

EQUITY RESEARCH

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SPEC BUY

Current Price Valuation

\$0.05 \$0.11

Code:			AUC
Sector:		Metals an	d Mining
* All figures in AUD u	ınless stated	otherwise	
Shares on Issue (M):			2,029
Market Cap (\$M):			101
cash debt			11 0
Net cash (\$M Jun 20)	22)		11
Enterprise value (\$M	•		91
52 wk High/Low (ps): 12m av. daily vol. (M		\$0.09	\$0.03 3.00
Key Metrics			
D/5 ()	FY25e	FY26e	FY27e
P/E (x) EV/EBITDA (x)	3.3 -30.2	1.8 -15.1	3.1 0.9
LV/LBITDA (X)	-30.2	-13.1	0.5
Financials:			
	FY23e	FY24e	FY25e
Revenue (\$M)	0 -3	0 -6	196 86
EBIT (\$M) NPAT (A\$M)	-3 -3	-6 -15	60
INI AT (ADIVI)	J	15	00
Net assets (\$M)	19	79	115
Op CF (\$M)	-3	-15	87
Per share data:			
EPS (c)	1.5	2.7	1.6
Dividend (cps)	-	-	-
Yield (%)	-	-	-
CF/Share (cps)	2.2	4.1	2.0
Prod (koz Au)	81.2	141.1	119.4
0.10			_ 25000
0.09		A	20000
0.07			15000
0.05	~~~	hand the same	10000
0.03			5000
0.01			- 0

Please refer to important disclosures at the end of the report (from page 8)

Jun-2022

Thursday, 11 August 2022

Ausgold Limited (AUC)

Study a Starting Point

Analyst | Royce Haese

Quick Read

Broad brushes, Ausgold's Katanning PFS published last week was in line with <u>our expectations</u>. Overall, the demonstration of the ability to front-end high-grades in the mine plan means that Katanning outperforms our previous mining-scenario we used to value the project, but a later build than anticipated has netted out against our prior assumptions. A Pre-Feasibility Study is just that though, this week's drill results show room remains to grow the project, and mining parameters can also be tweaked to improve efficiencies. Our valuation is unchanged at 11cps, we maintain our Spec Buy recommendation.

Study a Starting Point

Study: The Katanning Gold Project PFS outlined 11 years of production averaging 105kozpa from open-pit mining. Higher grade front-ended results in 126kozpa forecast production for the first six years.

Argonaut's Mining Scenario and Valuation: We have adjusted our model to take into account Ausgolds' study outcomes. Key adjustments discussed below. Overall, the study was in line with our prior expectations:

Input	Unit	Ausgold 1/8/22	Argonaut 26/5/22
Life of Mine	Years	11	10
Ore Tonnes Mined	Mt	32.0	26.0
Ore Processing Rate	Mtpa	3.0	2.8
Stripping Ratio	W:O	9	6
Average Gold Grade	g/t Au	1.25	1.25
Average Gold Grade Y1-6	g/t Au	1.47	1.25
Annual Au Prdn LOM	koz	105	101
Annual Au Prdn Y1-6	koz	126	101
Recovered Gold	Moz	1.16	1
Revenue - LOM	A\$M	2,669	2,270
AISC - LOM average	A\$/oz	1,481	1,335
Assumed gold price	A\$/oz	2,300	2,414
Pre Prdn Capex	A\$M	225	225
Sustaining Capex	A\$M	31	50
Closure Costs	A\$M	8	-

Recommendation

Ausgold's study demonstrates a long-lived, profitable gold project. There is room to improve upon the existing plan. We maintain our Spec Buy recommendation.



Ausgold Limited

Equities Research

Non-Executive Director

Non-Executive Director

Analyst: Royce Haese

Recommendation	Speculative Buy
Current Price	\$0.05
Valuation	\$0.11

Metals & Mining Sector Issued Capital (Mshs) 2,029 Market Cap (M) \$101 Thursday, 11 August 2022

Profit & loss (\$M) 30 June	2023E	2024E	2025E	2026E
Sales Revenue	0	0	196	341
+ Other income/forwards	0	0	0	0
- Operating costs	0	0	-86	-141
- Royalties	0	0	-5	-9
- Corporate & administration	-3	-6	-6	-6
Total Costs	-3	-6	-97	-156
EBITDA	-3	-6	99	185
margin	0%	0%	51%	54%
- D&A	0	0	-13	-25
EBIT	-3	-6	86	160
+ Finance Income/Expense	0	-9	-12	-11
PBT	-3	-15	74	149
- Tax expense	0	0	-14	-42
- Impairments and other	0	0	0	0
NPAT	-3	-15	60	106

