

Sonoma Mine



Location: Bowen Basin, near Collinsville, Queensland
Client: Sonoma Mine Management Pty Ltd
Commodity: Coal
Duration: September 2007 to September 2012, with possibly five-year extension



Total mine site solution

Owned by newcomer to the mining industry Sonoma Coal Management Pty Ltd, Sonoma is the first mine to be developed in the vicinity for many years and a boon for the local area. A greenfield site, Leighton Mining commenced work early October 2007 and has been contracted to manage the mining operations for five years, with a potential five-year extension. The site senior executive is employed by Leighton Mining and, as well as overseeing the mining operations, he will also oversee the materials processing plant.

Operations at the site are challenging because of the compact nature of the overburden and the steeply dipping coal seam. A high level of planning and optimum mining sequencing must be used to ensure that the terrace mining technique delivers consistent coal quantity and quality to match the client's aggressive projected coal sales.

The first mine for the client, Leighton Mining has provided an experienced team of professionals to ensure operations run on time and on budget.

Sonoma Mine will produce four to five million tonnes of coal a year, with total movement of around 25 million tonnes of overburden over the same period. Product coal is railed to Abbot Point coal facility for shipping overseas. The mine is expected to be viable for around 14 years.

The majority of waste material will be drilled and blasted prior to loading as there is only a small portion of waste that can be mined using free dig techniques. Leighton Mining runs a fleet of two 350-tonne excavators and one 550-tonne excavator and 14 190-tonne dump trucks on the site. Overburden is hauled to designated waste dumps and coal is hauled to the run-of-mine load out for processing.

Equipment is operated and maintained on site by teams of trained and skilled people.

Around 100 people work at Middlemount, working 12-hour shifts on a seven-days-on, seven-days-off roster.