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Fortescue Metals Group (FMG)

Iron ore price to lift FY23 earnings

Recommendation

Sell (unchanged)
Price
\$22.18
Target (12 months)
\$15.16 (previously \$14.45)

GICS Sector

Materials

Expected Return	
Capital growth	-31.7%
Dividend yield	6.6%
Total expected return	-25.1%
Company Data & Rat	ios
Enterprise value	\$71,425m
Market cap	\$68,291m
Issued capital	3,079m
Free float	54%
Avg. daily val. (52wk)	\$171.3m
12 month price range	\$14.50-\$23.325

Price Performance							
	(1m)	(3m)	(12m)				
Price (A\$)	19.86	20.32	17.88				
Absolute (%)	11.5	9.0	23.8				
Rel market (%)	11.7	5.5	16.8				

Iron ore price higher for longer

We have reviewed our earnings forecasts for FMG in light of higher-than-forecast iron ore prices, which we increase by 4% for FY23 on a marked-to-market basis. We also further tighten our price realisation discounts due to good demand in the market for mid-grade iron ore products and an increasing contribution from Iron Bridge, which produces a high grade magnetite concentrate. Seaborne iron ore prices have been stronger in response to Chinese Government stimulus including certain interest rate cuts and less restrictive housing policies. However, downstream demand continues to remain weak and as a result market sentiment is mixed. Reflecting this, we have lifted our short term iron ore price assumptions but our medium and longer term price forecasts remain unchanged on a steadily declining trajectory towards US\$90/t nominal (US\$82/t real) in FY25.

Iron Bridge into the mix

We also reduce the risk adjustment discount that we apply to the Iron Bridge Magnetite Project (FMG 69% ownership) which commenced production earlier in the June 2023 quarter and is currently ramping up production to a nameplate run-rate of ~22Mtpa of ~67% Fe grade magnetite concentrate. As this high grade production ramps up we expect it to provide FMG with both marketing and strategic optionality, enabling it to maximise value over its entire iron ore product suite.

Investment thesis – Sell TP\$15.16/sh (Sell TP\$14.45/sh)

EPS changes in this report are: FY23 +16%, FY24 +1%, FY25 +0%. Our NPV-based valuation increases 5% to \$15.16/sh on our 4% higher FY23 iron ore price and derisked valuation for Iron Bridge. While operations continue to perform at the top end of expectations, a forecast decline in iron ore prices, earnings and dividends combined with the uncertainty over capital allocation and investment returns for both FFI and the Belinga project in Gabon, causes us to see limited upside from the current share price. We retain our Sell recommendation.

Absolu	ute Price
\$30.00	
\$25.00	forman a com
\$20.00	\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \
\$15.00	N. J. A.M.
\$10.00	
\$5.00	
\$0.00	
Jur	n 21 Dec 21 Jun 22 Dec 22 Jun 23
_	FMG ——S&P 300 Rebased

Year ending 30 Jun	2022a	2023e	2024e	2025e
Sales (US\$m)	17,390	17,295	14,022	13,169
EBITDA (US\$m)	10,528	9,677	5,899	5,003
NPAT (reported) (US\$m)	6,197	5,558	2,833	2,136
NPAT (adjusted) (US\$m)	6,197	5,558	2,833	2,136
EPS (adjusted) (UScps)	201	181	92	69
EPS growth (%)	-40%	-10%	-49%	-25%
EPS (adjusted) (Acps)	277	269	132	99
PER (x)	8.0	8.2	16.8	22.4
EV/EBITDA (x)	4.6	5.0	8.2	9.7
Dividend (Acps)	207	174	87	75
Yield (%)	9.3%	7.8%	3.9%	3.4%
Franking (%)	100%	100%	100%	100%
ROE (%)	36%	30%	15%	11%

SOURCE: IRESS SOURCE: BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

Changes to our forecasts

With this update we have made the following changes to our modelled assumptions:

- Updated for higher iron ore prices and tighter discounts for FMG's realised prices relative to iron ore benchmark prices;
- Marked-to-market our current iron ore price assumptions and incorporated our latest iron ore price and foreign exchange rate forecasts;
- Reduced our risk adjustment discount for the Iron Bridge Magnetite Project, which has commenced production; and
- Updated for FMG's last reported cash position and capital structure, including the redemption of US\$750m @ 5.125% Senior Unsecured Notes, previously due May 2024.

