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Meridian to finalise flowsheet

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WITH metallurgical results confirming its Kapok West deposit can produce high-grade lead and zinc concentrates using the same process flotation regime as previous operations, Meridian Minerals can now get on with the job of finalising the process plant design for its Lennard Shelf project in Western Australia.

A key component of the current Emanuel Range bankable feasibility study (BFS), dubbed this due to the geographic location of the deposits in the Emanuel Range region of the Lennard Shelf, is to examine the viability of restarting mining operations based on mining the Kapok, Kapok West and Cadjebut Splay resources.

Total resources at the property stand at 13.21 million tonnes grading 6.35% zinc and 3.8% lead, with Kapok West accounting for an inferred 2.9Mt at 3.1% zinc, 5.5% lead and 13.9 grams per tonne silver.

The Kapok Central deposit hosts a measured and indicated 891,000t at 8.6% zinc and 5.6% lead, while numbers for Kapok East total 619,000t at 7.6% zinc and 9.3% lead and the Cadjebut Splay has an inferred 1.1Mt at 2.4% zinc, 8.5% lead and 15.7gpt silver.

Preliminary figures from the BFS estimated the project would have a pre-production capital cost of \$A153 million, which included a 20% contingency for the relocation and reconstruction of the Galmoy plant from Ireland, mine and infrastructure.

Meridian is looking at a base case annual processing rate of 600,000 tonnes per annum, with projected operating costs of US\$66c per pound of payable metal.

Managing director Jeremy Read said the results significantly de-risked the project.

"The Lennard Shelf project had a reputation, when it was in production, for producing high-grade and very clean mineral concentrates, highly sought after by the smelters," Read said.

"The testwork completed on the Kapok West mineralisation confirms that it will also produce high-grade, clean mineral concentrates using the same process as previously applied.

"This is an important result and we can now finalise the processing and flotation design for the processing plant."

Overall, the flotation results were consistently good, particularly when it came to lead, which returned a typical recovery rate to concentrate of 93-97%.

The zinc results typically showed recoveries of 83-89%, with the lower recoveries coming from lower zinc intersections.

Shares in Meridian were unchanged in morning trade at 7.6c.



Jeremy Read

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