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PBT	-3	-15	74	149
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- Impairments and other	0	0	0	0
NPAT	-3	-15	60	106

Cash flow (\$M)	2023E	2024E	2025E	2026E
+ Revenue	0	0	196	341
- Cash costs	-3	-6	-97	-156
- Forwards	0	0	0	0
-Tax payments	0	0	0	-14
+ Interest & other	0	-9	-12	-11
Operating activities	-3	-15	87	160
- Property, plant, mine devel.	0	-201	-28	-3
- Exploration	-6	-6	-6	-6
- Deferred Consideration	0	0	0	0
Investment activities	-6	-207	-34	-9
+ Borrowings	0	175	-10	-20
- Dividends	0	0	0	0
+ Equity	10	75	0	0
Financing activities	10	250	-10	-20
Cash change	1	27	43	131

Balance sheet	2023E	2024E	2025E	2026E
Cash & bullion	12	39	82	213
Other Current Assets	0	0	0	0
Total current assets	12	39	82	213
Property, plant & equip.	11	218	239	223
Investments/other	0	0	0	0
Total non-curr. assets	11	218	239	223
Total assets	22	257	321	436
Trade payables	2	2	21	21
Short term borrowings	0	10	20	20
Other	2	2	21	21
Total curr. liabilities	3	14	61	61
Long term borrowings	0	165	145	125
Other	0	0	0	0
Total non-curr. liabil.	0	165	145	125
Total liabilities	3	179	206	186
Net assets	19	79	115	250

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Financial ratios		2025E	2026E	2027E	2028E
GCFPS	Α¢	2.2	4.1	2.0	2.3
CFR	Χ	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
EPS	Α¢	1.5	2.7	1.6	1.6
PER	X	3.3	1.8	3.1	3.1
DPS	Α¢	-	-	-	-
Yield	%	-	-	-	-
Interest cover	X	7.0	14.5	11.1	12.7
ROCE	%	36%	72%	52%	57%
ROE	%	64%	60%	32%	26%
Gearing	%	126%	50%	34%	23%
Operations summary		2025E	2026E	2027E	2028E
Katanning Gold Project					
Ore processed (Mt)		1.7	3.0	3.0	3.0
Head grade (g/t)		1.70	1.63	1.38	1.38
Met. recovery		90%	90%	90%	90%
Gold prodn (kozs)		81	141	119	119
Cost per milled tonne (A\$/t)		52	47	48	48
Cash costs pre royalty (A\$/o	<u>z</u>)	1062	1003	1204	1205
Sustaining capital (\$M)		3	3	3	2
All in sustaining costs (A\$/oz)	1149	1084	1287	1286
Growth capital (\$M)		31	6	6	3
CAIC (A\$/oz)		1259	1262	1694	1662
Price assumptions		2025E	2026E	2027E	2028E
AUDUSD		0.725	0.725	0.725	0.725
Gold	USD	1750	1750	1750	1750
Valuation summary				A\$M	A\$/sh
Katanning Gold Project 7% re	eal after tax			330	0.16
Exploration				66	0.03
Corporate Overheads				-38	-0.02
Cash and bullion				11	0.01
Debt				0	0.00
Tax benefit				25	0.01
Hedging				0	0.00
Option/equity dilution				-162	-0.08
NAV				231	0.11
Directors, management					
Richard Lockwood				Non-Executive	Chairman
Matthew Greentree				Managir	ng Director
Denis Rakich				Executiv	ve Director
Geoff Jones				Non-Executiv	ve Director
Noal Foaris				Non Evocution	Discotos

*See Argonaut	Mining Sc	enario and	Valuation	section f	or Equity	assumptions

Shares	2023E	2024E	2025E	2026E
New shs issued/exerciseable	222	1667	0	0
Average issue price	0.045	0.045	0.000	0.000
Ordinary shares - end	2252	3918	3918	3918
Diluted shares - end	2252	3918	3918	3918

Top shareholders			M shs	%
Dundee Corp.	·		253.8	12.5
Jupiter Asset Management			125.0	6.2
Resources May '22	Mt	g/t Au	Kozs	Mkt cap/oz
Katanning Gold Project	56.0	1.21	2,160	47

