



Mediaportal Report

24/02/2010

▶ **ABC Goldfields WA (Perth)**
Rural & Resources Report - 24/02/2010 6:51 AM
Tara De Landgraft

Landgraft reveals that **Catalpa Resources** is ahead of schedule on construction of its \$92 million processing facility, adding that the Edna May mine is predicted to pour its first gold in May. General Manager of Operations Stuart Pether explains that good weather has enabled better labour productivity, assuring that the budget is on track despite changes to the oil price.

Interviewees: Stuart Pether, General Manager of Operations, Catalpa Resources

Duration: 3.39

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Demographics

Demographics are not available as the media outlet has not commissioned audience research into this timeslot.

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Some safe hands for hire

Dealing with the aftermath of one too many mining accidents led to the creation of an OHS consultancy. By **Wally Graham**

Minesite safety is a term that has become synonymous with the mining industry in recent times.

However, only 20 years ago, the founder and director of occupational health and safety consultancy Industrial Safe, Amanda Slinger, was working as sister-in-charge at Paraburdoo hospital.

During her tenure at the mining town's hospital she was required to deal with the aftermath of too many mining-related accidents.

"Living and working in a small community it is really tough when you're in that frontline emergency area," Slinger told *Australia's Mining Monthly*.

"You have people coming through the front door with mining-related serious injuries, or fatalities, and you need to emotionally support the families whilst dealing with your own emotions as you know them all really well.

"I just got to the point where I would rather be doing something from the other side and preventing these accidents."

Slinger began volunteering her time to deliver safety lectures at Hamersley Iron and enrolled in a Graduate Diploma in OH&S at Curtin University.

On completing her studies she worked in central Africa for a few years before returning to Western Australia where she worked in different remote mining areas.

"In that time I went to a lot of different mines and recognised that there was a need for the small to medium-sized mining companies to have some sort of service where they had access to onsite and off-site specialist OH&S knowledge," Slinger said.

"If you look at the large mining companies they have occupational hygienists,

occupational health nurses, safety managers and emergency response coordinators. They have the full flush of OH&S personnel.

"The small mining companies don't have such a large site where they can employ all those people."

In 1996 Slinger set up Industrial Safe offering the industry integrated OH&S facilities, services and personnel in the areas of safety, medical, and emergency response.

"We set up teams of two with staff who could cover all aspects of OH&S, including safety, training, emergency response and first aid, with each team member specialised in either safety or emergency response," Slinger explained.

"They had 24-hour contact back to our Perth operations whenever they needed any further technical support.

"We might start off with an exploration company and set them up with a RFDS chest or we might have a medic onsite during some large drilling program."

– Industrial Safe director Amanda Slinger

"It just built from there. We got one site then another site and now we provide the full integrated services from setting up medical centres and emergency response centres with all the equipment, and providing the personnel."

Fourteen years on, Industrial Safe offers integrated facilities, services and personnel capabilities in the areas of safety, security, medical, and emergency response.

Industrial Safe not only supplies fully equipped emergency response centres, fire tenders and units, as well as medical poisons permits and Royal Flying Doctor Service chests, it also provides the qualified and experienced medical and safety personnel who know how to use them.

The company's value to its clients goes further, however, with a comprehensive range of safety management services that translate into practical actions and measurable results.

Industrial Safe has the capacity to work through all stages of a company's development from feasibility studies and project approvals through to construction and operations.


"It's great to be involved in this way," Slinger said. "We might start off with an exploration company and set them up with a RFDS chest or we might have a medic onsite during some large drilling program.

"Then, as they find a resource and go into the development process, we get involved in the consultancy side of things.

"We start documenting their project management plans for them, we get involved in feasibility studies and documentation.

"It just grows. We go all the way through construction and into the operation. It's a fantastic journey watching it all happen and being part of it."

Industrial Safe counts such names as Avoca Minerals, BC Iron, **Catalpa Resources** and Apex Minerals on its CV.

"Hopefully I have achieved something along the way in terms of what I had set out to do when I was working at Paraburdoo hospital," Slinger said proudly. 

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General News

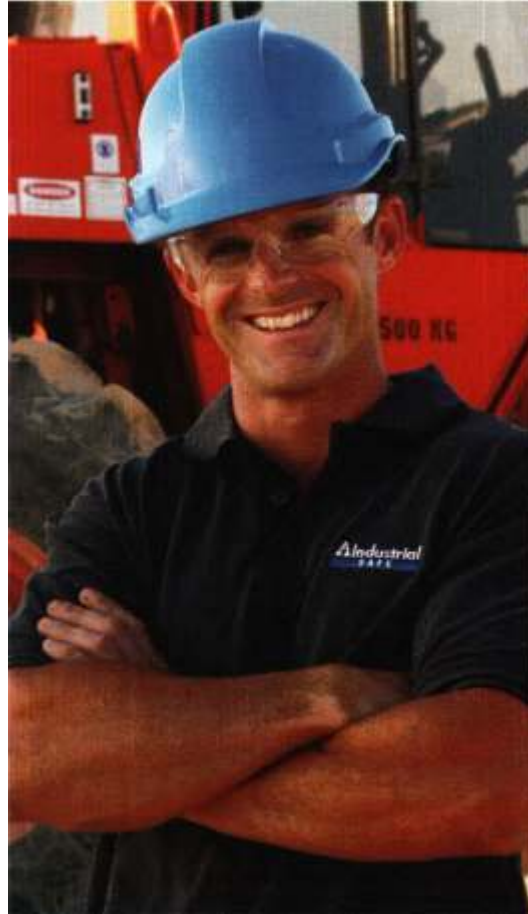
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Industrial Safe provides integrated facilities, services and personnel capabilities in the areas of safety, security, medical, and emergency response.



