The Site Operations Centre – A Carrapateena Story

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# ABSTRACT

In 2016 Carrapateena began collecting operational data on a PC in a demountable building in the middle of the desert. In 2024 Carrapateena has a world class Site Operations Centre, employing 28 personnel and providing full serviceability to the Carrapateena operation, from underground development to concentrate production. The story of Carrapateena’s SOC (Site Operations Centre) stems from big ideas and then a journey of discovering what a Site Operations Centre is and what it is not.

The SOC at Carrapateena has held many different personas and for it to truly become effective it had to strike the right balance between being a control room, and a service provider. Developing the SOC into a function with the right balance to support the operation requires subtle changes ranging from calling staff members technicians not controllers, accessibility to the room and presence at key stakeholder meetings, through larger modifications such as organisational structure and reporting lines.

Detail is what can make or break a SOC. If starting fresh some key considerations should be location, room layout, functions, resourcing, and well-defined deliverables.

The SOC should be central to the operational areas and departments. A single SOC serves all functions of a site and needs to be easily accessible by all areas.

The room needs to flow in the order of the material, from development, production, materials handling then processing.

Understanding the role and workload of each functional area of the SOC allows it to be set up for success. This leads to resourcing and must be adequate to maintain operations. A SOC must have “bums in seats” 24/7.

Documenting the Carrapateena SOC journey from infancy to maturity will hopefully provide some insight for new mines looking to set one up from the start and those established organisations wanting to take the next step.