up work instructions, procedures, management plans and get the team to send back weekly reports which include any issues on-site. On behalf of the client, we also purchase all the latest technologies in survey equipment and software, which is then utilised by the team on the ground."

In the case of any issues arising with the equipment on-site, the directors can troubleshoot with the team via email, Skype or over the phone. "We provide back-up support to the teams in Africa from halfway around the world here in Australia. I believe that nobody does this to the extent that we do," McGregor claims.





example, at the Mako project in Senegal we didn't have any local national surveyors. We recruited unskilled labour from local villages and trained them up so they could do basic, day-to-day surveying work.

"This certainly helped them, as well as the mining company and our client. Employing locally is part of government requirements to allow mining companies to work in their country and AASG takes this one step further by passing on our knowledge of surveying to our employees.

"AASG has developed a training programme to deliver to our national survey team and on reaching a certain level, we award our people with certificates of attainment.

"Once the construction phase is over, our

national assistants and technicians are then transferred over to the operations department to commence their careers in the mining operations survey team."

Surveying solutions for every phase

AASG provides the full suite of surveying solutions to clients at every stage of the mining cycle, starting with exploration. At this early stage, the firm can set out and pick up all drill holes, along with grid lines for sampling and contouring.

The construction phase is where AASG finds the majority of its work, offering a number of services including aerial surveys and ground modelling for design purposes, design set out, as-built of completed infrastructure and



auditing checks for concrete and structural steel.

“Using the Senegal project as an example, we had up to three project surveyors on-site at the peak of the works for the \$100 million EPC contract,” reveals McGregor.

The company can also support clients at the operations phase of the cycle, with services such as survey control for open pit mining, pit design set outs, monitoring of excavation, as well as ore and waste mark out in open pits.

“We like to get in at the exploration phase because that way we can take the project right through to operations. This is a big benefit to the mining company because they’ve sourced all of their surveying

requirements from one company.”

At home in West Africa

West Africa is a key region for AASG on the continent, not least because one half of the business is headquartered in Ghana, and it has continued to provide a steady stream of work since the firm’s first contract win in Senegal.

