



## UME positions for growth

Stephen Bryant expects to celebrate leading Australian drilling contractor UME Australia's 16th birthday in style next year. Not that being 15 has been a chore, despite the impact of the global financial crisis on the company's mining clients.

Whether it's just because UME has had the right clients, in the right places, at the right times, or the company has just gone about things differently to struggling rivals, it has nearly doubled its workforce in the past 12 months and maintained high drill rig utilisation rates in four states.

"UME has seen considerable growth in the last 12 months," managing director Bryant said.



"One of our crowning achievements is we have drilled 15,206.9m in one month (with the 89mm bits/ST58 tube) with one of our L6C's."

"I would say we have been very successful in helping clients to achieve drilled metres in a hurry. We have had numerous contracts where we have gone to site for small parcels to help out – 10,000-15,000m, etc) and have remained on site for some time afterwards ... in some cases several years!"

Bryant said UME had a strong working relationship with Atlas Copco.

"We have had that support since we commenced trading and it has been a major contributor to our growth," he said. "We have a lot of support from various Atlas branches and often engage Atlas technicians for support during peak times."

UME had a strong growth plan and had worked hard over the past 12 months to position itself for further expansion.

"We have expanded our warehouse facility and in 2010 we will be stocking the bulk of spare parts ourselves, including drill consumables, which in turn will be shipped directly to our sites. The key focus for this will be ensuring availability of supply and continuing to minimise site down time," Bryant said.

"Part of our success is we stock a considerable amount of spare parts on our sites which reduces down time and increases drill availability. We have also expanded our workshop facility in Bendigo, Victoria, and are now undertaking all our own rebuilds, as well as service exchange for rock drills, feeds, etc, which in turn increases our availability on site by ensuring we have a ready supply to service our sites."

So, roll on 2010. It promises to be a sweet sixteenth year for a mining services company on the rise.

"Most of our plant and equipment has been working during the economic downturn. This is largely due to some long term contracts and our focus on maintaining a sound and skilled workforce, sound business practice and ethics, delivery of goods and service for a fair price, and a firm commitment to ensuring client satisfaction."

"The fact that the company has grown in this economic downturn period shows dedication from our staff and most importantly, shows that our clients have confidence in the service we can provide."

Bendigo-based UME has some 75 staff and a fleet of 16 drills and miscellaneous support equipment.

With the recent purchase of another Atlas Copco Simba L6C production drill the company has seven Atlas Copco drills in its fleet, making it the largest contractor owner of the manufacturer's underground drills in Australia. Bryant said the performance of the equipment, and support from the OEM, had been important factors in UME's success.

"The first Simba L6C we purchased was nearly five years ago," he said. "We have found the L6C to be one of the best drills we have used. We have many people on our team with a lot of Simba experience and our records of achievement are testimony to the success we have had with these drills."

"The most recent record achieved with a Simba was at Mt Isa Mines in Queensland where we achieved in excess of 12,500m in a month. That was with our Simba 4353, using 89mm bits and ST58 tubes. This particular model was the first in our fleet – and is the oldest in our fleet – proving once again what we can achieve with the Atlas drills."



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