

Long haul to diamond mine

Staff reporter, [25 January 2012](#)



Haulmax 3900-D mine truck with Duratray dump body.

A LONG-range mine haul truck with purpose-built dump body are on their way from Australia to the Ekati diamond mine in northern Canada.

The Haulmax 3900-D (up to 85 tonnes payload) with special lightweight body developed by Duratray is the first of the Tasmanian-built trucks supplied to Ekati. The mine has a number of Duratray truck bodies.

The BHP Billiton-owned Northwest Territories diamond mine is currently the subject of speculation about its future ownership.

"It [the 3900-D] is hopefully the first of a fleet of units to be used on their Misery satellite mine project," said Haulmax global marketing manager Bob Calvert.

The truck will haul material more than 35km to a stockpile in testing conditions. Calvert said winter temperatures could get to -60C.

"The Duratray is a common sight at that operation," he said.

"Haulmax worked with Duratray Australia to develop a body specifically for the Haulmax unit design. The body was built in Melbourne, fitted to the 3900 and shipped direct to Canada as a complete unit.

"It was selected in this instance to ensure the flexible body liner will maintain material fluidity over the longer haulage distance and time, reducing the risk of it freezing."

A Duratray Australia spokesperson said there were more than 30 different dump trucks at Ekati with Duratray Suspended Dump Bodies (SDBs).

"As usual the body has all the trademarks of the Suspended Dump Body, with a rubber floor, rubber front wall and all the key benefits needed for icy conditions such as no carry back, impact and vibration reduction due to the suspended effect, and reduced maintenance," he said.

"The client specifically requested a [Duratray] body. The request was purely based on Ekati's experience with the SDB bodies, it just happened to be that the new design was an articulated long haul which was a new challenge for us. Though we have articulated models, due to the truck design a significant amount of changes and design had to be adjusted resulting in a custom body for this particular truck."

Haulmax relocated its manufacturing operation from Queensland to northern Tasmania several years ago. Its trucks feature predominantly Caterpillar components and are supported by the major American manufacturer worldwide.

Calvert said the concept of a more nimble long-distance mine hauler was catching on. Western Australian-based Mine Site Constructions now had four units working at the Simberi gold operation on Simberi Island, Papua New Guinea, while Haulmax was currently commissioning four trucks for Scotcorp in the Hunter Valley coal mining region in New South Wales. Another Hunter contractor had six units working.

"We have a unit on rental with a diamond mine in Zimbabwe," Calvert said.

The company also had trucks working in WA's Pilbara region, and in New Zealand, South America and Indonesia.

"We have a number of irons in the fire in Chile, Brazil, the US and Canada and hopefully our stock and production line position will hold us in good stead for quick deliveries both within Australia and overseas," Calvert told *HighGrade*.

The Haulmax trucks had found a real niche in the Hunter Valley where mines had to shut down larger haulers due to safety issues in highly inclement weather conditions. The Haulmax trucks could continue to operate due to their stability in soft and slippery conditions.