

Iron Ore
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23 January 2017

Secretary

Environment and Communications References Committee

PO Box 6100, Parliament House

Canberra, ACT 2600

By online submission:

www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/OnlineSubmission

Attention: Secretary, Christine McDonald

Dear Ms McDonald

Inquiry into the protection of Aboriginal rock art of the Burrup Peninsula

Rio Tinto is the company which manages the operations of Hamersley Iron Pty Ltd (HI) and Dampier Salt Limited (DSL), both of which have mineral resource services on Burrup Peninsula. These companies have been processing the shipment of iron ore from the inland Pilbara since 1964, through our Parker Point facilities and our Dampier sea bourn salt operations established in 1968.

Over the last two decades Rio Tinto has developed and implemented robust systems of cultural heritage protection and management, including the employment of qualified archaeological practitioners. Rio Tinto supported the inclusion of the Dampier Archipelago on the National Heritage List, acknowledging its outstanding rock art values. In July 2007 HI and DSL signed a Conservation Agreement with the Australian Government, one of only two such agreements under provisions of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, formalising our long term commitment to protecting the rock art.

Rio Tinto was involved in the **Burrup Peninsula air pollution studies** of air quality monitoring undertaken by CSIRO in 2004–2005 and 2007–2008. Several of the monitoring sites were located in line with prevailing winds from our Parker Point operations and iron ore stock piles (Site 8HI: Hamersley Iron; Site 8: King Bay South; and Site 7: Deep Gorge). In addition to the installation of diffusion tubes to measure

atmospheric chemical concentrations, Microvol samplers were specifically installed to measure iron ore airborne fine particles. Indications from this study show that the iron ore total suspended particles and deposition are localised, and experience a cycle of deposition and removal¹. Salt is hygroscopic (absorbs water) and does not create fugitive dust. Outside our original development footprints, Rio Tinto business functions do not present additional threat to the rock art nor National Heritage Values.

In regard to the Senate terms of reference (a) Rio Tinto do not believe that our commercial activities are a major contributor to the total industrial pollution load.

As a resource company with operations throughout the Pilbara and particularly within the Dampier Archipelago, we acknowledge our commitment to the communities in which we work. Rio Tinto expect of our employees to carry out their duties safely and with integrity and respect for others, the environment and cultures in which they operate.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Martin

Manager, heritage and agreements
Rio Tinto

cc. Tony Baker, Manager Health, Safety, Environment and Communities Dampier Salt

¹ *Filed Studies of Rock Art Appearance Final Report: Fumigation & Dust Deposition*, CSIRO 2007.
Burrup Rock Art Monitoring Program – Summary of Study Reports, SKM 2009.