

Rio Tinto ships first load of iron ore to Japan

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A shipment of West Australian iron ore is heading for Tokyo aboard the *Tai Shan*, marking a significant milestone for Rio Tinto.

The shipment, bound for Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corporation's Kimitsu works, left the new Cape Lambert B wharf carrying a cargo of 165,000 tonnes of Pilbara Blend fines.

It is part of Rio Tinto's expanded port, rail and mine operations in Australia that will increase production to 290 million tonnes per year.

Rio Tinto CEO Andrew Harding says they have been able to deliver the increase ahead of its original schedule and well within budget.

"It's a testament to our focus on value-driven growth of our low-cost operations," Harding says.

Harding pays credit to the efforts and commitments of Rio Tinto's employees, contractors and partners in the Robe River Joint Venture calling it a genuine team effort.

"Given the demanding operating environment in Western Australia over the recent period, this stands as a noteworthy achievement."

Harding went on to say the company would now focus on improving productivity as part of their Mine of the Future technology programme, as well as rolling out phase two of their port, rail and power infrastructure expansion to 360 million tonnes per year.

"Our focus will now be to ensure the ramp-up to full run-rate is achieved safely and efficiently."