

Steel giant for iron miner

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The loader is 112m long, the boom is 52m from tip to centre, and the whole structure stands 28m high.

"This was a big job for us," Mr Petley says. "It was very complex in terms of steel fabrication, and required a lot of man hours, technical expertise, space, large capacity cranes, and intensive machining and testing."

According to Mr Petley, this particular ship loader represents the "Rolls Royce" of its kind.

"It's a huge investment for Hamersley Iron," he says. "This loader is expected to have a working life of 25 years, working around the clock.

"And as it's located in a very corrosive environment, it was crucial that it be built of the very highest quality material."

Pacific Industrial stipulated 800 tonnes of 350 Grade XLERPLATE® steel from BlueScope Steel.

"We selected 350 Grade to meet Voest-Alpine's exacting criteria – providing strength, while remaining light," Mr Petley says. "Keeping the weight of the loader down was integral to reducing transport costs and minimising wharf loadings.

"The work proceeded well, thanks to our 300 tonne Demag crawler crane, and experienced workforce. The major challenge on the project was the sheer technical nature of the work."

A good steel supplier is critical to Pacific Industrial's operations, Mr Petley says. "All of our projects run to very tight timeframes, so it's essential that our suppliers are capable of working to our level of demand," he says.

"For jobs like this, we can't afford to take the risk with overseas steel. The quality of XLERPLATE® steel is exceptional – it sets the benchmark worldwide."

"BlueScope Steel has a strong relationship with Pacific Industrial," one of BlueScope Steel's West Australian State Sales Managers, Elly Pilkadaris, said.

"This ship loader was an important element in the Dampier port upgrade, and our ability to provide the required technical support to the Pacific Industrial team throughout the project was a key part of our market offer."

Panelling keeps a lid on loud music

Some of the world's best (and loudest) bands have given an Australian invented sound attenuation system the thumbs up.

The unique panelling, made from wheat straw, covers the roof of the recently completed Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre in Queensland – and has already passed the loud-sound test of 10 major groups.

Spiderbait, UB40 and Harry Connick Jnr are among the entertainers who've played the new centre without exceeding the 120dB sound leakage restrictions placed on the venue.

Bendigo-based Derek Layfield, the principal of Ortech Industries, has spent seven years perfecting the system made from wheat straw which would otherwise be burned during harvesting.

The compressed panel system also works with compressed rice straw, which Ortech is now using as Australia's drought devastates wheat farmers.

Each assembly of up to 100 sq m is held within a frame made of steel from BlueScope Steel, and craned onto a building with a special lifting frame also developed by Mr Layfield.

The system is now attracting world interest.

Ortech has signed a licensing agreement in the US and is planning to open a factory in Sri Lanka before December.

The massive Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre is the company's biggest job so far – and has already led to the Durra board panel being chosen for Auckland's Giant City Arena in New Zealand and the Australian Synchronon project.

On the Gold Coast, Ortech's Durra board panels are framed with ZINCFORM® G300 steel, fixed beneath Stramit Speed Deck Ultra® roof decking rollformed from COLORBOND® Ultra steel.

It provided constructors Multiplex with a cost-efficient alternative to building complex birdcage scaffolding, and delivered faster completion time.

The system (below) was engineered off-site, assembled on the ground and then lifted and bolted to the primary structure, with steel safety rails already attached.

Trades were able to walk and work on the Durra board.

According to Mr Layfield, tests at Melbourne's RMIT have indicated the lightweight acoustic structure provides sound attenuation equivalent to 60cm of solid concrete.

"Our next plan is to become major providers of prefabricated high performance cinema wall systems using Durra board and Durra beam steel studs from BlueScope Steel," he said.

Ortech will work closely with BlueScope Steel on the project.

