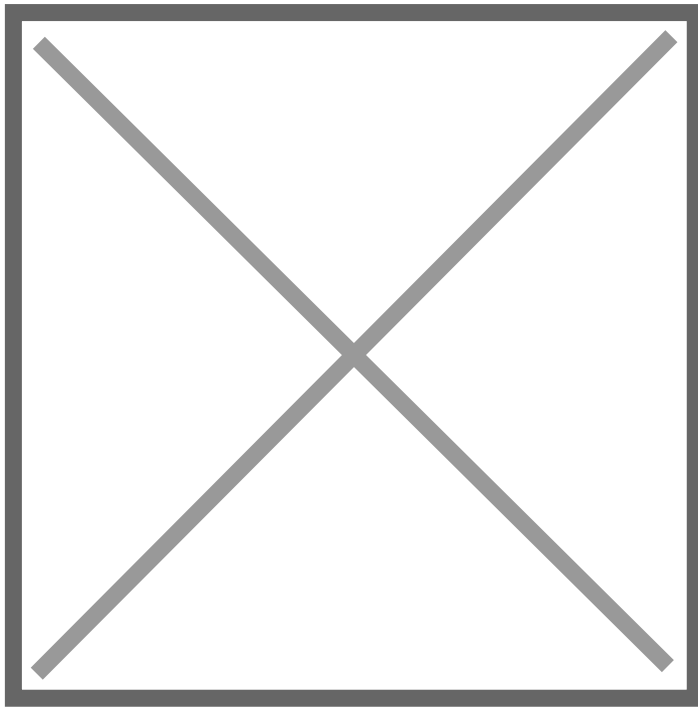


Rio Tinto launches biofuel crop farming trial for renewable diesel production in Australia

19 September 2024 | News

Rio Tinto Chief Decarbonisation officer Jonathon McCarthy explains potential of Pongamia seed oil as a feedstock for renewable diesel, a cleaner alternative to traditional fossil fuels

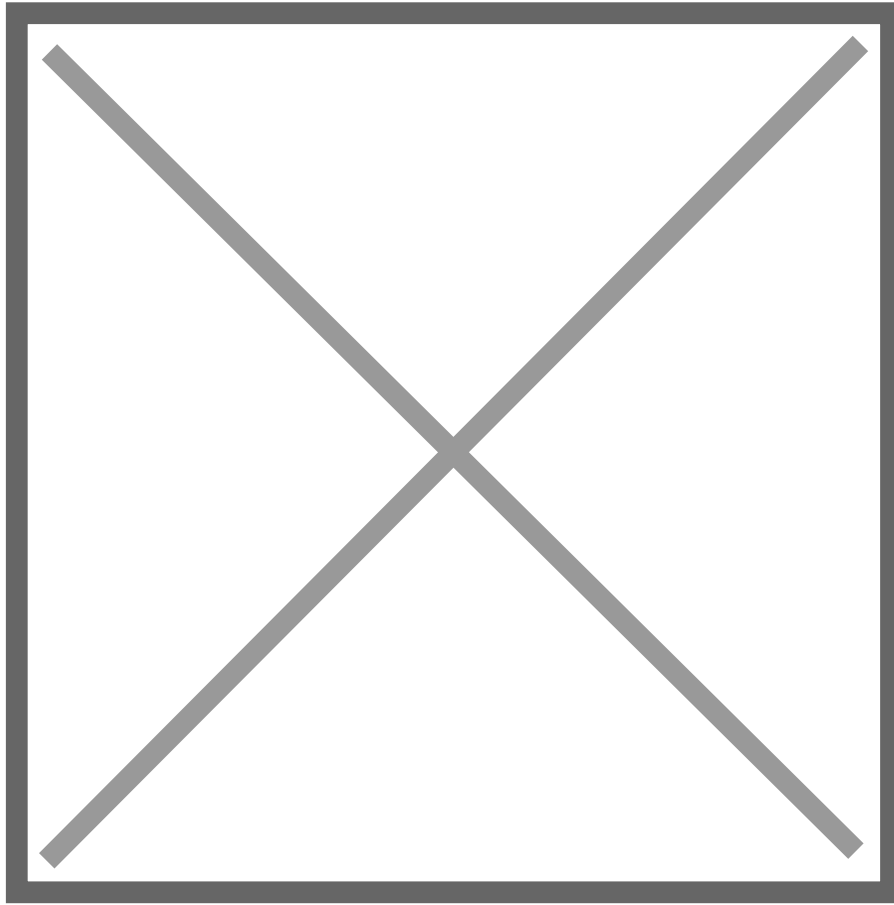


Rio Tinto Chief Decarbonisation officer Jonathon McCarthy explains potential of Pongamia seed oil as a feedstock for renewable diesel, a cleaner alternative to traditional fossil fuels

Rio Tinto, a British-Australian multinational company leading as mining group will develop Pongamia seed farms in Australia as part of a new biofuels pilot. The project will explore the potential of Pongamia seed oil as a feedstock for renewable diesel, a cleaner alternative to traditional fossil fuels.

The pilot aims to determine if Pongamia seed oil can contribute to Rio Tinto's renewable diesel needs while potentially contributing to the growth of a new biofuel sector in Australia. Rio Tinto is in the final stages of acquiring approximately 3,000 hectares of cleared land near Townsville in north Queensland to establish farms to study growth conditions and measure seed oil yields.

Rio Tinto has partnered with Midway Limited, to oversee the planting and management of the Pongamia seed farms. Midway Limited will engage with nurseries, agricultural experts and research organisations throughout the pilot, and prioritise opportunities for Traditional Owners and local communities.



Rio Tinto Chief Decarbonisation Officer Jonathon McCarthy

As part of its ongoing efforts to achieve net-zero Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 2050, Rio Tinto is actively exploring the potential of biofuels in the low-carbon energy mix. The company sees biofuels as an avenue to reduce reliance on fossil diesel, while fleet electrification technologies mature. Rio Tinto is also investigating how biofuels could be used in scenarios where electrification may face practical limitations.

Rio Tinto Chief Decarbonisation Officer Jonathon McCarthy said: “Diesel accounts for around 10% of our emissions footprint in Australia. While we continue to pursue electrification as the long-term solution for displacing the majority of our diesel use, the Pongamia seed pilot is an important parallel pathway that could reduce our reliance on diesel in the mid-term. It also presents a compelling option for other applications that are challenging to electrify, including blasting and non-haul equipment.

“Australia does not yet have a biofuel feedstock industry sufficient to meet domestic demand. A sustainable biofuels industry here could enhance the region’s fuel security, create local economic opportunities, and contribute to emissions reductions targets. We are excited about the potential of the Pongamia seed pilot and look forward to partnering with Midway Limited and north Queensland communities.”

The collaboration continues the growth of our position as trusted providers with the capability and experience to deliver a variety of projects for emitters who are committed to seeking alternative solutions to reduce their net emissions. This pilot follows a smaller-scale trial at Rio Tinto Gove operations in the Northern Territory where Pongamia saplings were planted to learn more about their response to low soil quality, heat and other climatic conditions in northern Australia.”