

A driver at the wheel of an Australian simulator – identical to the one that DECA is bringing to NZ

Driver trainer expands... GETS SIMULATOR

AN EXPANDING DECA DRIVER training operation – with the imminent establishment of a South Island division – is to set up New Zealand's first driver training simulator.

The company will introduce a \$250,000 US-developed simulator, in which a driver sits in front of three plasma screens, in a truck-like driving setting – with typical driver's seat, steering wheel, gearshift and pedals.

The MPRI TranSim 4 simulator will be launched here later this year – set up in a trailer so it can travel the country.

The system's state-of-the-art software means that a wide variety of driving environments can be played on the screens, a variety of truck dash displays can be replicated and 140 transmissions, 240 engines, 300 tyre sizes and 33 axle ratios can be loaded into the system.

Use of the simulators is reckoned by MPRI to reduce preventable accidents by 20% or more – as simulation training reinforces positive decisionmaking in realistic, risk-free situations.

It also claims to lower fuel use – training drivers in progressive shifting and other fuel management measures – reduce equipment damage and increase driver retention...giving drivers complete, consistent, objective feedback on their performance and giving them confidence on the road.

It will, says DECA Training managing director Stu Stubbs, provide driver training options that will save time and money and offer novice drivers and longtime professionals alike

“the chance to learn new techniques – all within a no-risk and cost-efficient environment.”

It is a big investment, Stubbs agrees, “but we and a lot of other people think it's overdue in NZ.” DECA Training in Melbourne, for instance, already has three of the same simulators – and is about to take delivery of another two.

MPRI regional sales manager, transportation, Byron Strong, pitched the simulators to DECA, the ACC and a group of invited trucking industry guests a few months ago.

Meantime, DECA Training will be launched in the South Island late this year – as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Christchurch-based Precision Training.

The two companies have already been collaborating on delivering training for National Certificates in Distribution, Levels 2, 3 and 4.

Stubbs explains that Precision Training has “a significant place in the market delivering

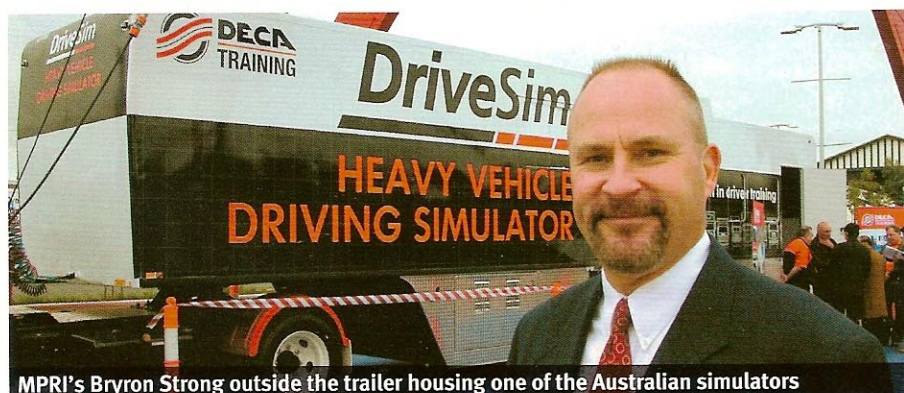
operational management training...for the transport and logistics industry.

“They've been involved in road transport and logistics for some time, but perhaps more on the management and supervisory level.”

Precision will continue business in its own specialist area – and will set up and run a Christchurch branch of DECA Training specifically for driver training services.

Says Stubbs: “We're pretty excited about it. We've had a significant number of large corporate fleet clients who've come to us in the last 18 months and talked to us about national coverage.” Until now the company has been relying on sub-contractors to provide training coverage in the South Island.

DECA Training, South Island, and Precision Training will share a new 400-square-metre facility, which will include a classroom and support area, a simulated warehouse and a dedicated forklift training area. **T-D**



MPRI's Byron Strong outside the trailer housing one of the Australian simulators