Denis Rakich Geoff Jones Neal Fearis

Timothy Kestell

matarining coluit roject	50.5		-,0	• • •
Measured	19.0	1.31	800	
Indicated	26.8	1.14	984	
Inferred	9.5	1.03	370	
Argonaut model Aug '22	Mt	g/t Au	Kozs	
TOTAL INVENTORY	32.1	1.25	1,290	78.7
Katanning	32.1	1.25	1,290	



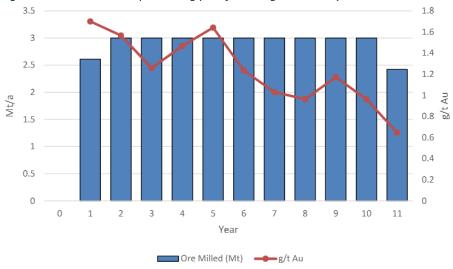
Ausgold reports a maiden Ore Reserve for its Katanning Gold Project of 32Mt @ 1.25 g/t Au for 1.28Mozs

Study a Starting Point

Study

Last week Ausgold reported its PFS and Maiden Ore Reserve for the Katanning Gold Project, Southwest WA. An 11 year mine-life is presented with higher-grade ore at the front end of the plan, allowing for dirt averaging 1.47 g/t Au to be processed during years one to six for 126kozpa gold production, with LOM averaging 1.25 g/t Au for 105kozpa.

Figure 1: KGP PFS Annual processing plan from August 22 study



Source: AUC

Total pre-production capital expenditure is estimated at \$225M, including the construction of a 3.0Mtpa processing facility

A 3Mtpa processing facility is envisaged, with total pre-production capital expenditure summing to \$225M. This pre-production spend includes the plant (\$85.4M est.), pre-production mining (\$41M est.), construction costs and contingency.

LOM stripping ratio under the current plan is 9:1 waste to ore. Of note, this LOM stripping ratio is factoring in the pre-strip that is also listed under pre-production capex. So after this capital has been sunk the operating strip ratio will be lower. In the study total material movement is maintained steady across LOM.

Figure 2: KGP PFS Annual material movement plan from August 22 study

35.0

20.0

15.0

0.0

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Ore Mined (Mt) Waste Mined (Mt)

Source: AUC



Ausgold estimates a LOM processing cost of \$17.3/t of fresh ore, recovery is estimated at 90.4%

An upgrade of local infrastructure will allow Katanning to access grid power for processing. Ausgold estimates processing cost of \$17.3/t of fresh/transitional ore, \$14.02/t for oxide. LOM gold recovery is estimated at 90.4% with 40-69% reporting to gravity. Mining cost across LOM is estimated at \$28.5/t of ore mined.

For the study purposes Ausgold has generated a Whittle optimised pit-shell using a \$2200 gold price and a revenue factor of 0.85. Within the optimised pit a lower cut-off grade of 0.6 g/t has been utilised for reporting of Reserves. A gold price of \$2300/oz is used for financial calculations.

Project payback is forecast at 1.7 years. The project on Ausgold's numbers generates a post-tax IRR of 40.7% and a post-tax NPV₅ of \$364.2

Ausgold projects gross revenue of \$2.7B across LOM for undiscounted free cashflow of \$773M. The early weighting of higher-grade ore and associated higher cashflow allows a payback period of 1.7 years. Ausgold's figures generate a post-tax IRR of 40.7% and a post-tax NPV $_5$ of \$364.2M. LOM AISC is estimated at \$1481/oz.

Argonaut considers this to be a robust study demonstrating a long-lived, profitable gold project.

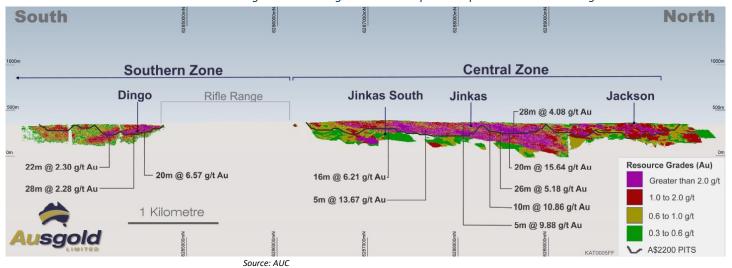


Figure 3: KGP long section with optimised pit-shell and resource grades outlined.

