Boiler simulator training to help avoid costly mistakes

Experience has taught Australian mill owners just how costly mistakes are when things go wrong at the boiler station.

At the same time, experience has also taught the Australian industry that mistakes are more likely and frequent early in the season, when operators may be 'rusty' after having just had about six months of doing a range of other tasks at the mill.

Recent incidents, attributed in part to operator error, have cost factories several millions of dollars in boiler repair costs and lost production.

All this has highlighted the importance of ensuring that operators are up to speed on the problems that may arise and the skills they need in operating boilers.

With this in mind, an SRA-funded project has been underway working with the milling sector to devise a suitable training simulator that could help alleviate some of these costly mistakes. Simulators are already successfully employed at other parts of sugar mills, and this project is looking to implement this technology at this critical component of the mill.

Led by Dr Anthony Mann, the project has consulted heavily with industry through surveys and workshops and has completed the development of a back-end system for the simulator.

The front-end user interface is being developed and a suitable training program will be incorporated into this front-end user interface. The industry feedback will continue to be vital in ensuring the project delivers a useful end-product for the industry. ◼

The project is funded by SRA and is called *A boiler simulator for improved operator training* (project code 2016/001).

More detail on further development on this project will be provided in the next edition of Milling Matters, in the second half of 2018.

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(Above) Work is underway to develop a training simulator for boiler operation.

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