

BEE group buys stake in Shaft Sinkers

Bridgette Radebe's wholly black-owned group, Mmakau Mining, has bought 25% of Shaft Sinkers, in a deal believed to be the first of its kind in South Africa.

"We are extremely pleased to have linked up with a BEE company like Mmakau," says Shaft Sinkers' MD Peet Nel. "Not only does this new relationship benefit from Mmakau's 15 years of experience in contract mining in South Africa, but also from the company's excellent track record in the field of liaison with tribal authorities and rural communities."

Radebe says the acquisition is the next, most logical step in the growth and diversification of Mmakau. "More importantly, it signals the first successful penetration of a black-owned company into the shaft-sinking field and is further evidence of both the spirit and intent of the Mining Charter. There is no doubt that Mmakau stands to benefit tremendously from Shaft Sinkers' 40+ years of experience in shaft sinking, tunnelling and civil engineering activities in other sectors.

"From Mmakau's side we hope to add value not only in respect of our technical know-how but also by contributing to Shaft Sinkers' drive for progress in meeting the Mining Scorecard's key requirements relating to ownership, procurement, human resource development,

employment equity and community development."

Shaft Sinkers is currently working on a number of major contracts – with a total value in excess of R750m – for South African mining companies. It has two contracts with Lonmin for the sinking and equipping of the Saffy and Hossy shafts at Brits on the western limb of the Bushveld Complex.

"With Mmakau on board, we believe we are now well positioned to secure additional lucrative contracts, not only in South Africa, but elsewhere in Africa, and, indeed, globally," says Nel.

Shaft Sinkers has been sinking shafts through every type of rock strata for more than 40 years. It has achieved several milestones:

- the fastest mechanised sinking record – 200.4m in one month at the then Vaal Reefs No 10 shaft, 1987;
- the deepest shaft – 3 583m at the then Western Deep Levels South Mine, now Mponeng;
- the widest shafts – 19m diameter at Drakensberg Pumped Storage Scheme.

Shaft Sinkers also pioneered mid-shaft development – a system that facilitates horizontal access to the ore body from the vertical shaft whilst primary shaft-sinking is still in progress. ○



At the Shaft Sinkers/ Mmakau Mining announcement, Bridgette Radebe and Shaft Sinkers' MD Peet Nel take centre stage.

