

Contractors put Safety first

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For Immediate Release

MULTIPLE benefits of Advanced Equipment (AE) Simulator training have convinced a leading Australian mining contractor to invest in the technology.

Macmahon Contractors expects to put about 160 equipment operators through its simulator training program this year, to hone their emergency response skills and general safety awareness. This will mainly take place at the Eaglefield coal mine in Queensland where Macmahon has a long-term mining contract with Peabody Energy.

Macmahon will also use the Immersive Technologies transportable AE Simulator to train equipment operators from other sites in Queensland, where it has experienced strong growth in its business in recent years, and in Western Australia.

Chief mining engineer Andrew Hollis said advanced simulator training technology had emerged as a valuable means of safely and cost-effectively maintaining benchmark operator skill levels and mitigating safety risks.

“Simulator technology has progressed to a high degree of realism over the last few years,” he said. “The technology complements the use of human trainers to achieve a better overall outcome, in terms of time and cost, from the training process.

“We recognised the need to improve the safety of our operators and their ability to manage an emergency situation – for example, a truck fire or brake failure – in a safe manner. The simulator helps improve the confidence of the operators to manage potential emergency situations, and can also be used to re-train personnel who have been involved in an incident, to rebuild confidence.

“By being able to do realistic training without actually operating the machines in a production operation, we can reduce the level of risk to other operators during the initial training period, and we can also focus training requirements for individual operators – tailoring the training to suit individual needs.”

Macmahon’s equipment fleet at Eaglefield after July 2006 is planned to feature four excavators; Hitachi EX5500, EX3600 and EX2500 models, and a Terex O&K RH120, and a primary truck fleet of Komatsu 630E & 730E and Caterpillar 789 trucks.

Immersive Technologies proprietary Cat 785/789 and Komatsu 730E truck Conversion Kits will initially be used to train truck operators. Macmahon is evaluating an excavator module for later application within the simulator.

“We plan to put 160 operators – mainly truck operators – through this year at Eaglefield and would plan on a similar number in the future,” Hollis said. The simulator has already shown benefits with refresher training of experienced operators.

“We are introducing new equipment that we do not have in the current equipment fleet at Eaglefield. The simulator will ensure our employees are appropriately trained to safely operate current and new equipment in various work environments under adverse conditions and situations.

“We can simulate wet weather training without endangering the operators, for example. This type of training is extremely difficult to manage properly in the production environment.”

Hollis said the Immersive Technologies AE Simulator would also help Macmahon to improve the effectiveness of its on-site training personnel, and allow for “challenge” testing of operators at more regular intervals.

An Immersive Technologies’ representative said Australia’s contractors recognise the potential of continuous improvement in open cut mine operations through simulator deployment.

“With high levels of operator turn over particularly being experienced in Australian contracting companies, Macmahon have found that simulator training can greatly assist in accelerating new operators to higher levels of productivity during operations.”

Business development manager Oye Obe of Immersive Technologies said Macmahon was one of three major Australian mining contract groups to purchase one of the company’s AE simulators. All of the contractors had been attracted to the benefits of the technology as a safety and skills improvement tool.

“We are very pleased to be working with Macmahon in Queensland where we too have undergone significant expansion in recent times,” Obe said.

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 75 AE Simulators deployed in 16 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