



WASM Senior Lecturer Dr Mostafa Sharifzadeh (left), Tropicana Planning Superintendent Diana Greenup, WASM Associate Lecturer Dr Guang Xu, Tropicana Student Geotechnical Engineer Christopher Box and Tropicana Senior Planning Engineer Steven Hulme.

Academic staff from the Western Australian School of Mines (WASM) visited Tropicana in March and April to not only canvass potential thesis projects for students but to foster and build on relationships with the local mining sector.

Dr Oktay Erten, Dr Waqar Asad and Andrew Govey from the WASM's Mine Planning Department visited Tropicana on March 13, while WASM Senior Lecturer Dr Mostafa Sharifzadeh, Associate Lecturer Dr Guang Xu and Senior Lecturer Dr Mohammad Waqar Ali from WASM's Geotechnical and Mine Ventilation Department visited earlier this month (April).

A mine and mill tour was followed by technical presentations by AngloGold Ashanti Australia's Senior Planning Engineer Steven Hulme and Engineer Support Tate Bailli and general discussions on proposed thesis topics in the area of mine plan optimisation.

WASM is particularly interested in technologies on spatial modelling of ore bodies and earth sciences variables; ultimate pit limit design and pit optimisation; along with geotechnical and mine ventilation systems.

The visit not only opens the door to possible vocational student/academic placement opportunities for WASM at Tropicana, but is the first step in building a relationship between the group and Tropicana.

For Steven Hulme, who coordinated the day, working with WASM is really a two-way street for both parties.

"We have already identified more of an opportunity in mine engineering at the moment, but by mid-year there should be quite a lot of interest on the metallurgy and geology as well," Steven said.

"At the same time, from our perspective, it really pushes youth development within the tertiary institutions."

Already this year enrolments in WASM's Mining Systems Unit have grown to 107, while total student numbers for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies in mining disciplines are estimated at around 600.

WASM's Govey said this year the group was keen to "maintain its local connection" by re-engaging with the mining industry, a move that has already facilitated an applied research project at Norton Goldfields' Paddington Gold Mine and a planned visit to First Quantum Minerals' Ravensthorpe nickel mine in WA's Great Southern region.

Last year the WASM academic team visited Alcoa's bauxite mine sites in the South West, as well as the Collie coal mine.

WASM is particularly interested in technologies on spatial modelling of ore bodies and earth sciences variables; ultimate pit limit design and pit optimisation; along with geotechnical and mine ventilation systems.