



Blistering heat behind Fortescue train derailment

Australian Financial Review

January 5, 2024 Friday

Print & First Editions

Copyright 2024 Fairfax Media Publications Pty. Limited All Rights Reserved

Section: COMPANIES AND MARKETS; Pg. 12

Length: 352 words

Byline: Brad Thompson

Body

Fortescue says a heat-related buckle in its railway line led to a derailment that cut the supply of iron ore into its port operations for four days.

The company is investigating the factors behind the heat buckle that led to the derailment of multiple wagons on December 30 - when the maximum temperature in some towns in Western Australia's iron ore-rich Pilbara region reached almost 50 degrees.

The wagons were empty when they derailed about 150 kilometres south of Port Hedland and there were no injuries reported from the incident.

Bureau of Meteorology records show the maximum temperature in Marble Bar, about 170 kilometres south-east of Port Hedland, reached 49.3 degrees on the day of the derailment.

Fortescue said rail operations resumed on Wednesday after a four-day disruption in sending iron ore from its mines to port.

The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator was notified, but advised **Fortescue** it didn't need to send investigators to the site.

Fortescue is assessing the damage bill and cost of track repairs as part of its internal investigation into the derailment, which will include weather and track conditions.

A company spokeswoman said teams "worked safely and swiftly" to ensure operations resumed on Wednesday. **Fortescue**'s executive chairman, Andrew Forrest, has spent the past few years warning about the threat of global warming and more recently lethal humidity.

Rail operators around the world, including in the Pilbara, take precautions to manage the risk of buckling as steel rail lines expand in hot conditions.

Blistering heat behind Fortescue train derailment

In response to questions about whether the derailment would affect the company's March quarter iron ore shipments, **Fortescue** said: "We believe we will meet our market guidance."

Fortescue is targeting shipments of 192 million to 197 million tonnes in 2023-24, including about 5 million tonnes from its newly-opened Iron Bridge magnetite operations connected to Port Hedland via a slurry pipeline. It shipped 45.9 million tonnes from Port Hedland in the September quarter, 3 per cent lower than the same three-month period a year earlier.

Fortescue shares closed at \$28.93.

Load-Date: January 7, 2024

End of Document