

GLENCORE TOWNSVILLE NEWS

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Another World First



The Night Shift Crew: L-R Noel Kimlin (XT), Dixia Santiago, Nobuyuki Ishikawa, Tatsushi Kosaka, Caroll Encina, Gavin Sue-Yek (XT) and Jorge Sanhueza

Wet commissioning was carried out on Glencore Technology's (GT) first high capacity robotic cathode stripping machine in Antucoya, Chile through August and September with the final performance test and machine acceptance on 18 September.

Located in the Atacama Desert, the Antucoya facility is a greenfield site. Built from scratch, the facility required the construction of the mine, a crushing plant, heap leaching, an EW plant, a 6,000 bed camp along with all other associated infrastructure. This all materialised in a few short years.

Noel Kimlin, GT Engineering Superintendent said this type of machine is the first in the world to use the robots to strip the copper deposits from the mother plates at a design speed of 420 plates per hour.

Other stripping machines around the world use robots to move the cathode plates inside the machinery but not actually stripping the copper deposit.

Noel commented that it's quite a machine. It includes options for automatic corrugation press, sampling, weighing, labelling and strapping to produce the completed bundles ready for sale.

Years earlier, GT pioneered this type of copper cathode stripping, installing low capacity robot stripping machines at CST Mining Group's Lady Annie Mine north west of Mount Isa in 2011 and a year later at Glencore's Nikkelverk Refinery in Norway.

However after further testing at the Townsville Refinery, it was confirmed that this form of robotic stripping could be offered at high capacity as well.

Along with Mesco engineers, GT personnel have seen this project through the various phases of concept, design, fabrication, installation and now the final proving of capacity on site.

The start-up of the Antucoya electrowinning (EW) plant went well with good quality first copper produced under very controlled conditions.

GT personnel, Hernando Saldarriaga, Gavin Sue-Yek, Noel Kimlin along with Mesco engineers, Tatsushi Kosaka and Nobuyuki Ishikawa were all on site to complete the successful commissioning works. It was also an opportunity to provide training for both operational and maintenance personnel.

Definitely a great achievement by all involved.



The robot stripping station

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