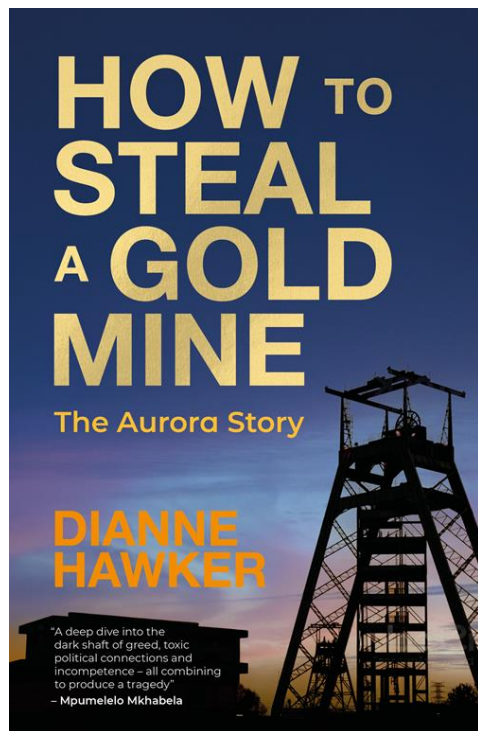


New



Publication date: 24 February 2023
Price: R290,00
Pages: 188
Format: 234mm x 152mm
Binding: Paperback / softback
Category: Current affairs
ISBN-13: 9780624090564
Barcode: 9780624090564
Edition: 1
Impression: 0

Digital Edition
Publication Date: 24 February 2023
Price: R285,00
Epub ISBN: 9780624090571

* Price is subject to change


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Dianne Hawker

How to Steal a Gold Mine: The Aurora Story

In October 2009, Aurora Empowerment Systems – a black-owned, politically connected business – made a bid to rescue the liquidated Pamodzi Gold mines.

Former President Jacob Zuma's nephew, Khulubuse Zuma, his lawyer Michael Hulley and former president Nelson Mandela's grandson Zondwa Mandela, were listed as directors of Aurora. On paper the company looked almost too good to be true – promising to turn the mines into a new business that would offer stellar benefits to workers, while also expanding into Africa. Soon after the acquisition, the first cracks appeared. More than 5 000 workers and suppliers, who depended on their employment to keep themselves and their families alive, went unpaid. Over the next few years, Aurora-managed mines were stripped of assets, as illicit payments went to the families of the “connected”, while workers starved.

Despite a litany of evidence of Aurora's dishonesty, to this day little has been done to bring the perpetrators to book.

About the author

Dianne Hawker has worked as a legal journalist and editor in many South African news organisations. She helped set up Newzroom Afrika.

She has worked in radio and online news and is currently the Multimedia Editor at Timeslive. She is a seasoned media trainer and coaches through her company, iNtatheli Media. She lives in Johannesburg.

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Tafelberg is an imprint of NB Publishers
Tel: +27 (0) 21 406 3033
Website: www.nb.co.za