

Last Days of Koolanooka

The planned closure of Sinosteel Midwest Corporation's (SMC) Koolanooka operation this *week [Ed note: Week beginning June 24th 2013]* marks a significant milestone for an iconic mine in the Mid West as the last of her DSO iron ore makes its way to Geraldton Port for shipping on Saturday.

"Unfortunately Koolanooka's time is up. We began mining in April 2010 with a three year mine life – we've even managed to squeeze out an extra two months." said GM of Operations, Scott Whitehead.

"This mine has been a great training ground for our employees, and we're pretty proud of the way we have maximized the asset and now leave the area in an even better condition than we found it."

The significant Koolanooka rehabilitation efforts have been done progressively over the life of the mine, and have also been informed by an innovative research 'Green Rewind' program partnered with the Kings Park Botanic Gardens & Parks Authority (KPGPA) Science Directorate.

Total production for the SMC Koolanooka mine was just over four million tonnes, however more than five million tonnes were exported under a former regime.

The Sinosteel Midwest Corporation (SMC) owned asset has played an interesting part in the history and development of the Iron Ore Industry State wide, having been the first exporter of iron ore in the State when a WMC Joint venture exported to Japan in the late 60's.

After all this time is it really all over for Koolanooka?

"We believe that Koolanooka does have magnetite potential, but we have not defined the resource. Given the current economic climate it is unlikely that we will be pursuing a project in the near future.

"Of course in the mining game, we 'Never Say Never'," said Scott.

"However our focus is now on the transition to our Blue Hills operation in the Shire of Perenjori which is due to start mining in August this year."

"We hope we have also played our part in the Morawa community, and we would like to thank the Shire and all community members for their support over the last few years. It's a great little town."

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KOOLANOOKA CLOSURE FACTS

- Planned closure of Koolanooka after a 3 year mine life – we got an extra 2 months!
- Commenced mining operations in April 2010 with the first shipment celebrated in July 2010.
- SMC will have exported 4.067 million dry metric tonnes to Chinese Steel Mills by the end of June 2013
- SMC has treated the area with respect, and will be leaving the area even better than we found it
 - Progressive rehabilitation has been exceptionally conceived and delivered
 - Innovative ‘Green Rewind’ program of research by Kings Park Botanic Gardens & Parks Authority (KPGPA) Science Directorate will be a lasting legacy for successful regeneration of native flora in the Mid West.
- Koolanooka Mine has great historical relevance for Iron Ore mining in the Mid West
 - Discovered by WMC in 1961
 - WMC partnered with Homestake (now Barrick Gold) and Hanna Mining Company to become Geraldton Operations Joint Venture (GOJV) and construction commenced in 1964
 - GOJV First Export of Iron Ore (to Japan) in 1966 was the first iron ore exported from WA
 - 5.1 million tonnes of iron ore was shipped to Japan between 1966-1974
 - Last ship was in August 1974 when the WMC contract with Japan expired.
 - Midwest Corporation acquired the tenements in 1992 and 1998.
 - In 2006 Midwest Corporation acquired the rights to haul leftover stockpile material from the GOJV to Geraldton Port
 - Sinosteel Corporation acquired Midwest Corporation, including the Koolanooka and Blue Hills assets to form Sinosteel Midwest Corporation in 2008, and commenced mining in April 2010.

INTERESTING FACTS

- The Koolanooka Mine was officially opened by WA Premier David Brand on 5th February 1966
- Former WA Minister for Mines Norman Moore did work experience at the WMC owned Koolanooka mine in 1965-66
- Norman Moore’s father was the Purchasing Officer at the mine in the 60’s.
- In 1973 Koolanooka mine was the largest employer in the Morawa area, employing 125 people.
- Premier Colin Barnett attended the celebration of the first shipment of SMC’s Koolanooka ore at Geraldton Port on the 15th of July 2010.