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Brighter future lies ahead

Kalgoorlie Miner, Kalgoorlie

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OPINION PAUL EVERINGHAM



It's impossible to sign off on 2020 without acknowledging that this has been a year unlike any other.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an event the likes of which the world hasn't seen for more than half a century. From an economic standpoint, the resultant downturn is the biggest Australia has faced since the 1930s.

In Western Australia — and particularly in the resources sector — we've been extremely fortunate to be unaffected by much of this turmoil. But as we went about our everyday lives, I'm sure many of our thoughts will have been with those who have

done it tough over the past nine months.

The New Year will no doubt bring renewed optimism. Globally, the roll-out of a vaccine for COVID-19 will be at the forefront of many minds.

Locally, we are already seeing the benefits of the reopening of State borders within Australia. Workers who have been prevented from travelling interstate to see family and friends are now able to do so in time for the festive season.

For the Goldfields region, which is facing a tightening labour market, that also means more access to workers from further afield — even if that also brings issues concerning housing availability into sharper focus.

From the perspective of the CME and our Goldfields member companies, we're very much looking forward to launching our GE Business Register early in 2021. We understand how important small and medium-sized businesses are to communities in the Goldfields and Esperance, and this online portal will help them better connect and collaborate with mining companies and each other.

The 2020 Mines Rescue Competition had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 but our CME team in Kalgoorlie-Boulder has been working hard in the background to ensure this very popular staple of Goldfields life returns next year. Watch this space.

From the pending Northern Star-Saracen merger, to strong gold prices, renewed interest in nickel, continued progress towards a Lynas plant and new land releases in Kalgoorlie-Boulder — there is plenty for the Goldfields to be excited about as 2020 comes to an

end.

On behalf of the CME and its member companies, I'd like to thank the workers who have kept our resources operations going this year through some challenging times.

I'd also like to wish the wider community a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

I look forward to getting back to the Goldfields in 2021.

Paul Everingham is the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA chief executive