

BHP, Caterpillar & Finning announce Escondida phased 798 AC haul truck fleet replacement

Posted by Paul Moore on 30th August 2022



BHP Group Ltd, Caterpillar Inc, and Finning International Inc announced today an agreement to replace BHP's entire haul truck fleet at the Escondida mine, the world's largest copper producer, located in the Antofagasta Region, northern Chile.

This agreement is part of the strategic equipment renewal process developed by Escondida. The new Caterpillar 372 t class 798 AC electric drive trucks will feature technology that delivers significant improvements in material-moving capacity, efficiency, reliability, and safety and generate a positive impact in key initiatives for the future, such as decarbonisation, diversity and inclusion, autonomous technologies, and the development of local capabilities.

The first trucks are expected to arrive at the mine in the second half of 2023, with delivery of the remaining trucks to extend over the next 10 years as the three companies work to replace one of the largest fleets in the industry worldwide, currently comprised of over 160 haul trucks. Maintenance and support services provided under the agreement advance BHP's local employment and gender balance strategies. Finning's Integrated Knowledge Center, located in Antofagasta, will provide top of the line industry technical support for the fleet.

The agreement also allows Escondida-BHP to accelerate the implementation of its autonomy plans by transitioning the fleet to include technology that enables autonomous operation. In addition, the agreements set forth a technological path that helps Escondida-BHP meet its decarbonisation goals, through the progressive implementation of zero-emission trucks.

BHP, Caterpillar, and Finning "uphold their commitment of contributing to the economic and social development of Antofagasta, through the generation of local capabilities related to the development of mining equipment technologies."

"This agreement is an important step to continue projecting into the future Escondida-BHP's leadership in the industry. It will allow us to generate significant efficiencies at the operational level, but it is also in line with some of the main challenges that drive us as a company: innovation for the future of mining, decarbonisation, and development of capabilities in Antofagasta's community. We have great expectations regarding the benefits that will be generated in the short and long term for both the company and the Antofagasta region," said James Whittaker, President of Escondida-BHP.

"The Caterpillar team is excited to support the successful deployment of machines and technology that will facilitate a step-function improvement in BHP's operational excellence. We applaud BHP as this mine site transformation accelerates the delivery of their aggressive sustainability targets," said Denise Johnson, Group President Resource Industries, Caterpillar Inc.

"We are very pleased to build on our long-term relationship with BHP to support its Escondida operations by improving efficiency, productivity, and safety, as well as reducing its carbon footprint, supporting its diversity and inclusion journey, and contributing to the development of capabilities in Antofagasta. This is the largest fleet deal in Finning's history, and will significantly expand the Caterpillar truck population and support the transition towards cleaner energy, with electric drive trucks, and future zero-emission trucks," said Scott Thomson, President and CEO of Finning International.