

Rio Tinto's first Pilbara-made rail car built by Gemco in Karratha

08.12.2025 | [Business Wire](#)

[Rio Tinto](#)'s first Pilbara-made iron ore rail car has rolled off the production line in Karratha, as part of a A\$150 million partnership with Australian rail industry supplier Gemco Rail to build 100 rail cars in Western Australia and to support local manufacturing.

The first Karratha-made rail car follows the completion of 40 Western Australian-made iron ore rail cars under the partnership at Gemco Rail's Perth facility earlier this year, with the remaining cars to be built at a new purpose-built facility in Karratha.

Machinery to assemble the iron ore rail cars and complete bearing refurbishment work, has been relocated from Perth to the new Gemco Rail facility. The Karratha workshop will create up to 25 local jobs.

The Karratha-made rail cars will begin hauling iron ore from Rio Tinto's 18 Pilbara iron ore mines to its Dampier and Cape Lambert port facilities this month. The new rail cars can each carry up to 118 tonnes of iron ore.

The partnership demonstrates Rio Tinto's commitment to local manufacturing and supporting the communities where it operates. It was formed in 2023 by Rio Tinto, Gemco Rail and CRRC Qiqihar Rolling Stock Co. Ltd and was supported by the Western Australian Government.

Western Australian Premier Roger Cook said: "My government's priority is diversifying Western Australia's nation-leading economy by supporting initiatives that help our State become a place that makes more things here.

"Our government brought railcar manufacturing back to Perth, and we're proud to see businesses like Rio Tinto and Gemco Rail get behind our State's industry, build more things here and create WA jobs. I'd like to congratulate Rio Tinto and Gemco Rail on today's milestone, which has brought Made in WA-railcars to the heart of our country's economic engine room."

The Gemco Rail deal reinforces Rio Tinto's commitment to partnering with local businesses to create jobs and strengthen regional communities. In 2024, Rio Tinto invested a record A\$10.3 billion with Western Australian suppliers.

Rio Tinto Iron Ore Chief Executive Matthew Holcz said: "We're thrilled to be working with our partners to bring iron ore rail car manufacturing to the Pilbara for the first time.

"Our WA operations haul more than 300 million tonnes of iron ore across almost 2,000km of rail tracks every year. Local manufacturing strengthens not only our business, it also empowers local communities, supports regional jobs and creates new economic opportunities in the Pilbara."

Engenco Limited, the parent company of Gemco Rail, Chief Executive Officer Dean Draper said: "We are pleased to deliver on our commitment with the expansion of our operations into the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

"Establishing a manufacturing presence in Karratha strengthens our ability to work closely with customers, enhances supply chain resilience, and supports regional industry while creating employment opportunities. The Gemco team remains focused on supporting our customers and building capability within our local

workforce to deliver high-quality, sustainable rail solutions."

CRRC Qiqihar Rolling Stock Co. Ltd Representative Vincent Zhu said: "We are delighted to witness the local ore car manufacturing event in Karratha.

"As a long-term and valued supplier of Rio Tinto, QRRS is honoured and proud to support Rio Tinto on the localisation project of ore cars to contribute to local society and communities. We will commit to promote the partnership with Rio Tinto and supply excellent products and services continuously."

Additional information:

Rio Tinto uses about 13,500 iron ore rail cars across its Pilbara iron ore rail network. It typically replaces about 10 retired iron ore rail cars a year.

View source version on businesswire.com: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20251207460279/en/>

Contact

Please direct all enquiries to media.enquiries@riotinto.com

Media Relations,
United Kingdom
Matthew Klar
M +44 7796 630 637
David Outhwaite
M +44 7787 597 493

Media Relations,
Australia
Matt Chambers
M +61 433 525 739
Alyesha Anderson
M +61 434 868 118
Rachel Pupazzoni
M +61 438 875 469
Bruce Tobin
M +61 419 103 454

Media Relations,
Canada
Simon Letendre
M +1 514 796 4973
Malika Cherry
M +1 418 592 7293
Vanessa Damha
M +1 514 715 2152

Media Relations,
US & Latin America
Jesse Riseborough
M +1 202 394 9480

Investor Relations,
United Kingdom
Rachel Arellano
M +44 7584 609 644
David Ovington
M +44 7920 010 978
Laura Brooks
M +44 7826 942 797

Weiwei Hu
M +44 7825 907 230

Investor Relations,
Australia
Tom Gallop
M +61 439 353 948
Eddie Gan-Och
M +976 95 091 237

[Rio Tinto Plc](#)
6 St James's Square
London SW1Y 4AD
United Kingdom
T +44 20 7781 2000
Registered in England
No. 719885

[Rio Tinto Ltd.](#)
Level 43, 120 Collins Street
Melbourne 3000
Australia
T +61 3 9283 3333
Registered in Australia
ABN 96 004 458 404

riotinto.com

Category: Pilbara

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Die URL für diesen Artikel lautet:

<https://www.rohstoff-welt.de/news/714720--Rio-Tintos-first-Pilbara-made-rail-car-built-by-Gemco-in-Karratha.html>

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