PRESS RELEASE

Skyriders Elios SkyEye drone powers up emergency tube-leak inspection

13 May 2019: When a major coal-fired power station in Limpopo experienced a tube leak in a boiler that subsequently resulted in a burst pipe, Skyriders Access Specialists (Pty) Ltd. was called upon to deploy its Elios SkyEye drone technology for an emergency inspection.

This is the first time that the confined-space inspection technology has been deployed in such an application, Marketing Manger **Mike Zinn** reports. “The client required an urgent visual inspection, in addition to determining the possible collateral damage associated with the area.”

Zinn explains that the drone was controlled just outside of the boiler itself. “We were not necessarily flying it blind due to the presence of its cameras, but it did have to cover a considerable distance.”

The drone was not only able to take high-definition photographs of the internal area of the boiler in question, but was able to pinpoint the exact location of the suspected tube leak. “We also piloted the drone around the adjacent walls and surrounding area in order to verify whether or not there were any additional issues,” Zinn explains.

While the Elios SkyEye drone has been used for inspection work on two previous occasions at the same power station, this was the first time it was called upon in an emergency situation. Skyriders dispatched a two-person team that was quickly on-site, and able to get the drone into the boiler as soon as possible.

The project was a showcase for the rapid deployability and flexibility of the drone. Traditionally, scaffolding or other rather time-consuming means of access would have to be first erected prior to inspections being carried out.

The Elios SkyEye drone has dramatically improved the health and safety of on-site crews in such projects, allowing specialised teams to enter only once the situation has been thoroughly analysed and verified. If need be, rope access is then used for teams to carry out additional inspection services such as ultrasonic wall thickness testing or other non-destructive testing methods.

Imported from Flyability of Switzerland, the hi-tech Elios SkyEye drone includes a full HD camera, a thermal camera, and an onboard LED lighting system with remotely-adjustable intensity. Hence an array of onboard tools is available for any lighting conditions.

The drone can be brought into usually inaccessible places up to many hundred metres beyond the line of sight due to the fact that it is equipped with a wireless communications system with a live video feedback.

“The main issue with this project is that it was an incredibly difficult area to access. Here the collision-tolerance feature of the drone meant it was able to access the affected area quickly and reliably. The fully-qualified and trained pilot means that the inspection work itself is carried out rapidly and professionally, producing real-time results for the client,” Zinn concludes.

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Notes to the Editor
To download hi-res images for this release, please visit http://media.ngage.co.za and click the Skyriders link to view the company's press office.

About Skyriders
Skyriders (Pty) Ltd, established in 1998, is a leader in the South African rope access industry, providing cost- and time-saving solutions to clients in the power generation and petrochemical industries who require rope access aided inspection, NDT and maintenance work to be done in difficult to reach, high-up locations.

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