

Australian Industry

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WTIA National Diffusion Networks Project (NDNP) funded by the Federal and State and Territory Governments and industry



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SUCCESS STORY NUMBER M03: RESOURCES FOR WEALTH – *Product and Process Reviews for major WA iron ore operations help maintain cost effective and safe mining operations in the Pilbara.*

The Story

Pilbara Iron, a member of the Rio Tinto Group, is a world-class asset manager that operates and maintains mining, rail and export facilities in the North West of Western Australia on behalf of asset owners, Hamersley Iron and Robe River Iron Associates. Through a network of nine mines, three ports and the largest privately owned railway in the world, Pilbara Iron handled around 130 metric tonnes of iron ore in 2004.



Such a large operation clearly contributes significantly to the State's economic wellbeing, and to the employment opportunities in the region. The importance of welding to the company and the State is recognised through the WA Government's on-going support for the WTIA's National Diffusion Networks Project. Through the newly appointed Minister for State Development, Alan Carpenter MLA, the NDNP is supported by the Department of Industry and Resources.

As a member of the WTIA Mining Industry Sectoral Project, Pilbara Iron utilises the expertise of the WTIA's engineers and technologists to help it maintain a vast array of assets and critical equipment.

WTIA is working with Pilbara Iron to create a more competitive, efficient operation by interacting with Hamersley Iron locations to

conduct Product and Process Reviews to ensure work practices align with Quality and Safety Management policy. In this regard, WTIA is developing Expert Technology Tools and specific training courses for Pilbara Iron personnel and contractors to provide solutions to needs identified by the Reviews. Mining Industry Sectoral Project workshops attended by 45 people in December 2004 also helped to identify needs and raise awareness of potential technology solutions.

Training courses on the application of AS/NZS 1554 *Structural Steel Welding*, Total Welding Management to AS/NZS ISO 3834 *Quality requirements for welding - Fusion welding of metallic materials* and the various aspects of health and safety in welding have all contributed to the efficiency, quality and safety of the operations.

By working with the Pilbara TAFE, WTIA has also contributed to the uplifting of training, qualification and certification available in the region. Pilbara TAFE is the latest training organisation in Australia to become an International Institute of Welding Approved Training Body through the WTIA, thus adding significantly to the amenity of the region, and services to industry, both Pilbara Iron, and the many subcontractors which supply it.



Maintenance of capital equipment can cost millions of dollars per year under harsh desert conditions.



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