The net changes to our forecasts are summarised in the table below:

Table 1 - Changes to earni	ngs and valua	tion estimat	es						
	Previous			New			Change		
Year ending 30 June 30	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25	Jun-23	Jun-24	Jun-25
Iron ore (Fines) CFR @ 62% Fe	104	93	90	108	93	90	4%	0%	0%
AUD/USD	0.67	0.70	0.70	0.67	0.70	0.70	0%	0%	0%
Total production (Mt wet)	192.4	200.0	208.0	191.7	200.0	208.0	0%	0%	0%
Costs C1 (US\$/t)	17.51	17.79	18.48	17.81	17.79	18.48	2%	0%	0%
Revenue (US\$m)	16,127	14,022	13,169	17,295	14,022	13,169	7%	0%	0%
EBITDA (US\$m)	8,622	5,899	5,003	9,677	5,899	5,003	12%	0%	0%
NPAT (adjusted) (US\$m)	4,794	2,808	2,135	5,558	2,833	2,136	16%	1%	0%
Adjusted EPS (Ac/sh)	232	131	99	269	132	99	16%	1%	0%
PER (x)	9.5	16.9	22.4	8.2	16.8	22.4	(1.3)	(0.2)	(0.0)
DPS (Ac/sh)	150	87	75	174	87	75	16%	0%	0%
Yield (%)	6.8%	3.9%	3.4%	7.8%	3.9%	3.4%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Net debt (cash) (\$m)	2,115	2,626	2,726	1,549	2,482	2,581	-27%	-5%	-5%
ND / (ND + E) (%)	11%	13%	13%	8%	12%	12%	-3%	-1%	-1%
Valuation (\$/sh)		14.45			15.16			5%	

SOURCE: COMPANY DATA AND BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

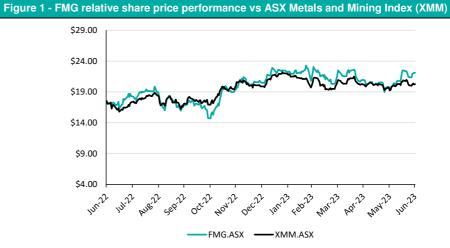
FY23 US\$ earnings and A\$ EPS are both up 16% on higher iron ore prices and improved price realisation discounts. For FY24 and FY25 A\$ EPS are effectively unchanged. Our NPV-based valuation is up 5%, from \$14.45/sh to \$15.16/sh on the improved FY23 outlook and reduced valuation discount for the Iron Bridge project. Dividend yields remain meaningful but are forecast to decline and continue to fade as a factor supporting the share price, particularly at these levels.

Upcoming catalysts

Key near term catalysts for FMG include:

- Updates on the operating cost environment being experienced by FMG as CY23 progresses;
- Updates on production ramp-up and first magnetite concentrate sales from the Iron Bridge Project;
- Development updates and disclosure of likely operating parameters for the Belinga Project in Gabon, where first shipments are targeted by end CY23;
- The maintenance of high price realisations for FMG's iron ore product suite and market developments in China, where the lifting of COVID restrictions are supporting the shortterm steel demand outlook;
- The June quarter 2023 report, scheduled for release on 27 July 2023; and
- The announcement of Final Investment Decisions on five (5) of FFI's projects by the end of CY23 and which projects they will be.

FMG vs the ASX Metals and Mining Index



SOURCE: IRESS

Fortescue Metals Group Ltd (FMG)

Company description: Iron ore major in the Pilbara, WA

FMG is an independent iron ore producer in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. The company is currently achieving its targeted ~187-192Mtpa production rate for FY23, following ten years of development and expansion. It has successfully reduced its debt and built a strong balance sheet. FMG is now targeting the production of a +60% Fe product and has become more active in exploration for other commodities.

Investment thesis – Sell TP\$15.16/sh (Sell TP\$14.45/sh)

EPS changes in this report are: FY23 +16%, FY24 +1%, FY25 +0%. Our NPV-based valuation increases 5% to \$15.16/sh on our 4% higher FY23 iron ore price and de-risked valuation for Iron Bridge. While operations continue to perform at the top end of expectations, a forecast decline in iron ore prices, earnings and dividends combined with the uncertainty over capital allocation and investment returns for both FFI and the Belinga project in Gabon, causes us to see limited upside from the current share price. We retain our Sell recommendation.

Valuation: \$15.16/sh

Our FMG valuation incorporates DCF models of FMG's Chichester and Solomon production hubs, including future production from the Eliwana and Iron Bridge projects. We also make an estimate of exploration/expansion upside and an estimate of corporate overhead costs, including FFI's operating costs and capital expenditure guidance. We calculate a 12-month forward, NPV-based valuation for FMG of \$15.16/sh on this basis.

