Diggers and Dealers Mining Forum – Day 1

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With delegates' names segregated alphabetically, registration was swift and the queues were very small, a lesson other mining conferences could learn, IMO.

The marquee is purpose built in Germany to exactly fit the car park it is sited in, it is the largest marquee in the southern hemisphere, and only gets used once a year!

There are around 130 company stands, including some service companies, arranged around the periphery of the marquee, with an inner circle, allowing plenty of room for chairs and casual seating.

The marquee is also used as the overflow room for the presentations taking pace in the adjoining Arts Centre, and this is the only criticism I have. The presentations boom out and it does make conversation with people in the booths quite difficult, and it's almost impossible to hear a softly spoken person! Once the presentations stop it's a huge relief, and the tendency is to race around the booths to take advantage of the silence while it lasts!

The catering was superb all day, and the quality of the staff serving was of the highest order. The staff are a mix of locals and others bussed in from Perth especially for the show, as are some of the barmaids in the local hostelries.

My overall impression is that the quality of companies attending was high, with several on the verge of production, talking a few months rather than years.

I caught up with Chris Reed, MD of Neometals {ASX: NMT}, who was his normal exuberant self, in very good spirits and confident about the direction the company is moving in. I noticed his stand was busy all day and was certainly listening to some of the discussions taking place there were some happy shareholders in attendance.

I noted a couple of companies that prima facie looked interesting and will look into them further, one being Galaxy {ASX: GXY}, though at a fraction under AUS $900 million, is somewhat larger than I would normally look at.

Day 2 tomorrow will allow me to be more focused and return to one or two of the stands that I like the look of the companies concerned.