

West Australian Railscene e-Mag

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SPECIAL 50TH EDITION PILBARA REVISITED



SD70MACel/c 4317 & 4323 on empty ore train negotiates the curves as it climbs the grade through the Chichester Ranges at Hesta on BHPBIO Newman main line on September 28th. Photo Phil Melling

I must sincerely thank Phil Melling who with his family went to the Pilbara for a short break in late September for allowing me to use their photos of ore trains at southern end of both BHPBIO and Rio Tinto lines. BHPBIO crossing of the Chichester Ranges in the Pilbara is a most spectacular sight it is not over a great length nor is it a steep grade but with huge ore trains of over 300 wagons both empty and loaded snaking around the curves it is a sight to behold. There are not that many shots taken of Rio Tinto railroad in the area where the lines cross Great Northern Highway except those taken by tourists who come across these trains at grade crossings and often video them as they never seen anything like it before. The Mt Tom Price area of Rio Tinto line is equally spectacular as the line runs through ranges with an all weather road adjacent to the line for some distance both to the north and south.



CM40-8MEFI 5667 & AC6000 6077 both in old blue BHP Iron Ore livery run a loaded ore train down the grade at Garden in Chichester Ranges on September 26th . Photo Phil Melling



SD70MACe 4347 with its metal window protection up & AC6000 6074 mid train helpers on loaded iron ore train at Coonarie on September 26th. Photo Phil Melling



CM40-8M 5668 note plastic window protectors & SD70MACe 4342 mid train helpers on empty ore work up the grade at Garden on September 27th. Photo Phil Melling



SD70MACel/c 4316 & AC6000 6075 haul empty iron ore train through the sweeping curves at Shaw loop with further two mid train helpers in the background on September 27th. Photo Phil Melling



SD70MACe mid train helpers 4337 & 4306 in the midst of all bar one bathtub type ore cars as they climb the grade at Hesta heading to the mines on September 28th. Photo Phil Melling



ES44AC 8107 in Rio Tinto grey, CW44-9s 7049 in Pilbara Iron yellow and grey & 7088 in Hamersley Iron grey on empty Brookman mine line train leaving Rosella Junction September 29th. Photo Phil Melling



7063, 7082 & 7082 run an empty ore train at 271km on Yandi line with the Spinifex grass dying off in the typical arid Pilbara landscape on a dusty and windy September 29th. Photo Joshua Melling



7045, 8117 & 9401 run a loaded Tom Price ore train on the original Hamersley Iron main line rounding the curves north of Wombat Junction on September 29th. Photo Hannah Melling



Above 7083, 8118 & 7072 run loaded Yandi ore train at Osprey on September 29th that is banked in rear by 7096, 8111 & 8121 in the photo below. Both photos Phil Melling





7060, 8112 & 8137 run loaded ore train on Rio Tinto Yandicoogina line near Karajini National Park on September 29th in light highlighting the red dirt typical of the Pilbara. Photo Phil Melling

BHP Billiton Iron Ore have a submission in with the Environmental Protection Authority for approval to construct a 23km deviation in the Cowra to Shaw section of the original Mt Newman main line that will be up to 6km west of the present line. This project part of RGP5 will reduce the ruling grade against trains from 0.55% to 0.33%. Following approval it will take about 2 years to complete this deviation in two stages the original line will remain but it won't be same.

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