

Pioneer moving from strength to strength

Since Pioneer Nickel Limited received a great deal of support for its ASX listing and capital raising late last year, the company has made great strides with its projects.

Pioneer Nickel raised \$5.5m which provided \$4.7m after costs for exploration.

At the end of March, Pioneer had cash of \$4.05m and no debt.

The company has managed to recruit a team of NiS-specialist geologists as well as retaining leading geophysical consultants Newexco Pty Ltd and southern Geoscience Consultants, and has maintained a very high level of field exploration since listing.

So far this year, the company has extended its regional dataset over a number of its project areas - specifically Acra, Jubilee, Lady of the Lake, Silver Swan North West and Wattle Dam - through geochemistry and electromagnetic surveys.

According to managing director David Crook, this has resulted in eight separate drill-ready targets being identified and the commencement of drilling.

Pioneer has added to its portfolio by acquiring or optioning tenements adjacent to its Acra-Jubilee project, including the tenement with the Lady of the Lake electromagnetic anomalies.

"In addition, Pioneer has assembled a portfolio of gold-base metal tenements in NSW, including a number of historic mining centres. This provides Pioneer with an inexpensive exploration option for the future," Mr Crook said.

He said Pioneer has enjoyed much support from its projects as it has a large tenement portfolio which specifically covers known NiS-endowed komatiite stratigraphy.

"Within the portfolio, NiS are known to exist at Acra, Jubilee and Pioneer (JH and BB prospects); ground positions are held immediately along strike of Titan Resources Limited Armstrong NiS mine and Breakaway Resources Limited Spargoville NiS mines; major land positions north are held along strike from MPI Mines Limited's Silver Swan NiS mine and Jubilee Mines NL-Image Resources Limited Emu Lake NiS JV project; and major land positions are held south along strike from the Widgiemooltha Dome NiS deposits.

"The tenement portfolio is exceptionally prospective, and the results being generated reflect this."

The Pioneer tenement portfolio has been assembled over at least seven years, and was not a 'knee jerk' reaction to a nickel price spike.

"Certainly, the buoyant market conditions were a factor in the timing of the listing, but this meant that a decent (\$5.5m) raising was achieved, ensuring that Pioneer can fully fund its judicious exploration programs.

"We are not a 'one trick pony', we have generated drill targets in three separate projects and we are prepared to spend money into the ground to test these on a priority basis.

"We recently commenced our third drilling program since listing and we have completed in excess of 1,500TEM stations."

Mr Crook has enjoyed numerous personal achievements during his mining career.

"From a discovery point of view, I was with the team that put the first drill holes into Radio Hill NiS mine near Karratha, WA, in 1983-84.

"I also supervised the establishment of the first 500,000oz at the Gidgee Gold mine, near Sandstone WA, and was exploration manager for Heron Resources Limited during which time we assembled a world-class nickel laterite resource.

"Moving to Kalgoorlie provided a series of exceptional opportunities. Living in one of the world's great mining cities means that I partake in a normal family and community-based lifestyle and the family is there to participate in success as it arrives.

"I think that the successful listing of Pioneer is the greatest achievement to date, and the discovery of a mine will be the next."

Mr Crook said Pioneer Nickel's long-term goals are to complete a range of work programs outlined in the prospectus within two to three years.

"Our short-term goal is to use industry-best techniques to evaluate our tenements within this time frame, ranking targets on a continual basis and testing these.

"Presuming success, Pioneer sees itself evolving into a mining company following a discovery." ■