

# The West Australian

## Newcrest Mining steps up Paterson Province search with \$60m Antipa Resources farm-in deal

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The hunt for copper and gold in the prospective Paterson Province has taken a step change after Newcrest Mining struck a \$60 million exploration farm-in deal with Antipa Minerals. Under the agreement, the gold major will spend as much as \$60 million to fund exploration on the junior's 2180sqkm Wilki project which surrounds Newcrest's existing Telfer mine and lies immediately to the west and north of its Havieron discovery. The deal, which involves Newcrest injecting \$3.9 million in Antipa for a 9.9 per cent stake, could see Newcrest taking as much as a 75 per cent interest in Wilki over a staged six-year exploration campaign.

The news comes hot on the heels of Rio Tinto advising on Wednesday that it would seek to bring its Winu project into production by 2023 with expectations of a maiden resource for the copper find soon.

The guidance from Rio this week suggests the East Pilbara's Paterson province could host two new mines within the next three years, with Newcrest also confident of developing a mine at Havieron.

The Newcrest agreement mirrors a pre-existing deal Antipa has with Rio over its Citadel project which represents the northern portion of the explorer's Paterson landholding.

Antipa revealed last month Rio had elected to proceed to the next stage of the agreement struck in 2015, which would involve the mining major spending an additional \$14 million in exploration to boost its stake in Citadel from 51 per cent to 65 per cent.

It has already spent \$11 million on the 1330sqkm project, which lies immediately east of Rio's Winu discovery.

The Newcrest deal with Antipa highlights the gold major's commitment to the area and its belief in the prospectivity of the ground surrounding its Telfer mine and Havieron discovery.

Antipa said it would begin exploration activities at Wilki within four to six weeks.

Executive chairman Stephen Power said the agreement with Newcrest was designed to ensure a robust exploration program would be undertaken across the Wilki project over the coming years, including the drill-testing of a number of highly prospective targets.

"Furthermore, the share placement positions Antipa in a strong financial position enabling the company to progress exploration activities on its remaining 100-per-cent-owned tenure," he said. At Havieron, Newcrest is ramping up drilling at the deep find 45km east of Telfer in the hope of delivering a maiden resource by the end of the year.

The Melbourne-based miner envisages an underground mine, with ore being trucked to Telfer for milling.

Newcrest got its foothold in Havieron in March when it entered a farm-in agreement with Greatland Gold.

The deal followed stunning, deep intersections returned by the London-listed explorer, including 275m at 4.77 grams per tonne gold and 0.61 per cent copper.

By spending \$US65 million on exploration, Newcrest could eventually secure up to 70 per cent of the project.

Fortescue Metals Group is another significant groundholder in

the Paterson province both in its own right and via a farm-in deals with Carawine Resources and Reward Minerals. Antipa shares closed up 0.2¢, or 18 per cent, at 1.3¢ after touching a high of 1.5¢ in a deeply sold-off market.