

Tanzanian quest awakened by comparison to WA project

You wouldn't need a second guess to realise that Alastair Hunter is a Scot – the accent is a dead giveaway.

He has been involved in the exploration and project development business for decades and has spent a large part of the past 12 years in Africa, most recently in Tanzania.

About three years ago he took over the helm at Peak Resources Ltd (ASX: PEK) and moved its centre of focus from gold in Western Australia to gold and base metals in Tanzania where he had spent several years in the field.

The initial quest was for gold in the Lake Victoria goldfield, including Geita West near the big Geita gold mine being operated by AngloGold Ashanti. Exploration in southern Tanzania near Lake Rukwa unearthed a greenfields rare earths deposit called Ngualla.

Hunter saw that a large carbonatite looked geologically similar to the Weld Range carbonatite in Western Australia.

The Ngualla carbonatite, which was granted in late 2009, is a joint venture with Tanzanian company Zari Exploration Ltd and Peak has now in advanced negotiations to buy out the partner's 20% stake.

In September the company announced

fresh results that will help lead to declaring a maiden resource, probably in the first quarter of 2012.

A 17 hole programme on the southern rare earths zone produced better shallow results of: NRC58: 122 metres grading 2.06% rare earths oxide (REO) from surface, NRC64: 18m at 4.41% REO from surface, NRC62: 22m at 6.17% REO from 18m followed by 54m at 2.53% from 54m, NRC66: 34m at 5.36% REO and NRC89: 131m at 4.27% REO from surface to end of hole.

Peak said this drilling programme also returned significant intersections of niobium-tantalum and phosphate from peripheral holes in the southern zone.

"This is encouraging as the highest tenor surface geochemical anomalies and exploration targets for these metals are located in the Northern Niobium-Tantalum Zone, over 1 kilometre to the north," Hunter said.

Better assays were: NRC43: 26m at 22.6% phosphate from 2m, NRC46: 44m at 0.54% Nb205 and 41 ppm Ta205 from 32m, and NRC67: 44m at 0.45% Nb205, 102 ppm Ta205 and 14.1% phosphate from 64m.

Drilling at Ngualla is ongoing with 11,856m in 185 holes, including the south



Peak's Alastair Hunter

west alluvial programme, now completed in a total estimated drilling programme of 22,000m.

A technical report said mineralisation was similar in style to Lynas Corporation's Mt Weld "being rare earth enrichment in the deeply weathered regolith profile of a large carbonatite."

Beneficiation and metallurgical work is already under way utilising Bateman and Amdel in Perth.

Hunter said the company has had several overtures over Ngualla and was looking at getting a rare earths end-user in as a cornerstone investor.

The company retains several prospects in WA including gold properties in the Menzies district, north of Kalgoorlie, and a prospect near the big Doolgunna copper-gold project in the north Murchison field.

Ross Louthean



Drilling on the Ngualla rare earths project.