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Press Information

200 New Low Emission Buses for Rapid Penang to be built with Rio Tinto Alcan aluminium lightweight technology

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Alcan Extruded Products, part of Alcan Engineered Products – a business unit of Rio Tinto, is pleased to announce today that it is supplying all of the aluminium extrusions, sheets and joining elements for the production of 200 new, low floor city buses for the city of Penang, Malaysia. Rapid Penang will be the first major transit company in Malaysia to operate a fleet of buses with the EcoRange[®] body structure system from Rio Tinto Alcan. The first of these latest generation buses will be delivered to Rapid Penang before the end of 2009.

“We are very proud that we were selected to supply the innovative aluminium EcoRange[®] body structure. Due to the system’s superior technical characteristics, it offers multiple benefits to our customers,” said Reinhard Fleer, president, Alcan Extruded Products. “Additionally, this supply contract clearly demonstrates strong market confidence in our advanced weight reducing aluminium technologies”, he added.

All 200 units will be built on the Scania K-series bus chassis, equipped with a 9-litre, Diesel engine, coupled to a 6-speed automatic gearbox. Other features include disc brakes and full wheelchair access – another first for Rapid Penang. 170 of the buses will have a shorter 10.6m body to suit the narrow inner city streets of Georgetown - which was recently awarded “Heritage City” status by the UNESCO - and the remaining 30 buses will use a 12m body.

The EcoRange[®] body structure system, developed by Alcan Extruded Products, includes high-performance aluminium extrusions, aluminium panels, as well as aluminium bolted connections for fast and easy assembly. The lightweight EcoRange[®] will help to reduce fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions, and the excellent corrosion resistance of aluminium will provide Rapid Penang with a long lasting body structure.

The bodywork of the buses will be assembled by Gemilang Coachworks, Rio Tinto Alcan’s local partner in Malaysia.

Alcan Extruded Products is a key player in Europe with a focus on specialty products for the mass transport sector. It includes production facilities in France, Germany, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Alcan Engineered Products is a global sector-leading business strongly committed to developing innovative, value-added products for a broad range of markets and applications. Its portfolio consists of seven downstream businesses: aerospace, non commodity aluminium rolled products, aluminium extrusions, cable, composite products, automotive structures and international trade.

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and NYSE listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange.

Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in South America, Asia, Europe and southern Africa.

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