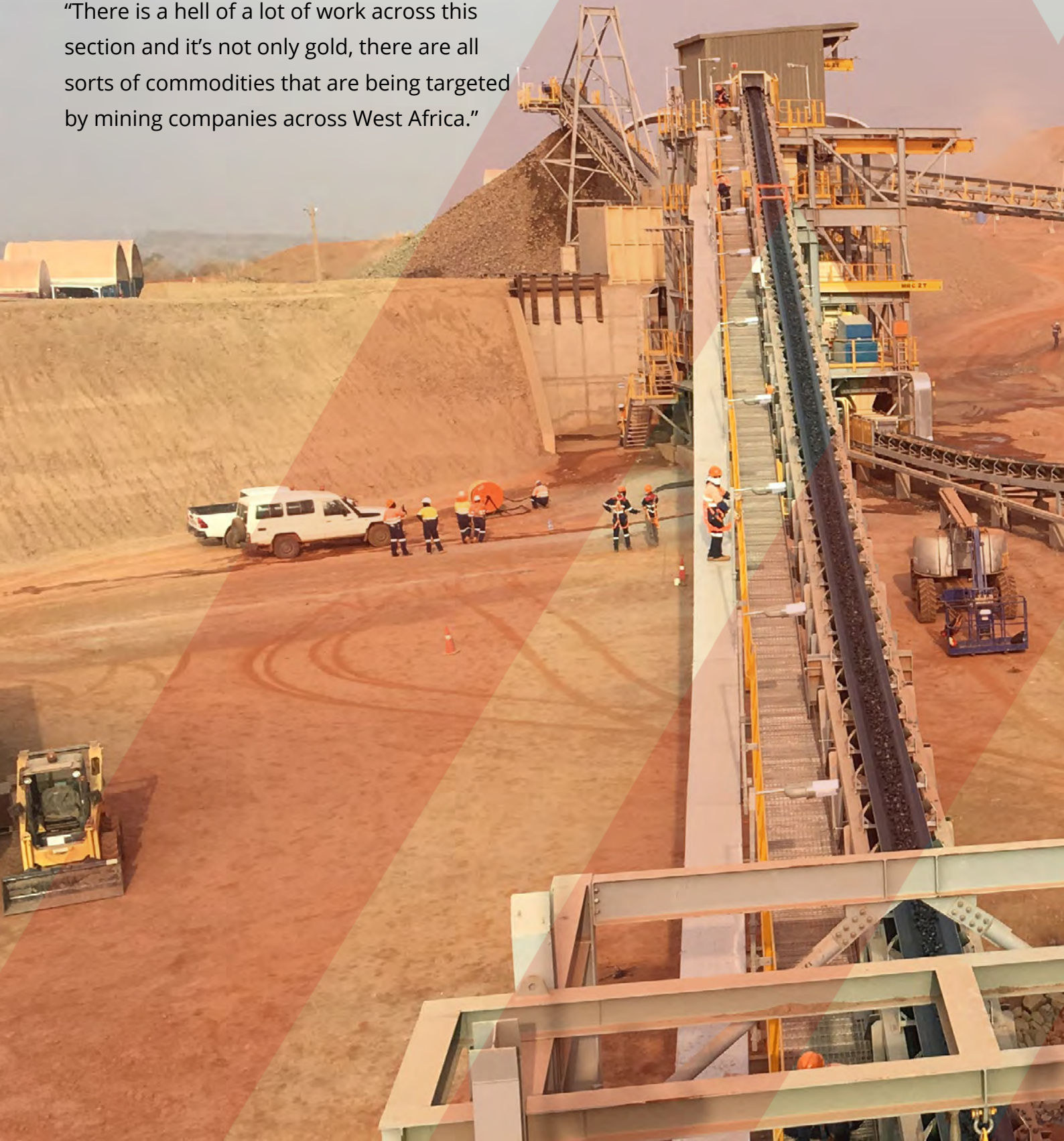
West Africa is one of the fastest growing regions in the world for gold exploration and production, and as a result, AASG has continually gravitated towards the highly prospective gold provinces of the region.

“We go where the work is, and that happens to be mostly in West Africa at the moment. Gold projects are cropping up in the Southeast corner of Senegal right through to Ghana. That includes the countries of Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

“There is a hell of a lot of work across this section and it's not only gold, there are all sorts of commodities that are being targeted by mining companies across West Africa.”

East African inroads

AASG has also assisted clients with projects in Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Tanzania in the past, and is currently negotiating a surveying services contract for a graphite mine in Tanzania through a client from Western Australia.



"We provide back-up support to the teams in Africa from halfway around the world here in Australia. I believe that nobody else does this to the extent that we do"
Brad McGregor, director Austral African Survey Group





The company also hopes to secure further work on the East side of the continent through its ongoing relationship with a major EPCM consultant, who are involved in a substantial mineral sands project on the island of Madagascar.

In addition to this East African pipeline, AASG is keeping tabs on several opportunities across the continent, starting in Ghana. McGregor and Matanawui worked directly on Newmont's projects back in 2005/06 and maintain good relationships with management there.

"There is a project coming up for a big expansion later this year, so we hope to be involved in this development and continue to build our working relationship with the project team", says McGregor.

A packed pipeline

AASG may secure further work in Ghana with another engineering company who are currently conducting a feasibility study on a new 'Greenfields Project' to the Northeast of the country. AASG are also currently tendering on projects in Côte d'Ivoire and are confident of winning work and having survey teams on the ground in the third quarter of this year.

"It seems like it's going to be a busy second half of the year for us, and we are due for completion on Teranga Gold's Wahgnion project in Burkina Faso in August. Finally, we have a strong chance of working on a potash project in the Northeast region of the African continent, which is one we've been following for a while."



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