

# Construction begins on Rio Tinto's first Western Australian-made iron ore rail cars

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[Rio Tinto](#)'s first locally made iron ore rail car has been built in Western Australia, as it steps up its use of domestic manufacturing across its world class iron ore business.

The company is investing about A\$150 million to purchase 100 locally built rail cars, as well as continued investment in bearing refurbishment for its Pilbara operations.

Its partnership with Gemco Rail and CRRC Qiqihar Rolling Stock Co. Ltd is also supported by the Western Australian government and establishes a new local supply chain that delivers jobs and boosts manufacturing in the state.

Western Australian Premier Roger Cook said: "Our vision for Western Australia's future is clear: we want to continue working closely with the resources industry to diversify our nation-leading economy and make more things here.

"These railcars are an excellent example of that vision already in action. I want to congratulate Rio Tinto, Gemco Rail and CRRC Qiqihar Rolling Stock for building locally and supporting Western Australian jobs and industry."

The first 40 rail cars will be built at Gemco's Forrestfield facility in Perth, as it sets up a manufacturing workshop in Karratha, where 60 more rail cars will be made, starting later this year.

The new Karratha facility will create a manufacturing and bearing maintenance industry in the Pilbara, supporting up to 25 jobs in the region.

Rio Tinto Iron Ore Chief Executive Simon Trott said: "We want to support local business and create new economic opportunities in the communities where we operate.

"By partnering with Gemco Rail and CRRC Qiqihar Rolling Stock, we are establishing new manufacturing capability in the Pilbara that will create a reliable and sustainable supply chain to support our operations and the regional economy for years to come."

Gemco Rail is using advanced engineering and manufacturing expertise, alongside robotic welding technologies, to create rail cars that will each carry up to 118 tonnes of iron ore from Rio Tinto's 17 mines in the Pilbara to its ports.

The new Karratha workshop will also support the supply of new and reconditioned rail car bearings from the Pilbara and reduce the need to transport iron ore rail cars and bearings from Perth.

Engenco Limited, the parent company of Gemco Rail, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Dean Draper said: "We are proud to partner with Rio Tinto to re-establish iron ore rail car manufacturing in Western Australia. The construction of Rio Tinto's first locally built rail car marks a significant milestone in developing a sustainable local supply chain.

"Gemco Rail's investment in both our Forrestfield facility, and our expansion into Karratha reflects our long-term commitment to our customers and to strengthening regional industries. Led by our highly skilled

workforce we are delivering high-quality rail solutions which will support Rio Tinto's Pilbara operations."

CRRC Qiqihar Rolling Stock Co. Ltd Managing Director Wang Liwen said: "We shall be committed to strongly support Rio Tinto's globalization strategy, low-carbon strategy, and localisation projects by virtue of our excellent products and services and actively promote the realization of social value."

Note to editors:

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 with new rail cars a year. The first locally made rail cars by Gemco are expected to start hauling ore in the Pilbara in the first half of 2025.

Since 2018, Rio Tinto has more than doubled its annual spend with Western Australia suppliers, increasing it to a record A\$10.3 billion in 2024.

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