There is room to improve upon the existing PFS

There is material within the current open-pit shell not included in the current Reserve, if this converts it will add ounces and lower strip

Room to Flex

The Katanning PFS represents a solid base-case and a project worthy of investors attention. We do think that there is opportunity to flex the project in a number of areas which will improve financial outcomes.

Mineralisation at Jinkas is well understood by Ausgold, but due to the scale of the deposit there are some areas that have not been drilled sufficiently to include in the Reserve. Ausgold has not included any Resources in the Inferred category in the Reserve or LOM plan. Ausgold estimates Jinkas, Jackson and Olympia to contain 286kozs of gold in the Inferred category (excluding the 59kozs reported as an underground Resource), some of this material is located within the optimised pit-shell and if infill drilling proves continuity, then it will convert to Reserves. This will both add ounces to the mine-plan and lower the strip ratio.



High-grade shoots are known to project at depth beneath Jinkas, as outlined by the 59kozs @ 3.3 g/t Au 'underground' Resource reported in May. No underground material is included in the LOM plan.

Results reported this week demonstrate growth potential at depth and internal to the current pit-shell Drill results reported on the 10th of August demonstrate this potential to expand the existing project. Results returned beneath the optimised pit include:

- 4 m @ 17.1 g/t Au from 207 m
- 7 m @ 7.0 g/t Au from 113 m
- 6 m @ 4.0 g/t Au from 252 m

These results represent widths and tenors that would be profitable in an underground mining scenario if continuity holds. If close to the base of the current pit-shell then the pit may also pull-down to take in some of this higher-grade ore.

Recent results returned internal to the current optimised pit include:

- 8 m @ 2.0 g/t Au from 8 m
- 5 m @ 3.0 g/t Au from 31 m
- 8 m @ 1.8 g/t Au from 31 m

Again, profitable widths and tenors under Ausgold's mining plan if they are able to be converted into Reserve.

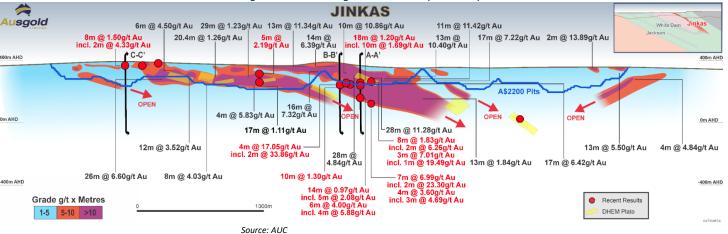


Figure 4: Jinkas long section with optimised pit-shell and recent results in red.

applied to the pit-material. With the margins Ausgold is forecasting a lower cut may be profitable, although it is likely this ore would be stockpiled and processed at the back-end of the mine plan so it does not displace higher margin ore.

For Reserve reporting and financial evaluation, a lower cut-off grade of 0.6 g/t Au was

GRES processing facilities regularly out-perform nameplate capacity

The study envisages a 3.0Mtpa processing facility with design-work and costings by GR Engineering Services (ASX:GNG). Most GRES plants outperform nameplate capacity, especially if oxide material is able to be sourced and blended with fresh rock. Away from Jinkas, Ausgold holds a dominant land position with numerous early-stage targets. With further exploration success these may contribute ore to the KGP.

Ausgold is currently collecting further samples for metallurgical testwork. These samples will be used to further optimise the flow sheet which may demonstrate improved recoveries.



Ausgold's study results were broadly in line with our expectations

Argonaut's Mining Scenario and Valuation

We have adjusted our model to take into account Ausgold's study outcomes. Overall, the study was in line with our prior expectations, with improvements in some areas offset mostly by a longer than anticipated runway to first gold. With a DFS scheduled for Q4 2023 and factoring in 18 months for FID and build, under the current plan we can expect first gold around mid-2025.

Key inputs adjusted in our model that have improved our project level NPV include:

- Front-ending higher-grade ore, with grade profile mirroring Ausgold's study (Figure 1, this report)
- Lowering processing cost to \$17.3/t, in line with AUC study. Prior \$20/t
- Assuming annual throughput of 3.0mtpa. Prior 2.8mtpa
- Assuming a larger LOM Reserve of 1.28Mozs @ 1.25 g/t Au, in line with AUC study. Prior 1.05Mozs @ 1.25 g/t Au

Key inputs adjusted in our model that have lowered our project level NPV include:

- Pushing back first gold to Q4 2024. Prior Q1 2024 (admittedly still aggressive in comparison to AUC's apparent timeline)
- Increase in assumed strip ratio to 7:1 (post \$25M assumed pre-strip). Prior 6:1
- This contributes to an increase in mining costs, now averaging \$32/t of ore across LOM. Prior \$26/t

The remainder of our model is unchanged. These changes have improved our valuation of the Katanning Gold Project (7% real after tax) to \$330M, prior \$280M.

