

## **Victorian tech firm eyes global success**

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When truck drivers work at the largest copper mine in the world – the BHP Spence mine in Chile – they can thank a Victorian company for keeping them safe.

The mine's operator, BHP Billiton, uses OPTALERT technology to protect its drivers against fatigue-related accidents.

The OPTALERT system has light emitters and receivers built into the frame of specially designed glasses to measure the velocity of the driver's eyelid 500 times each second.

The system sounds a warning alarm up to 30 minutes before fatigue reaches a dangerous level – long before the driver feels drowsy.

OPTALERT's customers are leaders in safety across three continents. CEO John Prendergast said OPTALERT has been fortunate in gaining a lot of support from the Victorian Government to help the company take its products to the world. "This has allowed us to get out of the workshop and in front of customers," he said.

As well as this Government support, Mr Prendergast recognises advantages of being based in Victoria.

"Our R&D efforts see us collaborating with respected institutions such as Monash University, Austin Hospital and Swinburne University of Technology, and we're fortunate that many are located in Melbourne.

"Plus, being based in Victoria means we also have a fantastic pool of talent to draw upon," Mr Prendergast said.