

Responsiveness to pit dewatering differentiates IPR

Responsiveness to pit dewatering requirements sets Integrated Pump Rental apart from its competitors. The team is able to assess an application and provide a pit dewatering solution with the correctly sized pump.

Pit dewatering remains a vital activity for opencast operations, as groundwater not only poses an operational challenge, but can become a safety hazard if not attended to appropriately.

Interestingly, it is not a simple case of one pump fits all dewatering application requirements, and it is advisable to deal with a reputable pump supplier to ensure that the most appropriate solution is selected.

Lee Vine, managing director of Integrated Pump Rental, explains that there is no such thing as a standard pit dewatering system, since each instance requires a site-specific solution.

"There are numerous options available in terms of the pump and ancillary equipment, as well as the choice between rental and outright purchase," he says. "The differentiator our team offers is the ability to assess a given application and provide a pit dewatering solution with the correctly sized pump."

Several factors can have an impact on the pump selection, including available power sources; volume of water to be pumped; and condition of the dirty water, including size and type of particles in the water.

"What makes pit dewatering applications complex is that, in many cases, the need to dewater a pit can be urgent, and customers are forced into making an incorrect pump selection or tying themselves to a contract that does not work in the long term," Vine says.

He adds that while the decision of whether

to hire or purchase is an important commercial one, so too is the selection of the pump. "If the pump is incorrectly sized for the dewatering application, it will not perform as required. This, in turn, leads to further operational challenges including production losses and sometimes even the need to change the pump, which results in further costs."

One of the most important factors for consideration is the available energy source. If there is no access to power, options such as diesel-driven or pumps fitted with hydraulic power packs must be explored.

When selecting the pump, it is also important to understand the specifics of the water ingress conditions and whether these are a long-term issue or a short-term challenge. The scenario will dictate the pump size, its rated output and what ancillary equipment is required.

As an example Vine points to a recent dewatering application on a mine in Lesotho where a constant flow of water into the mine's pit area demanded that water be urgently and reliably pumped out.

Over time, the pit depth increased and the groundwater level was exacerbated by the winter snowfall. As a result, the total dynamic head for the duties of the installed dewatering pump installation changed, and the mine



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required an urgent solution.

Initially, a Sykes XH150 diesel driven pump was deployed, pumping 120 litres per second at 150 metre head. Subsequent to this, a second Sykes pump was dispatched to site to ensure the water remained at an acceptable level.

With the two Sykes pumps on site, the mine was assured of sufficient pumping capacity, should the groundwater level increase.

Commenting on the responsiveness exhibited by Integrated Pump Rental in this instance, Vine says this is not unusual. "While not standard across the industry, our teams are known for this, and the primary reason we can respond rapidly is our comprehensive fleets of pumps that are capable of handling varying dewatering applications."

He sketches a scenario where a call from the mine came in and, within 24 hours, the first Sykes pump was installed on site. "This is very significant when one considers that the mine is situated some 500 km from the company's front door and across the border into a neighbouring country.

"More often than not – and this was the case here – our teams have existing relationships with customers, which have been built up and maintained over time. Our repeat customers know they can rely on us," he says.

In addition to renting out Sykes diesel driven pump sets, Integrated Pump Rental is also responsible for the sale of the dewatering pumps across southern Africa. The robust units are designed for reliable performance under the harshest operating conditions.

Vine concludes by saying that operating in Africa requires a certain mindset and skill set, and most importantly suppliers need to be responsive to customer requests. "Many mines are situated in outlying areas and this calls for a customer focused approach, particularly when groundwater in a pit becomes an issue." □



Sykes diesel driven pump sets are ideal for pit dewatering.