



SA uranium practices on display

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A HIGH-ranking delegation of China's top uranium experts is visiting South Australia.

It includes the managers of China's six operating uranium mines and executives from China Nuclear Uranium Corp. The group has visited the Beverley uranium mine and BHP Billiton's Olympic Dam copper and uranium mine in the past three days.

However, despite a recent run of deals between SA mining explorers and Chinese businesses, these men are not here to talk about commercial opportunities. Instead, they are investigating mine safety, radiation management and other technical aspects of uranium mining.

Tour leader and geologist Xu Gang said many in the delegation had dreamed of visiting Olympic Dam, "the number one in the world".

"We thought it would be very good for both parties to meet to share expertise in mining safety and the environment," said Mr Xu, who is also a Beijing-based director of Adelaide company Uranium SA.

China's uranium production is

much smaller than Australia's and its demand for the fuel is expected to soar as more nuclear plants are built. "Current production cannot support the future consumption. It is a known fact," Mr Xu said.

Uranium SA managing director Russell Bluck said the visit supported the growing relationship between the Chinese and SA mining industries. "There is a lot of Chinese investment in SA," Mr Bluck said.

"SA has the world's largest underground uranium mine in Olympic Dam and the world's largest in-situ leach operation at Beverley.

"Both have world's best practice in radiation management."

In recent months Chinese investors have struck more than \$50 million worth of deals with SA resources companies as China tries to lock in future supplies of minerals for its fast-growing economy.

Local companies to benefit have included Southern Gold, Marathon Resources, Havilah Resources and PepinNini Minerals.