

## Low Cost, High Return Conveyor Upgrades

With capital expenditure plans being reduced, it is possible to make significant conveyor upgrades without engineering modifications by utilising simple operator mechanical skills to improve efficiency and reliability.

The economic downturn has had a big impact on the bulk materials handling production sector with many conveyor operators looking to reduce costs and rationalise operations. The impact of this can be seen in the reduction of capital expenditure plans but the investments that are being made are focused on efficiency.

When it comes to conveying equipment, the method of choice for enhancing productivity appears to be the optimisation or existing equipment. Over the years we have seen an increase in demand for the optimisation and plant design process - particularly now in a downturn it is even more important.

Kinder Australia was one of the early promoters of conveyor optimisation. The focus has just slightly changed to production costs and the use of high performance quality equipment. More and more companies investing in engineered solutions - both large and small are trying to make more of the equipment that they already have by trying to improve their operations in order to improve their profit margins.



*Images K-Sure® Belt Support and K-Superskirt® (top) and MTD Disc Tracker (bottom) in recent plant upgrades to conveyor equipment.*

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Kinder Australia's conveyor optimisation advice is available to all customers Australia-wide so the company is well placed to see the trends. Before the global recession, conveyor operators were working flat out and not looking at their production closely; now they are working more intelligently. For example, upgrading your existing plant to incorporate efficient parts will reduce the likelihood of plant clean-ups. Also these upgrades will not only improve the longevity of the belting itself, but the design life of the material handling process will be more productive as a result.

Energy and power costs can make up a significant proportion of a conveyor system's running costs, which is why many have invested in modern, energy efficient parts and equipment. However, while the latest designs improve fuel economy, it is still the way the machine is driven and used that can have the biggest impact on fuel efficiency.

This trend is likely to continue. Plant improvements don't need major financial investments to make a big difference to bottom line productivity. Below is list of low cost, but high return items that are sometimes overlooked but should be considered as part of a plant upgrade.

Item	Size	Price Guide	Improvement Outcome
<b>K-Side Guide Rollers</b>	102mm diameter	\$89.00	Promotes belt tracking, preventing associated belt damage.
<b>MTD Disc Tracker</b>	127mm roller (pair)	\$360.00	Aligns belt prior to tail pulley, preventing material spillage.
<b>K-Containment Seal</b>	1" x 8" x 60"	\$637.00	Adjustable longer lasting inner seal, preventing material spillage.
<b>K-Superskirt® Engineered Polyurethane</b>	12mm x 15m roll	\$1,316.00	Longer lasting low friction skirting, sealing and preventing associated belt damage.
<b>K-Sure® Belt Support System</b>	750 belt width x 2m length assembly	\$2,032.00	Eliminates spillage and belt edge sag increasing skirting efficiency and wear life.