Going deeper and down

With the market starting to trend up, a drilling contractor is looking to grow in Australia and overseas. By Noel Dyson

It is not often that a mining support business chief speaks well of a downturn. Normally it is the sort of thing that keeps them awake at night worrying about how their business is going to make it through.

Wallis Drilling managing director Graeme Wallis, however, did not mind the mining malaise of 2009, even though he said the company's revenue fell about 30%.

While turnover fell, the slowdown gave the company, which is one of Australia's largest privately owned drilling contractors, a chance to catch its breath.

According to Wallis, the company's rigs had been running flat out for much of the latter part of the boom. The downturn gave the company a chance to overhaul much of its fleet and have them in prime condition for the upturn.

It also has given the company the chance to assess and maximise opportunities to diversify. Wallis Drilling has made strong inroads into the coal seam gas business. Indeed, it has even developed its own mud delivery system for that sector.

Wallis Drilling is one of the most prolific Aircore drillers in the mineral sands sector. It won an Australian Design Award for its Aircore system in the 1970s, which paved the way for its involvement in mineral sands. That Aircore technology is finding work in the uranium and nickel sectors where sticky clays are a problem. The dual tube system in the Aircore rigs has shown its ability to handle all types of material.

This mineral sands involvement led to the creation of the company's tracked Mantis drilling rigs for tackling the soft surfaces which mineral sands deposits often are found in.

Wallis points to a photo on the wall of the company's Midvale headquarters showing one of its heavy Mantis drilling rigs. The rig is sitting comfortably on the soft surface while one of the drill rig crew walks past with his legs sinking up to his knees.

The company can have 40 rigs operating at any one time.

There has been something of a change at the top of the company. Wallis is gradually pulling back from the business and chief operating officer Mark Crumby has been promoted to chief executive to take

over the day-to-day running.

There are other generations of the Wallis family involved with the company. His son Grant is looking after the international business while son Kim looks after the light rigs and also has responsibility for the Australian mineral sands customers.

Part of the company's success has come from its manufacturing capabilities. Wallis Drilling also has its own design team.

That team was responsible for the mud delivery system to go with the company's rotary drilling rigs.

In some ways Wallis is following the vertical integration approach of Ausdrill managing director Ron Sayers. Ausdrill opened its own drill consumables business last year, partly to supply its own drilling fleet, and has its own design and manufacturing capabilities.

One big difference between the two is that Wallis is happy for the company to stay privately owned.

For capital investments Wallis Drilling either funds them internally or seeks external finance.

"The important thing is to have a strong balance sheet so you can get finance," Wallis said.

Africa is a key part of the company's plans.

Crumby said the company could potentially have up to five of its reverse circulation drilling rigs operating on the continent this year.

"Africa has the potential to be 20 to 25 per cent of our business," he said.

The company has been in Africa for the past 25 years. It started out in Mozambique doing Aircore work in mineral sands.

Wallis Drilling even has incorporated a subsidiary in Namibia called Wallis Drilling Africa. That is to conduct the work it is doing for Extract Resources.

When *Australia's Mining Monthly* visited Wallis Drilling in early December the company was despatching a drill rig and the necessary support infrastructure to Namibia.

Crumby said to operate in Namibia a company had to be incorporated and registered for value-added tax purposes.

Part of the benefit of Africa is the ability to secure long-term contracts.

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General News

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"For continuity of work we like two to three-year contracts," Wallis said. "We can get them in oil and gas and in Africa and some of that here."

On the local front Wallis Drilling was recently awarded a five-year contract to work with **Catalpa**. That is for drill and blast work, along with some grade control exploration drilling.

Crumby said the company had developed diversified revenue streams.

"We're getting a good reputation in coal seam gas," he said. "We've built up in Africa with large companies working there, such as Aquila and Extract.

"Plus, the consolidation in the Australian space means more space for a quality player."

The company also has fielded some enquiries from South America.

On the oil and gas front Wallis Drilling has prequalified with Santos and Arrow Energy.

"We've just gone into a major program for Central Petroleum in central Australia for their coal seam gas project there," Crumby said.

He said the company had just executed a five-year strategic plan.

"Africa is part of that. Iron ore, coal seam gas too. Uranium is another major thing in Africa."

Diversity of drilling methods and commodities is a key to the plan. It gives Wallis Drilling the flexibility to deal with any downturns.

"If we get problems with a commodity we can switch," Crumby said.


He said the company would be growing its fleet size too.

Getting the right people is also important. As Wallis explains, just being able to drill is not necessarily enough for the head of a drilling team.

"A driller has to be able to drill," he said. "He also has to be able to maintain all of his equipment. There can be six vehicles to look after in a drilling team. He has to be able to order parts.

"They have to be human resources skilled. They have to be able to

control their crews and supervise their training on the job.

"We ask a lot from those blokes and they perform. That's why I like the job so much. These are such interesting people." 



The drill rig that Wallis Drilling sent to Africa as part of its work with Extract Resources.