

## Santos seeks innovative edge

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**JUST** when it seemed Santos couldn't catch a break, having sacrificed its CEO in a bid to restore investor confidence, *Energy News* has learned it is in advanced discussions with a local predictive analytics firm that could save it some critical dollars across its entire portfolio.

The South Australian government last week hailed the opening of IPACS Australia's pioneering Remote Asset Management Centre, and the firm's first port of call for the oil and gas sector was Santos, as both companies are based in Adelaide.



IPACS directors, father and son team Kailash and Vinay Sriram.

Santos is the only oil company IPACS is currently dealing with; the rest of its clients in the resources space are into mining.

The centre uses wireless sensors designed and manufactured in South Australia to transfer and collect data from mine sites in real time, but IPACS managing director Kailash Sriram told *Energy News* it is also applicable for oil and gas, both on and offshore.

"We fine tune things to introduce predictive analytics, trying to look ahead of time, not just statistics but on the dynamic performance of the machines," he said.

"Primarily collection of data is transferred in real time, giving you the advantage of looking at the various operational parameters, signing them off as base data or to enhance the performance.

"There can be a host of things that can come out of predictive analytics, which offer savings and helps mission performance and when you're planning your operations."

The public face of IPAC, however, is Sriram's son, IPAC general manager Vinay, another engineer.

Vinay said the sensors were currently relaying data from mining operations 650km from the city-based operations centre.

"Currently we have assets valued at over \$10 million under remote tracking and recording," he said.

"We are hopeful to increase our assets under management to \$100 million within the next three years with the new technology.

"Our focus is on reducing maintenance costs, increasing asset reliability and efficiency, identifying faults and increasing productivity."

He said mining companies which were not embracing the opportunity to quickly cut operating costs would not be in business for long in the current economic climate – and the same could be said for oilers who are languishing under oil prices that are over half what they were in June last year.

"The aim is to lower costs across the industry and allow companies to remain profitable and therefore competitive on the global stage," Vinay said.

"Bigger companies are able to do this easily while small to middle range contract mining companies find this harder to achieve. This technology will provide an affordable opportunity to reduce their costs and get more value out of their assets.

"The remote sensors are also a critical tool in maximising safety standards in these environments."

He said that while the technology had far reaching application opportunities in the defence industry, such as the future submarines project in South Australia as well as home automation, the energy market would also benefit.

The firm has also had interest from a national transport company to monitor mechanical drives and identify any potential early machine failure.

"Operational costs for any large company contribute greatly to their overall costs," he said.

"If they can be minimised it can result in significant savings to the company. The partnerships we have forged in South Australia are helping us gain exposure to a wide range of industries and future applications."

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