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WEBBA CHUTE SYSTEMS ACTIVE DOWN UNDER AT RIO TINTO

Rio Tinto's Paraburdoo Mine, Western Australia extension project has reported significant savings in maintenance and operating costs due to the successful installation of two transfer points by South African company Webba Chute Systems.

Such has been the success of the locally developed and manufactured bulk materials handling solution in boosting productivity at Paraburdoo that Webba Chute Systems is negotiating for future orders that could ultimately result in all the transfer points being replaced with the local solution.

"Our initial success at Paraburdoo is being observed keenly by the global bulk materials handling industry. The fact that we are negotiating additional orders is a vindication of the quality and performance of the South African product. It is also an important benchmark for our Australian operations, in addition to buttressing our global standing as a leading innovator in bulk materials handling technology" Werner Baller, managing director of Webba Chute Systems, says.

Rio Tinto has, to date, replaced the two main transfer points in the Paraburdoo processing plant with Webba Chute Systems. These handle

material from the incoming mine conveyor, transferring at 90 degrees into the processing plant, and carrying run-of-mine material with a maximum particle size of 300 mm at a rate of 4000 tons an hour.

Weba Chute Systems has transfer points similar to the ones at Paraburdoo installed at Kumba's Sishen Iron Ore Mine in the Northern Cape. These have been operating successfully for the past decade, making them ideal for application to international mining operations such as those of Rio Tinto in Australia. Rio Tinto personnel from Australia have already paid a visit to Kumba in order to see the Weba Chute Systems in operation.

Weba Chute Systems custom-designed the initial order of two transfer points by examining belt width and speed, as well as material size and shape and throughput. "We receive the data from the customer, which is then inputted into our sophisticated 3D software. In many instances we are able to recommend additional cost-savings. This makes for a value-adding, application-driven approach that maximises customer benefits," Baller says.

Rio Tinto is one of the world's leading mining companies. Hamersley Iron in Western Australian is wholly owned by Rio Tinto's iron ore group based in Perth. The group's interests also include 53% in Robe River Iron Associates' two mines in Western Australia and 59% in the Iron Ore Company of Canada.

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