



## **Media statement**

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### **Roebourne prisoners go to Rio Tinto**

Aboriginal prisoners from Roebourne Regional Prison have the opportunity to start work at Rio Tinto's Cape Lambert port to gain important skills before their release.

Called a Prisoner Employment Program (PEP), a jointly organised exercise by the Department of Corrective Services (DCS) and Rio Tinto will see a number of paid employment opportunities made available for trainee operators from the prison.

The minimum-security prisoners, who are close to release and have met strict selection criteria, will be given a three month contract under which they will work 40 hours a week at the iron ore port.

Two prisoners have already started work at Cape Lambert, the closest mining facility to the prison, with four more due to start work shortly.

Roebourne Regional Prison Superintendent Brian Wilson said the program would allow participants to adjust to work, a healthy lifestyle and regular income by the time of their release, which could in turn reduce re-offending.

Roebourne Regional Prison Employment Coordinator, Annette Farinaccio, who coordinated the joint program, said she had already seen a positive difference in the participating prisoners in terms of work ethic and motivation.

Rio Tinto's general manager of communities Janina Gawler said the program was designed to ease the transition from prison to the community, lower recidivism and interrupt a cycle of welfare dependency.

"There are also real benefits for our Western Australian iron ore operations. We are committed to increasing our employment of Aboriginal people beyond the 850 currently employed. Indigenous people deserve a share of the wealth created by mining, and employment is one of the most sustainable ways for us to provide this."

Since 2008 Roebourne prisoners have had the opportunity to do vocational training. Prisoners graduate with qualifications in carpentry, welding or general construction, preparing them for jobs when released.

Roebourne Campus Manager Delphine McFarlane said Rio Tinto had funded Pilbara TAFE staff to come in and train prisoners and supplied all the necessary equipment and materials.

"They have made a big investment in the education and training and ultimate rehabilitation of our prisoners. The PEP is the next step in giving prisoners who had completed a Workready course a head start," Ms McFarlane said.

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