

## **Conquest not happy with Gold Fields JV**

Kate Haycock

**CONQUEST Mining is taking South African miner Gold Fields to dispute resolution over the Mt Carlton joint venture, while rejecting a new overture from the gold major over its gold-silver tenements in Queensland.**

Conquest said it had rejected an offer from Gold Fields to buy further into its gold-silver projects in Queensland and has instead chosen to push the projects through to production on its own.

The explorer already has a joint venture with Gold Fields at Mt Carlton and the Perth-based company said it was taking Goldfields to dispute resolution over this JV.

Conquest alleges Gold Fields has not kept up its side of the deal and explored as required.

The company said it wanted to clarify Gold Field's "commitment" to exploration at Mt Carlton.

Managing director John Terpu said in a statement the company was concerned "insufficient" drilling was going ahead at the Mt Carlton regional tenement.

He said while it was obvious Gold Fields liked the better than expected numbers the project was generating – both through drilling and a recent scoping study – he believed the project needed to be brought into development as quickly as possible.

"Our number one priority is the timely development of one of Australia's largest potential new gold projects at Silver Hill," Terpu said.

"We consider delays in the exploration of the surrounding area included in the JV [area], which is currently under management of [Gold Fields], to be detrimental in realising the upside potential for the entire region."

Conquest said Gold Fields had completed only 10% of the drilling requirement of 150,000m halfway through the earning period under the agreement.

"We've invoked the dispute resolution process and are very keen to see a resolution of this issue as soon as possible," Terpu said.

The process will take around 20 days.

In a pre-feasibility study released in April, Conquest said it hoped the Silver Hill project, part of the broader Mt Carlton tenements, would produce around 135,000 ounces of gold equivalent (72% gold, 15% silver and 13% copper) within two years.

The project will cost around \$110 million to develop, the company noted at the time.

Shares in Conquest were last traded at 50c, up 4.5c this morning.