

Heron Explorer

A quarterly communication from Heron Resources, keeping you informed of our latest projects, initiatives and business opportunities.

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Getting to know Kevin Kellow

Kevin Kellow has been newly appointed as Safety Officer of the A1 Gold Mine in eastern Victoria.

Can you give us a brief summary of your working background and how you came to be working in the industry?

Originally working in the motor industry and volunteering my time to the local CFS station in South Australia, I progressed through the ranks to become a senior fireman and state instructor in breathing apparatus.

I was offered a job working for a small company called Deanmac, who provided emergency response to the Army and Air force bases at Wagga Wagga in NSW. I had left my now wife (Meika) at University in Adelaide to fulfill my dream of becoming a professional fire fighter. Wishing to return to Adelaide with Meika, I took a position with WMC/BHP Billiton Olympic Dam as an Emergency Services Officer. It was here I gained most of my mining emergency response experience, also becoming an ambulance officer in the process. I then began a degree in Emergency Management at Charles Sturt University.

What project were you most recently working on before moving to Victoria?

I was working for Dominion Gold Operations at the Challenger gold mine located approximately 200kms south west of Cooper Pedy in South Australia as a Safety and Emergency Response officer.

What attracted you to move to Victoria to work on the A1 Mine?

It would have to be the challenge of being involved in starting a mine from a bare patch, by this I mean not even an office. Being given an opportunity to develop a safety culture and contribute to the site growing safely into production. The location was also a major draw card for my family, an ability to live in a small country town without traffic lights, (not in a desert) yet still only a short drive to Melbourne so the wife can still have her metropolitan fix.

As the new safety officer for the project could you explain what your role involves?

The role of safety officer at A1 gold mine is very diverse. My main focus has been establishing a culture of safety throughout our employees, establishing our mines rescue and emergency response capabilities, site safety equipment and external suppliers for everything needed on site.

Over time I will provide leadership in emergency response, establish and co-ordinate a mine emergency response team, provide security, conduct inductions, deliver safety training, create and review site safety standards policies and procedures.



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What do you see are the project's biggest safety concerns?

My top two major concerns would be;

1. The drive to and from work. As silly as it may sound our drive to the A1 mine site from Jamieson is about 40km and usually takes around 45mins. The road has many tight bends and curves as it follows the Goulburn River, Gaffney's and Raspberry creeks, it is made of gravel that over time has formed small round pebbles. As we pass Gaffneys creek township the road surface changes from gravel to a bitumen road just wide enough for the vehicle before back to gravel for the remaining journey. The road has poor signage and almost no safety barriers. Often you look out the window and see either water, extreme steep slope (200m down) or solid rock walls. If the drive though the beautiful alpine region was not scary enough, nature adds its own hazards of fallen trees, poor visibility and wildlife.
2. Bush Fire. (Lightning) We have been taking a 10 minute drive to Frenchman's Gap, which is 650 meters in elevation above the mine site to access internet and receive mobile phone coverage. As you arrive you're given a stark reminder of just how fire prone the area is. In 2006 a large fire burnt out Gaffneys creek, the A1 Settlement and part of the Big River state forest. Three years on there is thousands of dead trees, although on the A1 lease the trees are showing a strong sign of recovery.

What do you do for fun outside of work?

I'm not sure that I would call it fun however, I enjoy racing yachts offshore on long distance races such as the Sydney to Hobart, however when at home just mellow out with a glass of red wine savoring watching my daughter grow up. So family time has become very important to me.