Sum-of-the-parts (+12 month Target Price)	\$m	\$/sh
Iron ore operations (DCF)	50,408	16.29
Exploration (estimate)	2,016	0.65
Corporate (DCF)	(4,323)	(1.40)
Subtotal	48,101	15.55
Net debt (cash)	1,210	0.39
Total (diluted)	46,891	15.16

SOURCE: BELL POTTER ESTIMATES

Resource sector risks

Risks to resources sector equities such as FMG include, but are not limited to:

- Funding and capital management risks: Funding and capital management risks can include access to debt and equity finance, maintaining covenants on debt finance, managing dividend payments and managing debt repayments. Exploration and development companies with no sales revenues are reliant on access to equity markets and debt financing to fund the advancement and development of their projects.
- Operating and development risks: Mining companies' assets are subject to risks
 associated with their operation and development. Risks for each company can be
 heightened depending on method of operation (e.g. underground versus open pit
 mining) or whether it is a single mine company. Development of mining assets may be
 subject to receiving permits, approvals timelines or weather events, causing delays to
 commissioning and commercial production.
- COVID-19 risks: Mining companies' rely on freedom of movement of workforces, functioning transport routes, reliable logistics services including road, rail, aviation and ports in order to maintain operations and get their products to market. They also rely on liquid, functioning markets to sell their products. Measures being put in place to combat the COVID-19 pandemic are posing risks to these conditions.
- Operating and capital cost fluctuations: The cost and availability of exploration, development and mining inputs can fluctuate widely and cause significant differences between planned and actual operating and capital costs. Key operating costs are linked to energy and labour costs as well as access to, and availability of, technical skills, operating equipment and consumables.
- Commodity price and exchange rate fluctuations: The future earnings and valuations of exploration, development and producing Resources companies are subject to fluctuations in underlying commodity prices and foreign currency exchange rates.
- Resource growth and mine life extensions: The viability of future operations and the
 earnings forecasts and valuations reliant upon them may depend upon resource and
 reserve growth to extend mine lives, which is in turn dependent upon exploration
 success, of which there are no guarantees.
- Regulatory changes risks: Changes to the regulation of infrastructure and taxation (among other things) can impact the earnings and valuation of mining companies.
 NIC's assets are located in Sulawesi, Indonesia, which has in the past implemented regulatory changes related to mining project ownership, fiscal terms and mineral export requirements.
- Sovereign risks: Mining companies' assets are subject to the sovereign risks of the
 jurisdiction within which they are operating. NIC's assets are in Indonesia, a G20
 country with one of the largest economies in SE Asia. Its sovereign debt is rated
 investment grade by the major ratings agencies.
- Corporate/M&A risks: Risks associated with M&A activity including differences between the entity's and the market's perception of value associated with completed transactions.

Fortescue Metals Group as at 30 June 2023

Sell Recommendation \$22.18 **Price** \$15.16 Target (12 months)

