

## Press release

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### **Rio Tinto in Clermont creates hope for cancer patients this Christmas**

**12 December 2009**

Rio Tinto Coal Australia is making a special Christmas donation to the Cancer Council Queensland this month in support of the council's life-saving cancer research in regional Queensland.

The Blair Athol and Clermont mines are both contributing to a \$10,000 donation that is in lieu of what RTCA would have spent on Christmas cards.

The gift provides a much needed boost for the Cancer Council's annual Christmas Appeal, and adds to significant fundraising efforts by RTCA employees during 2009.

In total, RTCA is donating \$20,000 to cancer research this Christmas, as its Hunter Valley mines are also making a similar donation to the Cancer Council NSW.

Managing director Bill Champion said he is very proud of the fundraising for cancer that RTCA employees have supported in their own time, and welcomed the opportunity to recognise and further enhance that support with a company donation.

"This year has been challenging for a number of reasons; such as flooding rains in Queensland in early 2009, and uncertain markets due to the global financial crisis," Mr Champion said.

"Despite these difficult circumstances, our workforce has been exceptionally generous in its support of fund-raising initiatives for cancer research, and I am delighted to nominate the Queensland Cancer Council as the recipient of this corporate donation."

Recent activities at **Blair Athol Mine** include:

- 2008 breast cancer fundraising – mine workers Elle Bray and Candice McDonald raised funds walking the Kokoda Trail as the "Kokoda Chicks", while Blair Athol Mine had one of its haul trucks painted pink in support
- In 2007, 2008 and 2009 cancer research fundraising - "Smiling for Smiddy" bike ride. Blair Athol Mine employee Trevor Weisse participated in the 1600 km ride from Brisbane to Home Hill in 2008. In 2009, Blair Athol and Clermont mines organised a "welcome dinner" and an overnight stay with host families for 63 riders and support crew in Clermont as the ride passed through. This year's "Smiling for Smiddy" Challenge raised \$542,000 for cancer research
- Annual Movember fundraising for prostate cancer. This year Gary Zoutenbier and Travis Weir participated in the event
- Annual "Shave for a Cure" fundraiser for the Leukaemia Foundation, with participants at Blair Athol Mine this year including Maurice Schneider, Clinton Newton and Ryan Nunan

Blair Athol Mine general manager operations, Andrew Cole, said: "These days most of us have been touched by cancer in some way, so I am very proud of the support and generosity that Blair Athol's workforce continues to show by getting behind these regular cancer fundraising activities."

Activities at **Clermont Mine** during 2009 included:

- Movember fundraising for prostate cancer
- Cancer research fundraising through support of "Smiling for Smiddy" bike ride
- Shave for a Cure fundraiser for the Leukaemia Foundation
- Breast cancer fundraising morning tea

Clermont Mine general manager construction, Dave Lamb, said: "Clermont Mine's workforce has really identified with these activities to raise money for cancer research. It's great to see so many individuals and teams working together to support this important cause."

Cancer Council Queensland CEO, Professor Jeff Dunn, said the generosity of RTCA and its staff would help the Cancer Council to expand its services in regional Queensland in 2010 and beyond.

“This year, with the help of RTCA and its people, we opened the Central Queensland Cancer Support Centre in Rockhampton, giving people from outlying regions vital access to cancer treatment services and support.

“The centre is the first of its kind in this region, and will help to address the gap in cancer survival rates for regional Queenslanders.

“With the support of RTCA and the Central Queensland community, we were also able to provide the following support:

- ✦ Our Cancer Council Helpline responded over 1,100 local calls.
- ✦ We provided \$132,275 in financial assistance to 312 Central Queensland cancer patients.
- ✦ We provided practical support through the loan of 51 pieces of medical equipment to 22 local cancer patients.
- ✦ Our Wig and Turban service met the needs of 113 local cancer patients.
- ✦ Our Cancer Counselling Service responded to 32 local referrals.
- ✦ Our Breast Cancer Support Service reached out to 70 local cancer patients to provide peer support.

“With the RTCA’s Christmas donation, we will continue our work in 2010 to improve access to services such as the Cancer Council Helpline, and to continue our research into understanding why regional patients experience lower rates of cancer survival.”

In Queensland, RTCA manages the Blair Athol, Hail Creek, Kestrel and Clermont mines, which along with the head office in Brisbane are donating a total of \$10,000 to the Cancer Council Queensland for cancer research in regional areas.

RTCA manages Coal & Allied’s three mines in the Hunter Valley in New South Wales. Those sites are also joining head office in Brisbane to donate a total of \$10,000 to the Cancer Council NSW for cancer research in regional parts of that state.

**Media Enquiries:** Alison Smith 07 3361 4223 / 0438 787 038