

Spring Creek underground coal mine to soon reach full output

24 January 2004 - The large new Spring Creek underground coal mine north of Greymouth is scheduled to reach full production of about 800,000 tonnes of coal a year by February 2004, Solid Energy South Island operations manager Wayne Merriman says.

The lift in output, which will see Spring Creek move from the development phase to production, will see more train traffic needed to move coal across the Southern Alps to the export port at Lyttelton.

The opencast Strongman mine is timed to close about the same time as Spring Creek reaches full production. This will allow train loading to shift from Rapahoe to a new loading facility nearby at Rocky Creek.

Train movements will increase from two a day to three a day.

Tranz Rail plans to increase the length of its West Coast coal trains next year from 24 wagons to 30 wagons to cope with steadily increasing production from the Solid Energy mines in the Buller and Greymouth coalfields.