							arget (12 month	<i>0)</i>			Ψιο	<i>,</i> , 10	
Table 3 - Financial s	summar	у											
PROFIT AND LOSS							FINANCIAL RATIOS						
Year ending 30 Jun	Unit	2021a	2022a	2023e	2024e	2025e	Year ending 30 Jun	Unit	2021a	2022a	2023e	2024e	2025e
Revenue	US\$m	22,284	17,390	17,295	14,022	13,169	VALUATION						
Expense	US\$m	(5,972)	(6,862)	(7,618)	(8,123)	(8,166)	NPAT (adjusted)	US\$m	10,497	6,197	5,558	2,833	2,136
EBITDA Depreciation	US\$m US\$m	16,312 (1,366)	10,528 (1,528)	9,677 (1,656)	5,899 (1,727)	5,003 (1,796)	Adjusted EPS EPS growth	USc/sh %	335 117%	201 -40%	181 -10%	92 -49%	69 -25%
EBIT	US\$m	14,946	9,000	8,021	4,172	3,207	Adjusted EPS	Ac/sh	448	277	269	132	99
Net interest expense	US\$m	(224)	(154)	(193)	(237)	(241)	EPS growth	%	95%	-38%	-3%	-51%	-25%
PBT	US\$m	14,722	8,846	7,829	3,935	2,966	PER	х	5.0x	8.0x	8.2x	16.8x	22.4x
Tax expense	US\$m	(4,427)	(2,649)	(2,271)	(1,102)	(831)	DPS	Ac/sh	358	207	174	87	75
NPAT (reported)	US\$m	10,295	6,197	5,558	2,833	2,136	Franking	%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Abnormal items	US\$m	202	C 407		0.000	0.400	Yield	% HO-/-b	16%	9%	8%	4%	3%
NPAT (adjusted)	US\$m	10,497	6,197	5,558	2,833	2,136	FCF/share FCF/share	USc/sh Ac/sh	291 390	116 160	119 177	68 99	50 71
PROFIT AND LOSS (INTERIM)							FCF yield	% %	18%	7%	8%	4%	3%
Half year ending	Unit	Jun-21a	Dec-21a	Jun-22a	Dec-22a	Jun-23a	EV/EBITDA	x	3.0x	4.6x	5.0x	8.2x	9.7x
Revenue	US\$m	12,949	8,125	9,265	7,835	9,460	EBITDA margin	%	73%	61%	56%	42%	38%
Expense	US\$m	(3,248)	(3,379)	(3,483)	(3,519)	(4,099)	EBIT margin	%	67%	52%	46%	30%	24%
EBITDA	US\$m	9,701	4,746	5,782	4,316	5,361	Return on assets	%	36%	22%	20%	10%	7%
Depreciation	US\$m	(694)	(722)	(806)	(859)	(797)	Return on equity	%	58%	36%	30%	15%	11%
EBIT	US\$m	9,007	4,024	4,976	3,457	4,564	LIQUIDITY & LEVERAGE	1104	(0.070)	070	1.540	0.400	0.504
Net interest expense PBT	US\$m	(149)	(76)	(78)	(59)	(134)	Net debt (cash)	US\$m	(2,678)	879 E9/	1,549	2,482	2,581
PBI Tax expense	US\$m US\$m	8,858 (2,647)	3,948 (1,171)	4,898 (1,478)	3,398 (1,030)	4,431 (1,241)	ND / E ND / (ND + E)	% %	-15% -18%	5% 5%	8% 8%	13% 12%	14% 12%
NPAT (reported)	US\$m	6,211	2,777	3,420	2,368	3,190	ND / (ND + E) ND / EBITDA	70 X	-10% -0.2x	0.1x	0.2x	0.4x	0.5x
Abnormal items	US\$m		-,		-,000		EBITDA/Interest	x	72.8	68.4	50.2	24.9	20.8
NPAT (adjusted)	US\$m	6,211	2,777	3,420	2,368	3,190							
							ASSUMPTIONS - Prices						
CASH FLOW							Year ending 30 Jun	Unit	2021a	2022a	2023e	2024e	2025e
Year ending 30 Jun	Unit	2021a	2022a	2023e	2024e	2025e	Iron ore (Fines) CFR @ 62% Fe	US\$/dmt	155	138	108	93	90
OPERATING CASHFLOW	1100	00.404	47.000	47.000	44.040	40.404	AUD/USD	US\$/A\$	0.75	0.73	0.67	0.70	0.70
Receipts	US\$m US\$m	22,181 (5,371)	17,603 (7,088)	17,083 (7,860)	14,210 (8,113)	13,184 (8,200)							
Payments Tax	US\$m	(4,015)	(3,667)	(2,247)	(1,102)	(831)	ASSUMPTIONS - Production						
Net interest	US\$m	(201)	(202)	(245)	(237)	(241)	Year ending 30 Jun	Unit	2021a	2022a	2023e	2024e	2025e
Other	US\$m	(/	(/	(= /	(/	-	Sales (FMG equity)	Mwt	182.2	189.0	191.7	200.0	208.0
Operating cash flow	US\$m	12,594	6,646	6,731	4,758	3,913	Third party	Mwt	-	-	-	-	-
INVESTING CASHFLOW							Sales (total)	Mwt	182.2	189.0	191.7	200.0	208.0
Capex & exploration	US\$m	(2,585)	(2,005)	(2,535)	(2,650)	(2,374)	62% Fe index price (real)	US\$/dt	155	138	109	86	82
Other	US\$m	(1,042)	(1,065)	(539)	(0.050)	(0.074)	FMG realised price CFR	US\$/dt	135	100	95	76	72
Investing cash flow FINANCING CASHFLOW	US\$m	(3,627)	(3,070)	(3,074)	(2,650)	(2,374)	Realised price discount Costs C1 (excl. royalty)	% US\$/wt	-13% 13.84	-28% 15.91	-13% 17.81	-12% 17.79	-12% 18.48
