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Via ASX Online

Whitehaven Coal Signs Narrabri Longwall Contract with Bucyrus

Whitehaven Coal Limited (ASX:WHC) today announced that its subsidiary Narrabri Coal Operations Pty Ltd has entered into a contract with Bucyrus Australia Underground Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Bucyrus International Inc, for the purchase of a longwall mining system for its Narrabri Joint Venture.

The signing of the contract follows a detailed competitive tender process for the design, construction, installation and commissioning of the longwall.

It is envisaged that Narrabri Coal Operations will take delivery of the longwall in October 2010, with a full surface build and underground commissioning thereafter. Subject to obtaining the requisite Stage 2 planning approvals, the longwall is expected to begin cutting coal in January 2011.

The longwall will have a 300m face, with a capacity of up to 8 Mtpa, and is capable of being retrofitted for Top Coal Caving at a later date (subject to a feasibility study and requisite planning approvals).

Bucyrus has supplied many longwalls in Australia and throughout the world, including Australia's first Top Coal Caving Longwall at the Austar Mine.

About Narrabri

Whitehaven's Narrabri Joint Venture is situated 28km south of Narrabri in north-west New South Wales. It is a joint venture with:

Whitehaven (operator)	77.5%
Electric Power Development Co. Ltd	7.5%
EDF Trading	7.5%
Upper Horn Investments Limited	7.5%

Whitehaven has entered into an agreement to sell a further 7.5% interest to a Korean consortium comprising Daewoo International Corporation and Korea Resources Corporation. Completion of this sale is subject to regulatory approvals which are in the process of being obtained.

Construction commenced on Stage One of the project in January 2008, with production expected to commence in early 2010.

Initial production using continuous miners will be 0.7 million tonnes per year. A rail loop and associated coal handling and processing equipment has been constructed to facilitate the transport of coal from the project site to Newcastle for export.

Stage Two plans for the project include the production of an additional 5.3 million tonnes per year from longwall mining. An Environmental Assessment is currently being carried out for the longwall phase.

The project will produce a low ash, high energy, low sulphur thermal coal for the export market.

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