

Anglo Coal training partnership grows

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For Immediate Release

ONE of the world's largest coal producers has ordered a second Immersive Technologies Advanced Equipment (AE) training Simulator as it continues with a major production build-up at the Dawson Complex in central Queensland.

Anglo Coal, wholly owned by Anglo American plc, and joint venture partner Mitsui Coal Holdings are spending more than \$US600 million to expand saleable coal output at the Dawson project to 12.7 million tonnes per annum by 2007. Anglo Coal Australia has been using Immersive Technologies AE Simulator technology since 2003 to train operators at its Callide, Moura, German Creek and Capcoal operations in Queensland, and Drayton mine in the Hunter Valley, New South Wales.

The new Immersive Transportable Base Simulator and T3 truck Conversion Kit (for Caterpillar 785C, 789C, 793C and 797 dump truck training) will be located at Dawson Central, formerly Moura Mine, where it will play an essential role in the start-up of one of the world's major new coal projects, according to an Anglo Coal spokesperson.

Anglo Coal expects to hire and train more than 200 mine equipment operators to work at Dawson, including a high proportion of "clean skin", or inexperienced, mine personnel. The site's Human Resources Training Co-ordinator, Terri Watson, said the Immersive AE 2B Simulator, due to arrive on site in November, would be used extensively for pre-employment assessment of prospective plant operators, operations training of new personnel, up-skilling of existing site operators and training assessors, and a range of other tasks, including familiarising equipment operators with new areas of the mine as development progressed, using Immersive's custom mine-site simulation package.

"We have seven major pieces of (digging and loading) equipment, 38 trucks and 12 ancillary items arriving on site over the next 12-18 months as the site builds to full-scale production, and we're looking at employing about 200 production operators within that time-frame," Watson said.

"We're going to take on a high proportion of clean skins, including local people who may never have worked on or anywhere near heavy mining equipment before, as well as recruiting experienced O&K RH340 and P&H 4100 operators particularly those with training skills to help in our training process.

"So the simulator is going to be an essential part of the training effort here."

Anglo Coal will employ the region's biggest fleet of ultra-class dump trucks in a massive earthmoving exercise as it uncovers and mines Dawson's rich reserves of metallurgical and thermal coal. The total initial material movement rate will be 160 million bank cubic metres per annum, with raw coal production at 15Mtpa. The total mining rate then evens out to 140Mbcm per annum. The Immersive AE Simulator will play a vital part in ensuring operators of the 350-tonne-payload Caterpillar 797 dump trucks, and other equipment on site, work as safely and productively as possible from commencement of operation.

"The simulator will be used heavily from the time it gets here," Watson said.

"From the pre-employment phase, where people's aptitude for driving heavy equipment can be checked, to initial training on the trucks, excavators and shovels, and up-skilling of our training assessors and existing operators, it (the simulator) is expected to make a significant difference to our training program, particularly with the number of unskilled people we need to put on.

"It is just not feasible to pull a piece of equipment out of production to undertake the kind of education and training required here."

Watson said Anglo Coal's positive experience with its first Immersive Technologies AE Simulator was a factor in its decision to again opt for the Australian company and its technology. Immersive offered a broad range of Conversion Kit packages and Anglo Coal had worked with the supplier to develop the industry's first dragline training simulator, which was released commercially in September 2005.

"Our trainer assessors see it (AE Simulator) as an essential tool in their training package," Watson said.

"As one experienced operator trainer assessor said, 'it's probably the best thing ever invented for the mining industry and earthmoving in general'.

"In particular, they find the option of being able to simulate situations such as mechanical failure, an essential part of training. The simulator comes into its own in being able to let someone gain the skills to handle these situations without risk of injury or equipment damage."

Immersive Technologies, which has opened a new Brisbane office to support its growing Queensland client base, continues to expand its presence in the coal mining industry. A number of Australian, North and South American, and Indonesian coal producers are among the more than 65 Immersive AE Simulator owners worldwide.

The company's Executive Manager Business Development, Oye Obe said the purchase of a second AE Simulator by the Anglo Coal group continued a trend of repeat buying by the leading mining houses, including Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, Phelps Dodge, Newmont Mining and others.

Anglo Coal also saw benefits in Immersive's Customer Support Program, purchasing a five-year service agreement.

"We are delighted to support Anglo Coal's latest simulator acquisition," Obe said.

"This continues a trend in simulation training by Anglo Coal Australia since 2003 and allows Dawson and its sister sites, German Creek, Drayton, Capcoal and Callide, to expand the application of simulator training for mine-site operational improvements."

Dawson Central, 140km south-west of Gladstone, currently produces about 5.5Mtpa of soft coking and energy coal. It employs some 470 people.

About Immersive Technologies

Established in 1993, Immersive Technologies is the leading global provider of operator training Simulators to the mining and earthmoving industries. With more than 65 AE Simulators deployed in 14 countries around the world, the company's simulators are integral to the operations of many world-leading mining companies who use the technology to improve operational safety and efficiency while driving down maintenance costs.

Immersive Technologies' strategic alliances with many leading original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) ensures its extensive range of AE Simulator Conversion Kits achieve a superior level of realism and accuracy through the use of exclusively licensed proprietary data and machine technical information from the OEM.

The company's expanding customer support base includes offices in Australia and the USA. For more information about Immersive Technologies, visit www.ImmersiveTechnologies.com