

## Rio Tinto completes first fully autonomous rail journey in Western Australia

**2 October 2017**

Rio Tinto has successfully completed the first fully autonomous rail journey at its iron ore operations in the Pilbara region of Western Australia as the company progresses toward full commissioning of the AutoHaul® project in late 2018.

The nearly 100 kilometre pilot run was completed without a driver on board, making it the first fully autonomous heavy haul train journey ever completed in Australia.

The journey was completed safely, being closely monitored in real-time by Rio Tinto teams and representatives of the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator, both on the ground and at the Operations Centre in Perth.

The successful pilot run from Wombat Junction to Paraburdoo is a significant step toward full commissioning of AutoHaul® in 2018 once all relevant safety and acceptance criteria have been met and regulatory approvals obtained.

Rio Tinto Iron Ore chief executive Chris Salisbury said “This successful pilot run puts us firmly on track to meet our goal of operating the world’s first fully-autonomous heavy haul, long distance rail network, which will unlock significant safety and productivity benefits for the business.

“Gains from AutoHaul® are already being realised including reduced variability and increased speed across the network, helping to reduce average cycle times.

“Rio Tinto is proud to be a leader in innovation and autonomous technology in the global mining industry which is delivering long-term competitive advantages as we build the mines of the future. New roles are being created to manage our future operations and we are preparing our current workforce for new ways of working to ensure they remain part of our industry.”

Rio Tinto’s focus on automation technology and innovation is improving safety, is better for the environment and boosting productivity.

### **Notes to editors**

The AutoHaul® project is focused on automating the trains that are essential to transporting the iron ore to our port facilities.

Trains started running in autonomous mode in the first quarter of 2017. Currently about 50 per cent of pooled fleet rail kilometres are completed in autonomous mode (with drivers on-board) and 90 percent of pooled fleet production tonnes are AutoHaul® enhanced.

Rio Tinto operates about 200 locomotives on more than 1,700 kilometres of track in the Pilbara, transporting ore from 16 mines to four port terminals.

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