Net equity proceeds	US\$m		_	_	_	_	Shipping	US\$/wt	7.32	10.46	9.43	9.81	8.54
Debt proceeds	US\$m	1,500	1,900	_	_	_	Royalties	US\$/wt	8.56	5.98	5.90	4.99	4.50
Debt repayments	US\$m	(2,451)	(134)	(884)		_	Other	US\$/wt	0.18	0.30	0.60	0.62	0.63
Dividends	US\$m	(5,684)	(6,699)	(3,926)	(3,041)	(1,638)	Cost of sales	US\$/wt	29.90	32.64	33.74	33.22	32.14
Other	US\$m	(258)	(166)	(164)	-	-	Interest	US\$/wt	1.19	1.13	1.64	1.31	1.26
Financing cash flow	US\$m	(6,893)	(5,099)	(4,974)	(3,041)	(1,638)	Capex (sustaining)	US\$/wt	19.91	16.24	11.08	6.00	5.50
Change in cash	US\$m	2,074	(1,523)	(1,317)	(933)	(99)	Total all-in cost	US\$/wt	50.99	50.02	46.46	40.53	38.90
BALANCE SHEET							Total all-in cost (@ 8% moist)	US\$/dt	55	54	51	44 49	42
Year ending 30 Jun	Unit	2021a	2022a	2023e	2024e	2025e	Total all-in cost (62% Fe eq.)	US\$/dt	62	69	57	49	47
ASSETS	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	20210	LULLA	20200	LULTE	20230	VALUATION						
Cash & short term investments	US\$m	6,930	5,224	3,714	2,781	2,682	Issued capital						
Accounts receivable	US\$m	737	492	678	490	475	Shares on issue m						3,079
Inventory	US\$m	1,212	1,553	1,711	1,711	1,711	Options (in the money) m						15
Property, plant & equipment	US\$m	10,758	10,255	22,024	22,917	23,465	Total m						3,094
Exploration & evaluation	US\$m	7,690	9,463	15	45	75		Current		12 months		-24 months	
Other	US\$m	1,056	1,388	497	497	497	Sum of parts valuation	A\$m	\$/sh	A\$m	\$/sh	A\$m	\$/sh
Total assets	US\$m	28,383	28,375	28,639	28,441	28,904	Iron ore operations (DCF)	53,215	17.20	50,408	16.29	49,979	16.15
LIABILITIES	IIC#	1.010	1 504	1 000	1.040	1 005	Exploration (estimate)	2,129	0.69	2,016	0.65	1,999	0.65
Accounts payable Borrowings	US\$m US\$m	1,918 3,442	1,564 5,348	1,230 4,525	1,240 4,525	1,205 4,525	Corporate (DCF) Total enterprise value	(4,461) 50,882	(1.44) 16.45	(4,323) 48,101	(1.40) 15.55	(4,188) 47,790	(1.35) 15.45
Borrowings Other	US\$m	5,288	5,348 4,118	4,525 4,113	4,525 4,113	4,525 4,113	Total enterprise value	30,002	10.43	40,101	13.33	41,130	13.43
Total liabilities	US\$m	10,648	11,030	9,868	9,878	9,843	Net debt/(cash)	3,133	1.01	1,210	0.39	2,509	0.81
SHAREHOLDER'S EQUITY	ООФП	.0,040	. 1,000	3,000	3,010	5,045	Equity value	47,749	15.43	46,891	15.16	45,281	14.63
Share capital	US\$m	1,105	1,053	1,044	1,044	1,044	. ,	,		.,	3	.,=	
Reserves	US\$m	46	109	130	130	130	MAJOR SHAREHOLDERS						
Retained earnings	US\$m	16,576	16,175	17,594	17,387	17,884	Minderoo Group Pty Ltd						36.7%
Non-controlling interest	US\$m	8	8	3	3	3	Hunan Valin Iron & Steel Group						9.0%
Total equity	US\$m	17,735	17,345	18,771	18,564	19,061	The Capital Group						7.6%
Net debt	US\$m	(3,488)	124	811	1,744	1,843							
Weighted average shares	m	3,077	3,077	3,079	3,079	3,079							

SOURCE: BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

Weighted average shares

17,735 (3,488) 3,077

18,771 811 3,079

3,079

Recommendation structure

Buy: Expect >15% total return on a 12 month view. For stocks regarded as 'Speculative' a return of >30% is expected.

Hold: Expect total return between - 5% and 15% on a 12 month view

Sell: Expect <-5% total return on a

Speculative Investments are either start-up enterprises with nil or only prospective operations or recently commenced operations with only forecast cash flows, or companies that have commenced operations or have been in operation for some time but have only forecast cash flows and/or a stressed balance sheet.

Such investments may carry an exceptionally high level of capital risk and volatility of returns.

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