

# Gina Rinehart, Andrew Forrest and other business leaders take in the Rio Olympics

John Stensholt | Aug 10 2016

Mining billionaire Gina Rinehart has been spending long days and nights cheering on Australian athletes at the Rio Olympics, but in person rather than watching on television.

The Australian Financial Review revealed before the Olympics started that Mrs Rinehart was the biggest individual backer of the Australian team, providing an estimated \$5 million annually in sponsorship and direct athlete support to swimming, rowing, volleyball and synchronised swimming.

That support has meant early morning starts in Rio de Janeiro for Mrs Rinehart at the rowing venue on the Lagoa Rodrigo de Freitas in the middle of town, evenings at the Aquatic Centre in the south of the city and then late nights watching beach volleyball on the iconic Copacabana Beach.

Mrs Rinehart has also been made an honorary team member of the synchronised swimming team, which will begin its competition next Monday.



Gina Rinehart, chairman Hancock Prospecting, with Tad Watroba, executive director, Hancock Prospecting, in Rio for the Olympics. supplied

Australian swimmers have performed well in the first few days of competition in Rio, winning two gold medals by the end of Wednesday Australian time, while beach volleyballers Taliqua Clancy and Louise Bawden won their first two matches.

## Kookaburras struggle

The news has not been as good for one of Australia's pre-Games gold medal favourites, the men's Kookaburras hockey team, though it has also attracted star-studded support.

Watching on at the hockey stadium in the Deodoro cluster of venues in Rio's north-west on Wednesday Australian-time were billionaire Andrew Forrest, the chairman of Fortescue Metals Group, the major sponsor of the women's Hockeyroos team, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop and the Australian chief executive of Dow Chemical Company, Andrew Liveris.

Ranked number one in the world and featuring an all-time great in Jamie Dwyer, named the best player in the world five times over the course of a decorated career, the Kookaburras have struggled to score goals in Rio.

The loss to Belgium was the second-straight 1-0 defeat for the team, and leaves Australia fourth in Pool A on a 1-2 record.

Australia had double Belgium's scoring chances, but was unable to respond after Tanguy Cosyns scored his field goal at the start of the second quarter.

The team lost their previous match against Spain 1-0, after struggling to a narrow win against New Zealand in their first match in Rio.

## Must wins

Australia now plays Great Britain and Brazil and must win both of those games to ensure their chances remain alive. The top four sides of Australia's six-team group qualify for the quarter-finals, which begin on Sunday Australian time, though if the Australians qualify they are likely to meet strong European opposition in either Germany or the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, the Hockeyroos have also started the Rio tournament slowly with losses in their first two matches. Though not considered a strong gold medal chance before Rio, hopes were high the team would put in a strong showing.

But a 2-1 loss to the US followed by the Hockeyroos' opening pool match loss to Great Britain left the team last in Pool B before its third match against India on Wednesday night Australian time.

Read more: <http://www.afr.com/business/sport/gina-rinehart-andrew-forrest-and-other-business-leaders-take-in-the-rio-olympics-20160810-gqp568>