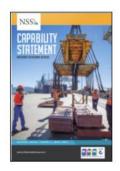
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AERIAL DRONE OF NSS @ WORK

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Sojitz Gregory coal mine gears up for restart

Activity is ramping up at the Sojitz Gregory site near Emerald in Central Queensland, where overburden removal is due to begin within a fortnight.

The site's Marion 8050 dragline is undergoing refurbishment, while a CAT-6060 excavator (below) and a Komatsu PC3000 are also being assembled on site and will be available to commence operations by mid-June.

Sojitz Coal Mining managing director and chief executive officer Cameron Vorias said those machines were expected to be breaking ground in June and first coal was expected in August.

"It is progressing quite smoothly at the moment," he said.

Mr Vorias said a 80-strong team was working on the Sojitz Gregory wash plant, which is due to come online in August/September.

DRA Global has the contract for the wash plant refurbishment and Mr Vorias said most of the workers involved were from Mackay-based G&S Engineering.

Mr Vorias said the full management team was in place for the Sojitz Gregory restart and 30 workers had come across from Sojitz's Minerva operation to start work.

This included rehabilitation work the new owners committed to delivering as part of the mine purchase deal from BHP Billiton Mitsubishi Alliance.

Mr Vorias said the company had formed Sojitz Green as a rehabilitation business to carry out this job and offer its expertise to other mines in the future.

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