



1.3 The Plate Mill

The high quality hot rolled XLERPLATE® steel is produced at the Port Kembla Steelworks' Plate Mill – a key supplier to Australian industry and a facility which has undergone several major upgrades in its 45-year history.

The 3,200mm Plate Mill is the only wide Plate Mill in Australia. It converts slabs produced at the slab caster into final customer-specified XLERPLATE® steel dimensions and is capable of rolling thicknesses from 5mm to 150mm and widths from 1,200mm to 3,200mm.

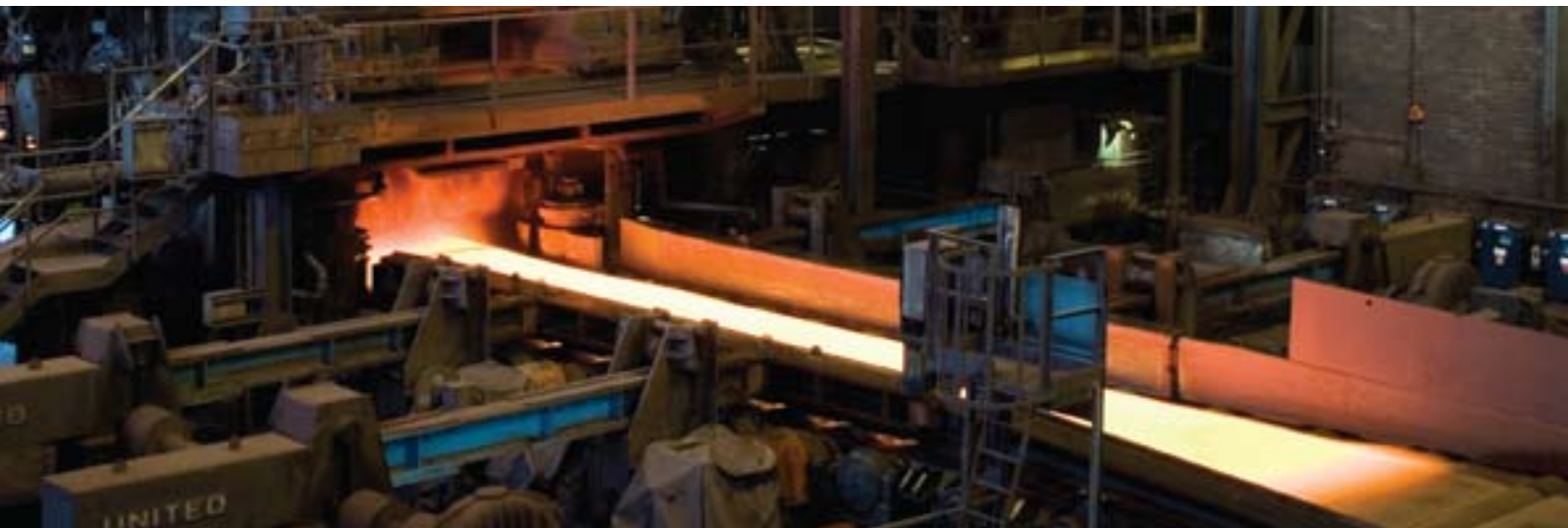
Slabs produced by the Steelworks' continuous caster for the Plate Mill are put through a 1,200 degrees Celsius reheat furnace which is fed by gases produced as by-products elsewhere in the steel making process. Reheating is tightly integrated with the Plate Mill's rolling operations to give maximum operator control.

Blasting with high pressure water removes surface scale from the reheated slabs and prepares them for the rolling process. In the first stage of the rolling process the slab undergoes a series of passes through a reversing mill. During this stage of rolling the required width is obtained. Once the correct width is obtained and the slab has been rolled to a predetermined intermediate thickness, the slab is then sent to a second reversing mill to complete the rolling process.

A series of passes through the second reversing mill results in XLERPLATE® steel of the required dimensions, including the final thickness. Following rolling, the XLERPLATE® steel passes through a hot leveller to ensure it meets the required flatness standards.

The rolling parameters, such as temperature and the amount of thickness reduction per pass, are carefully controlled and monitored in the production of XLERPLATE® steel to ensure all specified properties are obtained.

After cooling, the XLERPLATE® steel is sent to the processing area, where it is cut to the required size. Cutting of test pieces and inspection is carried out at this stage.





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