Salt: Sustainably sourced

Dampier Salt Limited (DSL) is the largest exporter of salt in the Asian seaborne market, harvesting millions of tonnes each year. Our salt is grown naturally as a solar evaporated product, utilising the energy of the sun and wind. For more than 50 years, DSL has been a reliable source of high-quality salt, supplying customers in major Asian countries and the world for their industrial and edible salt markets. The unique flavour of sea salt makes DSL salt a preferred ingredient in various food products all around the world.

Environmental stewardship
DSL’s commitment to decarbonisation is in line with wider Rio Tinto group targets. Our focus is to be an industry leader in defining the ESG benchmarks for the salt industry as a supplier.

Producing world-class salt from pristine Australian waters
Located in Western Australia, DSL operations rely on natural processes of evaporation over an area greater than 21,000 ha (equivalent to 168,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools) to transform seawater into salt. Seawater is pumped into a series of ponds that progressively concentrate it into brine before transferring it to our crystallisers. Further evaporation causes pure sodium chloride (NaCl) to crystallise as a solid deposit. The salt is then harvested and washed, and finally ready to ship to our customers worldwide.

Water management
We try whenever possible to reduce using potable water and have several projects in place to substitute potable water with seawater. As part of Rio Tinto, we utilise a water data platform that makes our surface water allocation, water usage, and associated average catchment rainfall runoff transparent to the public.

Biodiversity
Dampier is home to a diverse range of shorebirds who live or visit on their migratory journey from the Northern Hemisphere and has been recognized by BirdLife International as an area of international significance for the conservation of shorebirds, including the threatened great sand plover and the small, red-necked stint. The different salinity of each pond increases the diversity of invertebrates living in the mud, providing shorebirds with an array of food options.

In 2018, we implemented a new biodiversity protection and natural resource management standard, with input from BirdLife Australia, IUCN, and Fauna & Flora International. The standard seeks to minimize our impact by balancing conservation needs with development priorities through four actions. Our first priority is to avoid having an impact, after which we seek to minimise, restore, and finally offset impacts.

DSL operates site-based laboratories to continually monitor the salt making process, from the pumping of seawater right through to loading onto ships. Sampling at various points in the production and delivery cycle is key to our high quality.

DSL has a management system certified to the international standard ISO9001:2015 that allows us to be consistent in how we operate our business. As a commitment to our quality and our customers in the food processing industry, all our sites are Halal and Kosher certified.

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Cultural significance
The Dampier Archipelago has one of the largest and most diverse concentrations of rock art in the world, with an estimated one million engravings. In 2007, we supported the inclusion of the Dampier Archipelago – including the Burrup Peninsula – on the National Heritage List, in recognition of its outstanding rock art values. The art is on Murujuga, the traditional name for the Dampier Archipelago and Burrup Peninsula, where there are more than a million rock engravings, spanning more than 20,000 years, from before the last ice age, to European occupation.

The National Heritage listing covers approximately 300 square kilometers of the Dampier Archipelago land area which includes a significant portion of our DSL site. DSL ensures we pay our respect to the Traditional Owners, on whose lands we are operating.

About Rio Tinto
Rio Tinto operates in 35 countries—in mines, smelters, and refineries, as well as in sales offices, data centers, and research and development labs. With 52,000 employees, we are working to find better ways to provide the materials the world needs. Rio Tinto’s portfolio includes iron ore, copper, aluminium, lithium, salt, and other materials needed for everyday life, and for the world to cut carbon emissions to net zero. Mining for 150 years, Rio Tinto continues to build on a history and knowledge that span generations and continents.

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