

# ArcelorMittal's major reline project will boost economy

**Kyle Cowan**  
ArcelorMittal Newcastle  
A has recently started an extensive reline project, which will last 125 days and will include the shutdown of certain parts of the plant.

Although many residents know the shutdown is taking place, not many know for what reason exactly. In a bid to give the community insight into the happenings inside one of the biggest employers in our area, here is what readers need to know about the project:

“A reline is made up of a number of activities from mechanical, electrical and instrumentation to automation and civil, which have to be sequenced to reduce the downtime of the BFN5,” explained Gracious Maswanganyi, Manager of Corporate Social Responsibility and Communications at ArcelorMittal Newcastle.

“This project runs 24/7 for the full duration (125 days) of the project. All the activities have been programmed in a MS Project plan. From this plan we derive a ‘critical path’.”

This “critical path” indicates the activities, which need to be completed in series, and determines the duration of the outage.

Any slip on these activities will increase the downtime, while any gain will have a positive reduction in downtime of the furnace. The aim is to complete the reline in less than the planned 125 days.

When a large company like



**ArcelorMittal will be on shutdown for the next 125 days for a major reline project on the blast furnace.**

ArcelorMittal embarks on a project like this, local economy receives a large boost. Local companies that specialise in certain areas are often used, to

enhance the positive impact on local businesses.

“ArcelorMittal aims to use the maximum amount of local labour and manufacturing

capability in executing the Blast Furnace reline,” continued Ms Maswanganyi. “There are a number of specialised Blast Furnace related skills, materials

and equipment that have to be brought in from overseas and we are also able to draw on international expertise from within the ArcelorMittal Group, with regards to latest best practice developments in Blast Furnace technology,” she continued.

Big projects like this are also planned well in advance, to minimise the negative effects of having large parts of the plant inactive. In this case, only the blast furnace and the sinter and steel making areas are shut down for the full duration of the project.

The rolling mills will remain in production, utilising the stock stored for use during times like these.

“To supplement the backup store, material imported from within the international ArcelorMittal Group and from ArcelorMittal Vanderbijlpark will also be used. There will also be shorter duration planned shutdowns on each of the mills during the reline period, in order to carry out maintenance work that cannot be performed during normal operation,” said Ms Maswanganyi.

ArcelorMittal agreed that the increase for local business was very positive.

A large number of people (more than 1 000) will be staying in Newcastle during the reline period, thus accommodation, food suppliers, transporters and even local labour requirements will see a sharp rise in demand during this period.