The increased runway to first gold has necessitated we factor in an additional capital raise this financial year to provide working capital for studies leading to FID and the major raise for the build. We now assume \$10M is raised this financial year before the \$75M raised to fund major works next FY. We assume both raises are completed at 4.5cps (prior 5cps) due to the softer share price recently. These raises at these prices result in equity dilution in present value terms of \$162M. A higher share-price would enable Ausgold to raise at a higher price thereby reducing dilution for existing shareholders. We retain our 70:30 debt to equity split funding pre-production capital, with assumed debt of \$175M to contribute to funding the build.

Our Ausgold valuation remains steady at 11cps

Factoring in Ausgold's study figures our project level NPV

improves to \$330M

Factoring in the improved project level NPV, exploration upside, corporate overheads, tax benefits and equity dilution, we value Ausgold at \$231M or 11cps. Unchanged from prior.

Table 1: Argonaut's Ausgold Valuation Summary

Valuation summary	A\$M	A\$/sh
Katanning Gold Project 7% real after tax	330	0.16
Exploration	66	0.03
Corporate Overheads	-38	-0.02
Cash and bullion	11	0.01
Debt	0	0.00
Tax benefit	25	0.01
Hedging	0	0.00
Option/equity dilution	-162	-0.08
NAV	231	0.11

Source: Argonaut



Further price escalation remains a key risk to the project

Key Risks to Valuation

Ausgold's PFS which we have used to inform our model assumptions was completed based upon current tendered rates for mining, construction and processing. As is well documented most inputs for all miners have increased significantly over the past 18 months due to diesel/steel prices and a stretched labour market. There is risk here that costs continue to escalate.

There remains considerable upside potential at Katanning

We have discussed upside potential above, almost none of which is factored into our mining-scenario. There is also potential for diesel prices/the labour market to improve, which could materially reduce Ausgold's cost assumptions.

Another key risk is the potential to develop within West Australia's Great Southern wheatbelt region. The project is located on arable farmland ~40 km northwest of the town of Katanning and as such there is potential for increase environmental scrutiny on project development. The project is located on granted mining leases, and has been mined historically. Ausgold has established an office in Katanning and is actively engaging with stakeholders. These factors reduce this risk in our view.

We have assumed processing recoveries of 90%. Ausgold is investigating whether this can be improved. If recovery of 93% was able to be achieved then our project level NPV would improve from \$330M to \$370M. If the processing facility underperforms at 87% then our project level NPV reduces to \$291M.

At spot gold/exchange rate our Katanning Gold Project NPV improves to \$410M Our valuation is highly sensitive to both gold price and exchange rate. We have used our long term exchange rate assumption of AUD:USD, 0.725:1.0 and gold price assumption of US\$1750/oz. If spot values (AUD:USD, 0.7:1.0, US\$1790/oz) are used our Katanning Gold Project NPV improves to \$410M.

Table 2: Argonaut's Katanning Gold Project NPV₇ under various gold price and AUD:USD assumptions

		Gold Price (US\$)					
		-10%	-5%	Base	+5%	+10%	+15%
		1575	1662.5	1750	1837.5	1925	2012.5
	0.80	107	163	218	273	326	380
AUD:USD	0.75	174	233	291	348	405	463
	0.725	211	271	330	390	449	508
AU	0.70	250	311	373	434	496	557
	0.65	335	401	467	533	600	666

Source: Argonaut

We have assumed a 70:30 debt to equity split to fund construction in our model. There is no guarantee that either method of funding would be available to Ausgold to build the Katanning Gold Project, as the project advances we will continue review our financing assumptions.

Summary

Katanning represents a long-lived, profitable gold project. There is room to improve upon the existing plan. We maintain our Spec Buy recommendation.



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Important Disclosure

Argonaut acted as Lead Manager to the Placement to raise \$16M in March 2022 and will receive fees commensurate with this service

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