



PIKE RIVER COAL

11 December 2008

IN-SEAM DRILLING TO PLOT COAL MINING

Pike River Coal Limited has started its scheduled in-seam drilling through the Brunner coal seam under the Paparoa Ranges to plot the best road map for its heavy mining machinery to cut coal.

Pike River has contracted an experienced Australian in-seam drilling company to drill five in-seam boreholes, totalling approximately 7 kilometres in the Brunner coal seam.

These holes will have regular directional deflections or 'branches' into the seam roof and floor, to better outline the geometry of the coal-seam and assist with controlled drainage of in-seam coal-bed gas ahead of mining.

In-seam drilling involves placing a drilling machine underground and drilling horizontally within the coal seam rather than vertically from the surface. This is far more effective in collecting accurate in-seam data than drilling from the surface and with no impacts on the surface.

The drill-rig is comprised of a track-mounted unit along with a power pack and can safely be deployed wherever required. The motor, located within the drill hole just behind the drill bit, allows the driller to steer the hole in a pre-determined direction. It can drill forward up to 2000 metres.

The drill-rig has been established at the end of the 2.3 km access tunnel and the first hole is now being drilled parallel to the northwards tunnel extension to the ventilation shaft location. Later holes drilled from this same location will radiate out in a fan pattern and delineate the pit bottom area and further.

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The Pike River mine, about 50 kilometres northeast of Greymouth, is opening up New Zealand's largest known deposit of hard coking coal. The mine is expected to produce an average of one million tonnes a year for at least 18 years once hydro-mining commences in mid 2009.

Pike River shares are quoted on the NZSX and the ASX under the code "PRC"

Figure 1. In-seam drill-rig



Image courtesy of Valley Longwall Mining Services