

Solid Energy to open up Kimihia opencast mine near Huntly East

27 April 2009 - Solid Energy intends to develop an opencast pit adjacent to the Huntly East underground mine over the next 6 to 12 months.

The coal producer says in its March Huntly update newsletter that the pit is expected to operate on a short-term basis to recover a small amount of coal not mined by the original Kimihia opencast mine between 1942 and 1978.

Kimihia was mined as an underground operation from 1887 through to 1950. The current East Mine is located at the bottom of the old Kimihia opencast pit, Solid Energy says.

The Huntly East underground mine opened in 1978 and has operated successfully on the eastern side of the town since that time.

Some 50,000 tonnes of coal to be recovered, is located near the boundary of the Huntly East underground mine's licence, close to the alignment of the proposed Waikato expressway.

Solid Energy says coal from the operation will be blended with the underground production and transported by rail from the Huntly East underground mine to New Zealand Steel's Glenbrook steelworks.

Huntly has been the most important coal mining centre in the North Island since the 1860s. Mines have worked more or less continuously since that time.

Sources: Solid Energy and Lindsay Clark