



Pilbara red has Rinehart in the pink

Exclusive

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Colour me pink. Gina Rinehart has celebrated the ramp-up of her Roy Hill iron ore mine to 55 million tonnes per annum with mine, rail and port ceremonies attended by her international partners and local employees.

The visit to what is now a huge operating mine 250 kilometres east of Port Hedland included a special christening ceremony to launch two more "pink trucks" – weighing more than 200 tonnes each – as a way of supporting breast cancer victims and breast cancer research.

Several of the pink trucks, which are now close to half the fleet at Roy Hill, are named in honour of employees at the company and other women who have suffered from breast cancer.

A jubilant Mrs Rinehart praised the efforts of her staff and her partners in having the Roy Hill mine – which she describes as Australia's largest single mine – able to reach its production target in record time.

But the project had a very long gestation before construction started – with Rinehart taking over the iron ore tenements from BHP in 1992.

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Roy Hill was only to start in earnest a few years ago after her private company, Hancock Prospecting, and its partners were able to secure a massive \$US7.2 billion debt-funding package from 19 of the world's largest banks and five national export credit agencies.

Hancock Prospecting has kept 70 per cent of the project with Japan's Marubeni at 15 per cent, South Korea's Posco at 12.5 per cent and Taiwan's China Steel Corp taking 2.5 per cent.

Representatives of the three partners also flew to the Pilbara to see locomotives christened in their companies' name.

These will travel the 350-kilometre rail line from mine to port and back.

As part of the marking of the 55 million target, Mrs Rinehart and her partners also sailed briefly out of the port in a ship carrying iron ore from Roy Hill.

She is keen to invest more to increase that volume to 60 million tonnes per annum as soon as the company can get approval.

Mrs Rinehart said that none of the projects were possible without years of hard work.

This included negotiating thousands of permits and licences along with time-consuming and money-consuming compliance burdens.

"This is a significant part of the reason you don't see much in the way of new mega projects like Roy Hill on the horizon in Australia," she said.

"And investment in Australia has dwindled to levels not seen since the Whitlam anti-business days, when investment dried to a trickle."

Roy Hill now employs just over 2000 people at the mine and in Port Hedland and Perth and says it expects to pay more than \$11 billion in taxes over the life of the project.

The 24-hour operation spreads over 27,000 hectares on a huge cattle station in the north-west.

The pink trucks quickly get covered in Pilbara red.



Gina Rinehart pictured yesterday as the Roy Hill mine reached its target.