



AVKO focuses on the traditionally more difficult areas of mining.

Contract Miner of the Year

WINNER: AVKO Mining

HIGHLY COMMENDED: Byrnegut

FINALIST: Thiess

FINALIST: Macmahon

AVKO Mining, established in Kalgoorlie in 1993, specialises in contract narrow vein mining, particularly in the gold industry.

In recent times it has expanded its capabilities in mechanised narrow vein mining and Alimak raise mining with the acquisition of Ian Kidd Mining a similarly sized contractor based in Queensland.

Ian Kidd Mining has worked at the Gympie Gold mine and the acquisition gives AVKO two current contracts, one of which is in PNG. The scope of works at this PNG operation has just been extended by a factor of four.

When he founded AVKO, director Paul Hurley had been working for other contracting companies for six years. He says he knew that a better service could be offered in terms of quality of work and safety of employees.

Also, by developing a company focussed on the traditionally more difficult areas of a mining operation, he says he thought some mines would be interested in having the administration and

supervision of such areas taken out of their hands.

AVKO started as an airleg mining contractor, with airleg mining still the core of its business, an area often considered the most challenging.

The company provides a range of services to the mining industry, including: airleg and shift supervisor labour hire, underground development, shaft sinking, mechanical and airleg mining, machinery hire, ITH drilling and civil drill and blast.

In larger mines, AVKO caters to the more specialised parts of the business. Its other service is whole-of-mine contracts for larger companies or tribute mining for smaller operations.

Its clients have included WMC Resources, Newcrest Mining, Croesus Mining, Roche Mining, Black Swan Nickel, Macmahon, Placer Dome Asia Pacific, Cobar Management, Peak gold mine and Mincor.

The very nature of the business dictates that AVKO will experience major variations of work volume. The way it deals



AVKO director Paul Hurley (right) accepts Prospect Awards trophy and certificate from sponsor Atlas Copco's Andrew Lyon.

with short-term cycles is to withhold enough funds from each contract so it can employ its miners in town in quiet periods.

For longer duration cycles, AVKO has regular discussions with clients outlining their needs and expectations during these periods.

Recently AVKO has started

to move into the civil excavation area as part of an organic growth strategy to try to compensate for the cyclic nature of mining.

AVKO says it is taking a proactive view to training student mining engineers and employed two-third year men and one first-year woman to

work as underground labourers last summer.

The company says its performance is measured by safety.

At one Queensland mine experiencing potentially dangerous ground conditions, AVKO formed AVKO Drilling to build and operate a machine that replaces miners to reduce the exposure of personnel to dangerous ground conditions.

Although the new method is slightly more costly to the client it was a very smart decision as shortly afterwards the previous method was discontinued because of the escalating risks.

To date three drills have been commissioned and there are plans for another two.

The company is also involved with the WASM Curtin University on a geotechnical engineering project involving AVKO building a prototype rockbolt overcoring rig.

The rig is being trialled at several mines extracting 150mm diamond core with rockbolts up to 3m in length embedded in the core.