

Cockatoo Island



Location:	Off the Dampier coast, 200 kilometres north of Broome, Kimberley region, Western Australia
Client:	Portman Mining
Commodity:	Iron ore
Contract duration:	February 2006 to May 2008
Major contractor since:	2000



Mining magic below the sea bed

In 2000, Portman Mining and HWE Mining entered into an agreement to jointly mine 1.5 million tonnes of remnant ore at Cockatoo Island, one of the Dampier Archipelago islands and currently the only known sub-sea mining operation in the world.

The mine boasts an exceptional, virtually pure haematite orebody. Dipping down at 60 degrees and at just over 35 metres wide, the orebody has a current mining strike length of just over one kilometre.

A joint venture study undertaken during 2001 revealed that it was feasible to uncover an additional four million tonnes of iron ore from the sections of the orebody extending below the sea water level.

To make mining possible, the joint venture partners constructed a 15 metre high sea wall to prevent tidal water from flowing into the pit and began mining the historical "main" Cockatoo Island orebody in 2002.

HWE Mining provides a complete mining service at Cockatoo Island including drilling and blasting, loading and hauling, processing, infrastructure management, maintenance and other related services. We use the full range of surface mining plant and equipment at the mine.

Mining is expected to continue until May 2008 and on its completion, HWE Mining and Portman Mining will carry out an extensive mine site rehabilitation program.

Cockatoo Island operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. HWE Mining employs over 110 people at the mine.

Production results at a glance

- 300,000 bank cubic metres mined per year
- 1.3 million tonnes of iron ore processed per year