

# ON THE BEAM

Each quarter, the Australian Steel Institute (ASI) brings you news and views from around the steel industry in our regular column: *On the Beam*. From projects won and completed, through to new product launches and company announcements, you can find it all here.

## WATKINS STEEL CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF A NEW FACTORY

Watkins Steel recently celebrated the official opening of their new factory at Raubers Road in Banyo, Queensland. Watkins Steel was established in 1968, with its first workshop located underneath a suburban house in Hendra. The company soon rented some smaller factories, before building its first factory in 1978 on Toombul Road in Virginia.

Every decade since then, Watkins Steel has progressed into larger facilities until the company's last move to Depot Street in 2008. 14 years later, Watkins Steel has officially expanded into its entire Raubers Road factory, taking their overall footprint from approximately 2,500m<sup>2</sup> to 10,000m<sup>2</sup>. This expansion is testament to the ongoing growth of the business and the incredible work of their employees across estimating, drafting, fabricating, installation, research and development, business services and Holovision.

Watkins Steel combines the latest 3D technology with advanced robotics to produce a variety of steel structures with unparalleled accuracy. Specialising in small structural steel, metalwork, urban artscapes, architectural structures, and refurbishment projects, Watkins Steel's range of services also includes steel detailing and 3D laser scanning.

## ASI SUBMISSION TO NSW GOVERNMENT'S FUTURE INNOVATION GREEN PAPER

ASI has made a submission to the NSW Government's *Securing future innovation and global competitiveness in NSW Green Paper*. Consultation was sought on "on the forces driving substantial, rapid and ongoing change across the economy", to help the Government with industry policy reform in NSW over the next 10 to 15 years.

Key points in ASI's submission were:

- Transition to net zero emissions by 2050 is the single biggest challenge and opportunity for the steel industry over the next 20 years.
- All the major Australian steel producers have announced their intention to meet a net zero emissions by 2050 commitment, which is supported by comprehensive, published sustainability plans.
- The single most critical business operating environment constraint is the availability of skilled personnel to fill industry wide vacancies.
- ASI believes the single most effective means of encouraging local industry innovation and growth is for the NSW Government to set mandatory local participation targets for major projects.

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## FIRST GREENSTEEL-READY PELLETS MADE IN WHYALLA FROM LOCAL MAGNETITE

GFG Alliance's mining arm, SIMEC Mining has produced its first high quality GREENSTEEL pellets that will underpin the future of decarbonised steel production in Whyalla, South Australia.

The pellets were produced from the company's Duchess South drill core in the Southern Middleback Ranges using innovative technologies proposed for SIMEC's magnetite expansion operations. As part of routine production, a small parcel of concentrate was successfully converted to pellets in the existing pellet plant.

The successful production of the Direct Reduction grade pellets is another significant step forward in GFG Alliance's GREENSTEEL transformation at Whyalla, and is coupled with the successful commissioning of a 400tph demonstration pilot plant to test an innovative technology integral to current and future mining operations.

Both milestones build on GFG's announcement earlier this year of its magnetite expansion project and construction of a debottlenecking process to increase magnetite concentration production to 2.5Mtpa. Processed magnetite concentrate is a high-quality energy efficient iron ore product which is needed to feed the Direct Reduced Iron (DRI) process. DRI enables the use of hydrogen as an alternate reductant to fossil fuels, and when fed by renewable energy it makes GREENSTEEL.

This magnetite expansion work offers GFG the chance to increase exports

to its steelworks in Europe and to strengthen its position as a consistent supplier of premium quality magnetite to support low carbon intensive steelmaking.

GFG Alliance's Executive Chairman, Sanjeev Gupta, said, "Our purpose is to create a sustainable future for industry and society and that starts right here with magnetite – a critical enabler of our global GREENSTEEL strategy. Thankfully it's an iron ore we have in abundance right here in Whyalla."

SIMEC also provided an update on its Dry Low Intensity Magnetic Separation (DLIMS) plant, which rejects non-magnetics from a coarse crushed fraction of the feed material, thereby upgrading the quality of feed to the magnetite concentrator.

Performance of the plant has exceeded expectations by rejecting over 20 percent of the feed mass as waste, while still recovering more than 98 percent of magnetics to product.

SIMEC's magnetite expansion plan continues with a feasibility study underway for Stage 2, which is evaluating a new 5Mtpa magnetite concentrate supply chain to supplement the existing Stage 1, 2.5Mtpa facility.

The current optimised mine shell contains 443 million tonnes of magnetite ore from the JORC compliant Duchess South reported resource of 614 million tonnes. The proposed flowsheet for processing this ore generates a product containing 68 – 70 percent Fe magnetite concentrate with less than 2 percent silica. This quality is referred to as direct reduction, or DR quality product.

The life of the mine is estimated to be in excess of 20 years, with the mine producing 7.5 million tonnes per annum of magnetite concentrate, and generating annualised revenue of more than \$800 million over that time.

According to Interim CEO Primary Steel and Mining and Director Industrial Projects, Theuns Victor, "This grade of magnetite is a key enabler to Whyalla's GREENSTEEL future, and strengthens its position as a consistent global supplier of premium quality magnetite to support low carbon intensive steelmaking."

"When combined with renewables, particularly solar from our Cultana Solar Farm, our port, a skilled workforce, and supportive community and government, we have all the ingredients to create a world leading GREENSTEEL hub at Whyalla and fulfil our CN30 mission."

SIMEC Mining General Manager Magnetite Expansion and Growth, Gavin Hobart, said, "Our existing iron-ore operation in Whyalla is home to some of the highest purity and most desirable deposits of magnetite in the world. The high quality of our ore makes it a critical resource to enable GREENSTEEL manufacturing and this successful pellet production is a significant milestone toward realising our plans."

"Stage two of our magnetite expansion project represents a generational opportunity for economic growth in Whyalla. Once operational, the project is expected to employ more than 1,200 workers and support around 3,500 people in the broader community."

