



Information Release

1 March 2001

IsaMill technology increases recovery and improving economics at Mount Isa

Six new IsaMill grinding mills recently installed at MIM's Mount Isa Lead-Zinc concentrator, have transformed plant performance and increased zinc recovery by almost ten percent.

The success of the installation confirmed IsaMill as the world's leading technology for fine and ultra fine grinding of mineral concentrates.

The IsaMill technology was developed as a joint venture between MIM and Netzsch of Germany and is marketed by MIM Process Technology.

Philip Bangerter, Business Manager – Mineral Processing, at MIM Process Technologies, said the IsaMills were installed in a major upgrade of the Lead Zinc Concentrator as part of the development of the new George Fisher zinc-lead-silver mine near Mount Isa.

“Two IsaMills have successfully operated for several years.

“The IsaMills efficiently achieve grind sizes down to 7 microns, necessary to achieve mineral liberation and recovery for fine-grained ores like those now being processed at Mount Isa and many other sites.

“Conventional technology is unable to achieve this economically.”

Joe Pease, Concentrators Manager during the installation and commissioning of the six IsaMills, said the technology performed exceptionally well, and allowed the concentrator to exceed expectations.

“We reached our design target of a five percent increase in zinc recovery to 75 percent within a month of commissioning the new IsaMills,” he said.

“Since then we have been able to increase recovery a further five percent to 80 percent as well as increasing zinc concentrate grade by over one percent Zinc.

“The second stage of improvements were implemented due to the changed circuit performance created by the introduction of the IsaMills.

“While conventional wisdom says that flotation is difficult for ultra fine particles, we have found much greater flotation performance enabling a host of other new ideas to work in the circuit,” he said.

“Since commissioning the six new IsaMills, we have been able to strip away complexity from the circuit and achieve a more stable performance.

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“The circuit now behaves more like a coarse grained circuit than a fine grained one, and this has resulted in an a reduction of unit costs reflecting the simpler circuit and lower circulating loads.”

Mr Pease said he expected there were further gains to be achieved.

“We basically have a new circuit now and are constantly finding that we can challenge old assumptions and find new improvements,” he said.

MIM Process Technologies’ suite of technologies is backed by MIM’s operating experience both in Australia and overseas. In Australia, Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines has recently selected IsaMill for its Gidji plant at Kalgoorlie.

In other parts of the world there is strong interest from North America and South Africa where a pilot IsaMill is being trialed at the sites of potential customers.

About MIM

MIM is an Australian-based mining and mineral processing company producing copper, gold, zinc, lead, silver and coal in Australia, UK Germany and Argentina. The group has around 8000 employees worldwide and in 1999/2000 generated sales revenue of almost \$3 billion.

MIM aims to create shareholder value as an efficient and competitive mining and exploration company.

Safety has the highest priority with employees at MIM and the company has a strong commitment to environment management and reporting.

For more information visit our website: www.mim.com.au

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