

# Emmerson sniffing out more copper

**E**mmerson Resources Ltd is determined to prove last year's unexpected copper discovery in Tennant Creek was no one-hit wonder.

Shares in the well-trodden explorer soared more than 200% after drilling 116m @ 3.4% copper and 0.88 g/t gold at the Hermitage project. It was subsequently ranked as the world's 16th best copper intersection recorded last year.

Assays also indicate the copper and gold grades are increasing at depth with the hole terminating in 30m @ 7.4% copper and 3 g/t gold, including 2m @ 19.77 g/t gold and 3.84% copper in the final 2m.

It was somewhat of a surprise discovery for Emmerson which has been actively exploring in the Tennant Creek mineral field for the past 15 years, predominantly for economic gold deposits. The company only gained access to Hermitage last year after freeing up longstanding Native Title issues over the project.

Speaking to **Paydirt** last month, Emmerson managing director Rob Bills revealed even he wasn't initially convinced his company had latched on to something rather significant.

"Typically in Tennant Creek, you get the primary copper zone higher up than the gold, so we thought we were potentially drilling into a gold zone at depth, which we still hope to do with this second round of drilling," Bills said.

"The visuals were great. I was actually out there at the time when we drilled through the native copper zone and the field techs were saying, 'oh, we've hit a copper pipe', because it was coming up as pure copper. I said, 'there's no copper pipes out here, this is native copper' because we don't really see native copper in the field, certainly not 30m of it.

"There wasn't much of a reaction to the share price when we announced the visuals [in November] but there certainly was quite a big reaction when we announced the intercept in December. It was quite a stunning hole and it changes the game plan for us in a lot of ways."

Emmerson is now undertaking a minimum of 1,700m RC and diamond drilling at Hermitage, targeting key extensions to the discovery hole. First assays are expected later this month.

Visual copper has been observed in the first few holes completed at the time of print, with the company also reporting that it had intersected a new zone of malachite, chal-

copyrite and possible bornite mineralisation.

Bills and the Emmerson team are already contemplating further exploration for similar styles of mineralisation in what is referred to as the northern project area which hosts Hermitage and the nearby Jasper Hills target, which also remains subject to Native Title clearance.

"We believe this style of copper mineralisation is not an orphan," Bills said.

"If we can get access to Jasper Hills later in the year, then I think we'll be drilling another one of these high-grade copper-gold-cobalt systems."

Emmerson's copper discovery is also timely given the Northern Territory has emerged as a new hotspot for red metal

significant copper discovery against the existing focus on gold in Tennant Creek. The company has struck a JV for the Tennant Creek Mining Group (TCMG) to mine and process gold resources found by Emmerson via a proposed central processing hub. Neither Hermitage nor Jasper Hills are part of this agreement.

Bills said his company remained committed to gold exploration across its commanding 1,700sq km ground position and hoped to soon yield from the 6% production royalty under the JV with TCMG.

"We haven't got the skill sets for development and production, where those guys have," he said. "It's actually a pretty good marriage of two companies. One plus one is going to equal more than two in this JV."

Bills said several dedicated copper investors had found their way on to Emmerson's register via the recent \$5 million placement. A separate SPP for a further \$1.5 million was in play at the time of print.

With a substantially improved cash posi-



**Emmerson is following up on a copper discovery at Hermitage, part of its expansive Tennant Creek minerals portfolio in the Northern Territory**

exploration, with the likes of BHP Ltd and Rio Tinto Ltd recently picking up large land packages in the vicinity.

The company previously made a copper discovery at Goanna about five years ago but Bills is quick to point out some key differences with Hermitage.

"This is an actual breccia pipe which is something we haven't seen before, even though it is still IOCG," Bills said.

"With those sort of grades, you actually don't need a lot of this stuff for it to be economic. So, it has changed the game plan for us in Tennant Creek. Now we're kind of thinking, 'what else is in that northern area? Are they all like this? Are they all these high grade copper-gold-cobalt type things? And, what sort of scale are we talking about?'"

An obvious challenge for Emmerson is balancing this new opportunity to build on a

tion, Emmerson also plans to tip more funds towards its copper-gold exploration portfolio in New South Wales, including the Kiola project which is hosted along the same belt as Cadia-Ridgeway and Alkane Resources Ltd's Boda discovery.

"NSW has been a bit of a poor cousin, simply because of the JV and the constraints of getting money into the ground and doing activities in Tennant Creek," Bills said.

"With this raising, we now have a lot more budget to really hit NSW. Fingers crossed with COVID and all these other things, we can be drilling over there towards the latter part of this year for what will be one of our most exciting drill programmes from a greenfields perspective."

**– Michael Washbourne**