



The resources industry is powering ahead as coal giants post record quarterly results and Oaky No.1 underground mine reopens. Macarthur Coal sold 1.48 million tonnes in the June quarter.

PHOTO: MACARTHUR COAL

Good sales fuel more coal jobs

By **BIANCA CLARE**

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THE Bowen Basin resources industry is powering ahead as coal giants post record quarterly figures and Oaky No.1 underground mine gets set to reopen in August.

Macarthur Coal made record coal sales of 1.48 million tonnes in the June quarter.

Supporting this milestone is the monthly sales record of 0.76 million tonnes achieved in April, which included the company's largest single shipment of Coppabella PCI (a grade of coal).

A spokesperson for Macarthur Coal said it had restarted idle excavators at both Coppabella and Moorvale mines.

At Moorvale, about 22 former Macarthur workers have been rehired on temporary contracts; about the same number have been put on at Coppabella by contractor Leighton Holdings.

"Macarthur is observing an improvement in shipping requests from its traditional cus-

tomers seeking coal for delivery in the second half of the calendar year," the spokesperson said. "European demand has begun to return to a market already buoyed by demand from China."

Macarthur also announced a three-year operating contract has been signed with Sedgman for the coal handling and preparation plants at Coppabella and Moorvale mines.

As a result of the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal (DBCT) expansion, Macarthur has increased its contracted port capacity and commenced its rail contract with Pacific National.

Macarthur Coal said it expected the queue of ships at DBCT to grow over the next few weeks and waiting time to reach between 15 and 25 days, which would increase demurrage costs in the second quarter.

BHP and BMA operations exceeded expectations with just over 5 million tonnes of coking coal shipped, 1,796,000 tonnes of weak coking coal shipped and

461,000 tonnes of thermal coal shipped in the June quarter.

Goonyella mine had the best quarter, producing 1,725,000 tonnes.

US coal giant Peabody has ramped up production at its Millennium coking coal mine, restoring the jobs of about 40 contractors as it seeks to feed growing Chinese demand.

Aquila has also experienced a strong renewed interest in coal demand with all coal to be produced at Isaac Plains Mine this year now sold.

Xstrata will restart longwall operations at its Oaky No.1 underground coking coal mine next month in response to increased spot market sales to China.

In December, the Swiss miner announced it would close Oaky No.1 because of the massive slump in coking coal demand.

"We expect to restart longwall operations from August this year and will mine to the end of the year. Then we will check market conditions," a spokesman said.