

Anglo's digital vision for Quellaveco takes shape with Epiroc autonomous drill rig arrivals

Posted by Daniel Gleeson on 27th January 2022



Anglo American's automation plans for its Quellaveco mine in Peru are starting to take shape, with its first automated trucks having started up in "pre-mining" mode last year and now automation-ready drills on site ahead of first ore production later this year.

The company's most digital and autonomous mine yet, Quellaveco is expected to produce 300,000 t/y of copper over the first 10 years of the mine from an orebody that currently has around 1,300 Mt of reserves.

In the company's December quarter production results today, it said construction of the project was progressing to plan, with first ore mined in October and first copper concentrate production expected in the middle of 2022.

In the first half of 2021, the operation started up four of a planned fleet of 27 autonomous Cat 794AC haul trucks as one element in a range of technologies that will help to make Quellaveco Anglo American's first 100% digital mine.



Anglo American plans to deploy a fleet of 27 autonomous Cat 794AC haul trucks at Quellaveco

Now, the company has drill rigs on site that, by the end of this year, should be fully integrated into its in-country remote operations centre. The rigs – six fully autonomous Epiroc Pit Viper 351s and three tele-remote SmartRoc D65s – will eventually be overseen from this remote operations centre.

IM: How many rigs out of the "multiple" drill rigs you ordered from Epiroc will be autonomous? What does the timeline look like from here in terms of them reaching their capacity? When will their control and oversight be integrated into the remote operations centre?

TC: Quellaveco will have six Pit Viper 351s that operate fully autonomously and three SmartRoc D65s that operate in tele-remote (operator controlled from a distance with some autonomous functions). We aim to integrate full control and oversight of the drill fleet into the remote operations centre by the second half of this year.