

Alderan sets the bar even higher

Alderan Resources Ltd may have soared above all other newcomers in 2017, but chief executive Chris Wanless expects his US-focused company to better those feats this year, headlined by a potential major discovery at the Frisco copper project in Utah.

“We’re not going to count our chickens before they hatch, there is still a lot of work to do there, but we’ve only really just scratched the surface,” Wanless told **Paydirt**.

“We certainly think 2018 is going to be even better than 2017. We are planning quite an aggressive exploration programme this year which will really unlock the potential, not just of the big underlying porphyry prospect but all the associated prospects around it.

“It could be a very significant year, not just for the company but potentially for exploration in the US and in Australia because it’s been a long time since any junior has made a Tier One discovery and this project certainly has that potential.”

Alderan raced out of the starter’s block upon completing an \$8.5 million IPO in June, finishing its opening day’s trade at 38c/share before charting a remarkable share price run which peaked at \$2.40/share in October.

Wanless credited a combination of good timing and strong support from lead broker BW Equities Pty Ltd and mining entrepreneur Tolga Kumova, as well as the untapped potential of the Frisco project, as the key drivers behind the company’s memorable first seven months on the bourse.

“I think for most of the people we met [in the lead-up to the IPO] the only real question we got was about how this thing could still be there given its location in the middle of the copper industry in the US,” he said.

“It was quite an easy sell to investors and I think that’s also indicative of the fact that everyone’s looking for copper at the moment...and at the end of the day there were a lot of people wanting to get on to the stock and that really did push the share price up a fair bit.”

A 10,000m drilling campaign kicked off at Frisco in July, followed by an IP survey over the entirety of the project.



Expect plenty of drill holes to be punched into the Frisco project in 2018

Frisco is comprised of historical mining centres and workings, including the Cactus copper-gold silver deposit and breccia pipe, the Accrington copper-zinc-silver-gold skarn and the Horn zinc deposit.

“Porphyries are big systems so last year’s work was really about trying to understand the geology at the Frisco project,” Wanless said.

“The geophysics we did, which was a very big geophysics programme, was integral in helping us identify exactly where the main porphyry intrusions are and the associated deposits.



Alderan is chasing a Tier One copper discovery at Frisco

“We were perhaps a little bit late starting the drilling programme, but that went pretty much as expected. We knew we were not necessarily drilling in the best places to start with because we were still doing the geophysics, but we think we have a pretty good indication now of where we should be drilling going forward.”

Although the company’s share price tailed in December, it failed to internally

dampen the possibility Alderan was on the cusp of unmasking a major discovery at Frisco, with the results of the IP survey identifying a new porphyry copper prospect, subsequently named Perseverance.

Wanless said the Perseverance prospect was emerging as the likely main causative intrusion for the whole Frisco system.

“We always suspected there was either a large porphyry underlying the whole system or multiple porphyries, and Perseverance certainly has that in terms of its

scale,” he said.

“It’s similar in size to Bingham Canyon, if you consider the size of Bingham Canyon once you include the pyrite shell around it. Bingham Canyon is a 7bt copper deposit, it’s massive. Discovering the Perseverance target underneath the whole project is certainly a very significant move forward for the project.”

Wanless was confident his company had enough cash remaining in the bank to see it through the proposed 2018 exploration programme, headlined by “lots and lots of drilling”.

If not, Alderan is unlikely to be short of potential backers should it need to rattle the tin.

“A very common theme among a lot of the funds and investors is they’re really keen to get some copper exposure,” Wanless said. “Copper is, after all, the biggest base metal market and there’s more copper used in batteries, electric cars, etc than any other commodity.

“That said there are very, very few investment opportunities in copper around for them. One fund manager recently told me he was desperate to get on to copper and that he’s been looking all over the place but just couldn’t find it. And it’s not just fund managers; a lot of the majors have come out in the last 6-12 months have been very bullish on copper.

“There are simply very few copper projects out there, especially in good jurisdictions. We just happen to be in one of the best places in the world to build a copper mine.”

– Michael Washbourne