

In perfect alignment

New South Wales-based equipment distributor Ostaline Mining Services believes it has the answer to a problem it approached one of its key suppliers over 10 years ago – getting an underground diamond drill accurately aligned.

When it comes to underground diamond drilling, getting the rig set-up on exactly the right angle is key.

Ostaline's supplier Transtronic AB, in alliance with Stockholm Precision Tools, has launched the RigAligner in Australia, which uses a gravity-based sensor to measure the dip angle of the drill rod and a north-seeking gyroscope to ascertain the azimuth direction of the rig underground.

Transtronic managing director Johan Sward said the RigAligner was a game-changer for customers working underground.

"The ease of use and short startup time of the RigAligner ensures a short payback-time, and the light weight tool will enhance the working environment," Sward said.

According to Ostaline marketing director Gavin Caspersz, the instrument, which is unaffected by magnetic interference, is accurate to 0.5 of a degree in azimuth and to 0.05 degrees in the dip angle and can be set up in 20 minutes.

That 20 minutes is about the time it takes for the RigAligner to provide azimuth and dip angle readings referenced to True North.

"You then clamp the unit to the drill rod and commence alignment," Caspersz said.

"The information from the RigAligner is presented via Bluetooth on a rugged hand-held PC. It's a fairly simple process from that point on. It's very interactive and easy for operators to use and understand".

The RigAligner unit only weighs 3kg.

"That's a significant advantage from a health and safety point of view," Caspersz said.

He said the RigAligner was new to Australia but has been used successfully in other parts of the world for over four years.

Ostaline has a long history with Transtronic, being its exclusive Australian and South East Asian distributor for its alignment instruments since the mid-90s.

Transtronic is well known in Australia for their range of drill angle and hole depth measurement and logging systems.

In a partnership with Position Partners, Ostaline also supplies Transtronic components for the Carlson Drill Grade High Precision Machine Guidance System for surface drilling applications.

Caspersz said he set Transtronic the challenge to find a way to electronically align underground diamond drills about 10 years ago, to overcome the archaic method of using string lines, measuring tapes and hand held levels.

Ostaline was already supplying, installing and supporting instruments for the alignment of surface and underground production drills.

However, Caspersz said, the moving joints on underground diamond drills were under tremendous strain.

The resulting wearing of these joints meant the traditional methods of individually measuring the movement angle of booms, rollovers and feed rails on a well-maintained longhole production drill were not conducive to maintaining accuracy on an underground diamond drill.

By measuring on the drill rod itself during the set-up for drilling, the RigAligner overcomes these inaccuracies.

"It is critical what the set up angle [of the rig] is," Caspersz said.

"The more accurate the setup, the more accurate and dependable the outcome."

Ostaline celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2018.

Its founder and managing director Elroy Caspersz expressed his pride in the company he formed in 1988 and its achievements over this period.

He is excited by the new chapter in Ostaline's history and in the launch of the Transtronic RigAligner in Australia. **AMM**

Transtronic's RigAligner product.

