



BASS POINT QUARRY'S

“DREAM RUN” WITH WA500 LOADERS

Hanson Construction Materials' Bass Point quarry, located just south of Wollongong, has had a long and highly successful relationship with Komatsu, in particular with its WA500 series of loaders. Its latest WA500-6 loaders are described by Hanson's maintenance team leader as a “dream to work on”.

Situated on the New South Wales coast,

just south of Wollongong, Hanson's Bass Point quarry is a unique operation supplying high-quality basalt material by sea right into the heart of Sydney.

About 30 per cent of the quarry's output is shipped from its loading jetty into the company's own ship, the Claudia, which then delivers the material to its concrete plant in Blackwattle Bay - adjacent to the fish markets - from where concrete

and aggregate is supplied to building and construction projects throughout the metropolitan region.

Equipment used at the quarry includes a fleet of three Komatsu WA500 sales loaders, including a WA500-6 delivered in late March, a 12-month-old Komatsu HD465-7 dump truck and a Komatsu HD325-5 dump truck.

The Bass Point quarry, which has been



(Above) The WA500-6 loads basalt material into a HD325 dump truck.

(Left) Mark 6 of Komatsu's WA500 sales loader is described by Dave Baird, Hanson's maintenance team leader, as "a dream to work on".

in operation for 40 years, supplies 1.5 million tonnes of product a year, mainly to the Sydney market. Its primary product is high-quality basalt for concrete, roadbase and other applications.

The quarry produces up to 6000 tonnes a day of basalt, ranging from dust up to 20mm aggregate, gabion spalls from 75 to 100mm and large boulders (up to 200 tonnes) for a forthcoming marina project adjacent to Bass Point.

Up to 3500 tonnes of material, which can be various mixed blends of 20mm, 20 blend, 10mm, 7mm and so on, is loaded on to the Claudia for each trip, with up to three trips a week.

Material goes from the stockpiles via a gravity feed system and conveyors along a 500m jetty to the Claudia.

"From our secondary crushing plant, material goes into the stockpiles. Under those stockpiles is a tunnel, which is gravity fed through clamshells, which the operator out on the jetty controls, depending on how much tonnage is required out on the jetty," said

It's really good from the management side of things if an operator takes over ownership of a machine ...

Wayne Kelly, quarry supervisor at Bass Point.

"That comes through that tunnel, onto the transfer point, on to the ship tunnel conveyor and straight out onto the jetty. Depending on the weather, and we are constrained in rough conditions, wind and so on, the ship then goes straight to Blackwattle Bay, just under the Anzac Bridge in Sydney," he said.

The quarry is in production from 2pm until 6am, five days a week, with maintenance from 6am until 2pm - and being so close

to the ocean, it is a constant battle against rust and corrosion. Sales take place Monday to Friday, and from 6am until noon on Saturdays.

According to Mr Kelly, the quarry has had a long and successful relationship with Komatsu, particularly in its use of WA500 loaders as sales loaders.

"I will let our maintenance team leader, Dave Baird, talk about the Komatsu loaders, but what I particularly like about them is how the operators really appreciate them and so are taking a lot of ownership.

"That's really good from the management side of things because, if an operator takes over ownership of a machine, he looks after it and it's going to last us for a lot longer," he said.

Maintenance team leader Dave Baird, who has been on the site "since the day it opened", said the first Komatsu WA500-1 loader arrived in the early 1990s.

"When they brought in the 'Dash 1', me being a fan of another brand through and through, I went through a phase of thinking,



After 12 months at Bass Point, the HD465 dump truck (above) has proven itself reliable, says Baird.

Wayne Kelly, quarry supervisor (left) and Dave Baird, maintenance team leader at Bass Point.

‘Oh yeah, we’ll see how this goes, we’ll see how that goes’,” he said.

“However, I have always been open to what’s going on and - 34,000 hours later on a WA500-1, with no transmission replacement, no engine replacement, no pump replacement, just normal service, though we did replace plenty of air compressors on it - I realised it was the greatest machine that was ever made.

“To me, the WA500s are like the old Holdens, they just keep going on and on.

“I’ve had plenty of people throughout the industry ask me about them and, as a sales loader, if you wanted 10 sales loaders

tomorrow, I’d go out and buy 10 WA500s.

“With the HD465, for me, it’s too early to comment. After 12 months, it’s had no repairs, no failures - so time will tell. But the loaders I cannot speak highly enough about,” Mr Baird said.

“And the latest WA500-6 is an operator’s dream - plus, believe it or not, someone in Komatsu actually thought about the man who has to service it, because all the filters are all in one spot. They are just such a great machine to work on now as far as the servicing goes. There are very limited breakdowns.

“That early machine, like I said, had an

air compressor problem - but 34,000 hours and you don’t do an engine or a trannie, what can you say? It speaks for itself,” he said.

“I hope we get the same amount of life out of the trucks. Like I said, they are only new in the place as far as ours go, but so far so good.

“The latest loader out, the WA500-6, it’s that far advanced now, it’s absolutely a dream to work on. The Dash 3 models, they were good, but there’s improvement again with the Dash 6,” said Mr Baird. •

Source: Komatsu Australia