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MinEx CRC's Coiled Tube Rig ready to deliver low-cost drilling revolution after success with Delamerian NDI campaign

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MinEx CRC's Coiled Tube (CT) drill rig has performed strongly in its first deployment under the National Drilling Initiative.

The CT rig has been deployed since August in the Alawoona region in the southern part of GSSA's Delamerian project area, about 150 km east of Adelaide. This followed recent trials at Kapunda and Mawson Lakes near Adelaide, which proved up a self-contained, truck-mounted hydraulic fluid processing system. It means no waste drilling fluids or sumps and is perhaps the biggest advance in

the CT rig since it emerged from the Deep Exploration Technologies CRC.

At Alawoona, the CT rig has drilled a number of twinned holes alongside conventional diamond holes as part of advanced field testing. This has allowed GSSA and MinEx CRC to see how cuttings from the CT rig (and test results from downhole and on-rig instruments) compare with conventional drill core.

The Alawoona NDI drilling has also allowed live testing of a drill coring tool, which can extract up to 3 metres of core (just like NQ core, but slightly smaller in diameter) from the bottom of the hole.

The CT rig proved it could operate the coring tool up to the rig's full depth capability of 500 metres. And it successfully extracted core from granite as well as soft rocks.

GSSA's principal geologist and the leader of the MinEx CRC NDI project 8, Rian Dutch, told GSSA's Discovery Day conference on 25 November the results from Alawoona had given the team the confidence to drill the next project area (Quondong Vale in the northern Delamerian) solely with the CT rig.

Drilling is expected to get under way early in 2022, with up to 25 holes planned in a region with between about 100 metres and 300 metres of cover. This represents a significant step-up in coverage from the 10 holes with the conventional rig at Alawoona.

"I think the fact that we got core out of the bottom of CT rig is absolutely fantastic. It's a bit of a gamechanger. From my perspective and I think for industry as a whole – the fact we can get core as well as cuttings is brilliant," Rian said.

He said the CT rig deployment at Alawoona was generating a lot of data and meant GSSA was having to think about new ways to handle data from precompetitive drilling and deliver it to industry.

"We're capturing a whole bunch of field data as we go so that we can deliver that data to you more quickly. So things like making sure that we have all the different sample types that we need – images, geological logs, portable XRF.

Rian said the XRF was key to helping interpretation of the geology. Other data includes magnetic susceptibility and other wireline petrophysics such as gamma and a full orientation on the holes.

To deliver results to industry quickly, GSSA have created the SA Drilling Atlas

([https://geoscience.sarig.sa.gov.au/spotfire/wp/analysis?](https://geoscience.sarig.sa.gov.au/spotfire/wp/analysis?file=/Anonymous/Delamerian_Drilling_Atlas_v1-1&waid=8zyY1qIVV0-gTUQYKRn5-2604117978UTX6&wavid=0)

[file=/Anonymous/Delamerian_Drilling_Atlas_v1-1&waid=8zyY1qIVV0-gTUQYKRn5-](https://geoscience.sarig.sa.gov.au/spotfire/wp/analysis?file=/Anonymous/Delamerian_Drilling_Atlas_v1-1&waid=8zyY1qIVV0-gTUQYKRn5-2604117978UTX6&wavid=0)

[2604117978UTX6&wavid=0](https://geoscience.sarig.sa.gov.au/spotfire/wp/analysis?file=/Anonymous/Delamerian_Drilling_Atlas_v1-1&waid=8zyY1qIVV0-gTUQYKRn5-2604117978UTX6&wavid=0)) within SARIG, which will have results available to industry within days.

The results are field data, so they are subject to change, but the near-instant delivery more than makes up for any such shortcomings.

The SA Drilling Atlas has an impressive spread and display of data. Four holes from Alawoona are already in the Atlas, with results such as drill logs, lithologs and stratigraphy, images of intervals, Portable XRF, petrophysics and geochemistry, including linear regressions and bivariate plots. Visitors to the Atlas can also look at drill results in terms of regional geology and view 3D visualisations of the holes, which have been orientated.



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