NEWS

# Diggers and Dealers: Why ASX explorers should be thinking more like Canadians

***By Josh Chiat, 5 August, 2026***

Australian explorers should take inspiration from Canadian counterparts and drill harder for longer, says an emerging Aussie junior.

For years a cultural distinction has defined the Aussie and Canadian exploration markets.

While Aussies have been keen to release resources early, start small and grow from a running start, Canadian companies have been known for delaying resource announcements while they drill like beavers chew through wood.

SX2's Mike Hudson. Pic: Diggers and Dealers

The former is often viewed as more transparent, but **Waratah Minerals (ASX:WTM)** executive chair Andrew Stewart, who worked on the giant Oyu Tolgoi copper-gold discovery with Robert Friedland's Ivanhoe Mines, says Aussie investors are missing a trick.

TSX-listed stocks tend to put more metres into the ground before they table resources, sometimes selling up to a major without publicly revealing the scale of their find.

It's more about the journey than the event, Stewart says, pointing to the approach of dual TSX/ASX listed darlings **Benz Mining Corp (ASX:BNZ)** and **Southern Cross Gold (ASX:SX2)** as evidence capital growth can be built through drill hits alone.

C$2.4bn capped, TSX listed Snowline has built a near 8Moz measured and inferred resource at the Valley project in the Yukon, where it made its discovery in 2021, while Great Bear was sold to Kinross for US$1.4bn in 2022 without even publishing a resource.

After announcing its exciting Spur discovery near the Cadia gold mine in New South Wales last year, Waratah's Stewart says there should be enough drilling data to compile something within six to eight months.

But he stressed it's more important to test the limits of its discovery.

"We don't like to treat this as an event-driven process, we like to treat this as a journey. And so we're building this asset as if you were a major company and then you're adding the value that way," Stewart said after presenting at Diggers and Dealers in Kalgoorlie on Tuesday.


**SOUTHERN CROSS GOLD CONSOLIDATED LTD**
**TSXV: SXGC | ASX: SX2**
**www.southerncrossgold.com**

Mariana Bermudez – Corporate Secretary
+1 604 685 9316 mbermudez@chasemgt.com
1305 – 1090 West Georgia Street Vancouver, BC, V6E 3V7, Canada

Nicholas Mead – Investor Relations
+61 415 153 122 info@southerncrossgold.com.au
Level 21, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3000, Australia

"A lot of junior companies go out there, they explore, they put in exploration, they put out a mineral resource and they stop drilling, then they start the studies.

"It's not what this is about. This is going to be a lot of drilling for a long time, but we will aim to have that resource and I think it's about what's meaningful.

"It might be an open pit resource at the start and focus on the upper 300m, and I think getting that gravitas is anything more than sort of the three million ounces type thing is something that's significant.

**Focusing on drilling**

Stewart said Australian analysts and investors are often too quick to want resources to value assets.

"We're not getting any pressure from our shareholders for that. That's more people from the outside," he said.

"You see a lot of these stories at the moment that there's no rush for a resource – I mean Southern Cross, a lot of the Canadian stories

"And I think people in Australia for a long time have looked for resources just to value the assets.

"It's not necessarily the way they should be valued."

Waratah shares are down around 15% YTD, but up 22.5% over the past 12 months.

With a market cap of almost $190m, the aim is to continue growing through the drill bit at Spur and the nearby Consols discovery.

Stewart says there remains at least several months ahead of Waratah in its current phase of life, with 10 rigs on the ground and 77,000m drilled to date.

"We're not being crazy with that resource. We've only been going at this for 12 months. To drill this and give this justice is at least another six or eight months of drilling and then you'd have a step in the resource."

With investors now using AI to create gold deposit models from available data, he argued it is easier than ever to assess value based on drilling results alone.

And the ethos of management is to run exploration to the max.

"I see exploration geologists that are pushing the management for drill rigs and the management's … often very conservative," he said.

"Whereas I think if you go to a geologist that wants a rig, you give him five or six. And I come from a school where, you know we went from one rig to 24 rigs in about six months on Oyu Tolgoi."

**Speaking of...**



Mariana Bermudez – Corporate Secretary
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+61 415 153 122 info@southerncrossgold.com.au
Level 21, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3000, Australia

Speaking of Southern Cross Gold, it's engineered a massive ramp up in exploration activity at the Sunday Creek discovery north of Melbourne after signalling a resource will be due in March next year.

An upgraded exploration target was posted yesterday of 10.4-11.9Mt grading from 8.9g/t gold equivalent (AuEq) to 12.1g/t AuEq for 3Moz to 4.6Moz AuEq.

To fulfil that aspiration, rigs on site will be ramped from 11 now to 24 by the end of 2026.

"It's a $60m dollar budget all up for 200km so we'll go from about $5m a month to $10m bucks per month between now and the end of they year," boss Mike Hudson told media after presenting on Tuesday.

The C$2.4bn capped firm has already sunk an exploration decline, among the first to be approved in many years in Victoria, where a fraying government has been working to reverse its reputation as a tough mining jurisdiction in the past decade.

Hudson, who grew up in nearby Kilmore, was optimistic about the reappointment of Jaclyn Symes as Resources Minister in the new Labor Government of Ben Carroll, which will only be in place until this year's November election.

After sinking the decline, he is confident the explorer will be able to get Sunday Creek permitted, with the focus on using exploration to define a resource of meaningful scale.

That decline will also help expand on 130km drilled to date as SX2 looks to de-risk the project.

**"**Gold is variable no doubt in any deposit so you always want to get underground as quickly as possible and de-risk it, hence decline getting in and seeing it and touching the ore as Pierre Lassonde says," Hudson said.

"So that's a major de-risking moment and that's another major reason, not only to increase the drilling and to permit progressively but also to get under and de-risk it from the geological model to the resource, from the resource to the reserve and hopefully eventually out the other side of a mill."

This article first appeared at https://www.miningnews.net/explorers/news-analysis/4535040/southern-cross-scales-sunday-creek and was published on 4 August 2026.

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## ABOUT SOUTHERN CROSS GOLD CONSOLIDATED

Southern Cross Gold Consolidated Ltd (SXGC) is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) and has CHESS Depositary Interests (CDIs) listed on the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX).



Mariana Bermudez – Corporate Secretary
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+61 415 153 122 info@southerncrossgold.com.au
Level 21, 459 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3000, Australia

We explore for gold and antimony in the Victorian Goldfields. Our 100% owned flagship project at Sunday Creek is the best new grassroots discovery in Australia with a globally leading high-grade hit rate for this stage of the project's development.

Our results demonstrate high-grades and wide zones of gold and antimony over an 11km mineralised trend. As at February 17, 2026, the project has delivered a total of seventy nine (79) composite intersections exceeding 100 g/t Au, sixty six (66) composite intersections between 50-100 g/t Au and ninety seven (97) individual intersections exceeding 10% Sb by applying a 1 m (down hole length) @ 5 g/t AuEq lower cut.

Our corporate objectives are to discover and develop large, long-life, sustainable assets which create value for shareholders and all stakeholders in the community.

The team has made numerous discoveries and has demonstrated success in advancing these towards mining.

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