

CASE STUDY:

BIS INDUSTRIES



BIS INDUSTRIES ROLLS OUT INNOVATIVE FATIGUE MANAGEMENT AT BODDINGTON.

Leading services provider to the Australian mining industry, Bis Industries, has taken a high tech approach to fatigue management on their Boddington to Bunbury copper concentrate haulage project. Sharing roads with a myriad of locals, holiday-makers, tourists and farmers, this was one high-risk route that Bis Industries needed to mitigate through the use of innovative fatigue monitoring technology, Optalert.

Although Boddington is one of the smaller sites within the Bis Industries organisation, the unique transport setting required a high-tech solution to ensure a safe working environment for its drivers and the public.

The Boddington mine, located just south of the city of Perth, transports copper concentrate to the Bunbury wharf 170 km away. Located two thirds of the way to Margaret River – a tourist Mecca virtually all year round – Optalert was installed on six prime movers and one light vehicle.

“Ninety five per cent of the time our road trains are sharing the road with the public, often these passenger vehicles are holiday makers who may have never seen a road train before and at times they don’t understand the stopping distances and crash avoidance spaces required when interacting with that type of heavy vehicle,” said Toro Havini – Bis Industries Divisional Risk & OHSE Manager.



THE OPTALERT SYSTEM HAS BEEN IN FULL SWING ON SITE SINCE EARLY MAY, WITH VERY POSITIVE DRIVER FEEDBACK FOLLOWING AN EXTENSIVE DEBRIEF AND TRAINING PROGRAM RUN BY SENIOR BIS INDUSTRIES MANAGEMENT.

“We wanted Optalert on this operation as we understand that fatigue is a critical risk in our business and we want to do everything to ensure that we not only meet our legislative responsibilities but exceed them.

“Bis Industries always aims for best practice and Zero Harm is a core value we take very seriously. We want to use technology that is at the cutting edge of fatigue management,” he said.

“Our drivers often report back near misses where passenger vehicles do dangerous things in an effort to overtake a road train or pull out in front of them, not understanding that such a heavy vehicle needs more stopping and crash avoidance space.

“That’s why it is so critical that our drivers are 100% alert and totally vigilant to the actions of those around them.

“We respect our drivers immensely and I am constantly in awe of the work they do. They are professional drivers and handle themselves incredibly well; however fatigue management is an issue across the industry.

“It is a very human issue and while experience helps to keep it in control, it only takes one micro sleep to cause a tragedy, especially at the wheel of a road train. That’s why we support our guys with Optalert and they appreciate that we do it for their safety and the safety of everyone they share the road with. It’s also important for the driver to know that this is a tool for them to use in real time in the cab. It’s for their benefit just as much as it is for the company.”

He adds, “the key to the success of this roll out has been the support of Optalert and the lengthy debrief session they had with drivers to iron out any concerns or issues. “Bis Industries has had a long standing relationship with Optalert and we have had times when the system was used successfully and also times when it was not so successful. Any time you are an early adopter of high technology, you will encounter teething issues, but we have worked closely with Optalert over the years to iron out those issues and as a result our feedback has gone into making the system more rugged and suitable for mining and outback road conditions. The result is a product that we have a lot of faith in,” he said.





As a result of the collaborative effort and diligent training, Boddington marks the most positive Optalert implementation in Bis Industries' history.

"I believe Optalert technology is the best drowsiness detection tool that I have ever seen. I am very pleased with the data that we have been able to get out of the Fatigue Risk Profiler. I have been involved in quite a few investigations into incidents or near misses involving fatigue over the years and it is really interesting to hear the driver retrace his or her steps in the moments leading up to the drowsiness. The one thing that is always consistent is the speed at which drowsiness catches you and the self-debate we can have with ourselves about how drowsy we really are, and at what point we should pull over. Anything that helps the driver proactively remove that self-debate early and eliminate the likelihood of a micro sleep is worthwhile in our book."

If Toro were to give any feedback to others considering rolling out similar high technology he says the key to their success has been to roll out with the utmost respect for operators.

"We are always mindful that anything we introduce into the driver's workspace can be perceived as an invasion of their space. You will always hear the arguments - "what's this for?" or "I'm fine, I don't need it" or "I don't want anyone watching over me" but by working closely with our guys we have helped them develop their own passion for Optalert."

"One thing I have realised after spending a lot of time with drivers of all ages is that they all drive for a reason. In the majority, truck drivers are very independent personalities. It is wise to understand these personality traits and the history of fatigue management in Australian trucking."

Hugh Murray – Senior Operational Systems Manager at Bis Industries agrees, "We see great value in the Optalert product as it predicts when a driver is becoming drowsy and consequently warns the driver in advance of a possible micro sleep. This allows the driver to manage their own fatigue proactively and take the appropriate action to ensure their safety."

"Optalert is just one tool that we have provided to the drivers to help them manage their fatigue but we are pleased to see that there has been significant improvement to the product in the last 18 months, from automatic real time information transfer via 3G to the design of the glasses and the ruggedisation of a portable solution, which appears ideal for our business."

"Bis Industries is committed to achieving Zero Harm. This means zero injuries, zero environmental damage and zero equipment damage. Everyone has the right to be safe at work and to return home as healthy as when they started the day", he concluded.