

Rio Tinto Coal Australia Pty Limited
GPO Box 391
Brisbane Queensland 4001
Australia
T +61 (0)7 3361 4200
F +61 (0)7 3361 4370

Press release

Opera Queensland gives Clermont students a voice

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Thirty-five music and performing arts students from central Queensland rocked the Clermont Civic Centre last Friday night in a concert performance that concluded Opera Queensland's five-day opera workshop in Clermont.

Moving Opera! is an intensive in-school residency workshop that focuses on the creative process of making opera and music theatre.

It is the third time that the workshop has come to Clermont visiting more than 100 students in the area over the last three years.

The workshop was brought to Clermont with the support of Rio Tinto Coal Australia and its Clermont Community Development Fund, which together contributed nearly \$17,000; and the Priority Country Area Program, which contributed \$5000.

Students came from Clermont State High School, Clermont State School, St Joseph's Catholic School, and Kilcummin School to take part.

Throughout the week, they collaborated with five professional artists from the performing arts to learn skills in stagecraft, improvisation, singing techniques, movement, and stage direction.

Local St Joseph's Catholic School parent Louise Cook said the programme was immensely rewarding for her daughters Meagan and Natalie, aged 10 and nine.

"When the girls learnt a new song, they knew they had achieved something, which was a real confidence-booster for them and also for me as a parent," Mrs Cook said.

"Clermont has some singing and dancing groups in the town but nothing quite like this where they get to work with professional artists from the performing arts.

"Each day they came home from the programme exhausted but with a smile on their face and I could tell that they were having fun and taking a lot more from the experience than just musical skills.

Daughter Natalie Cook said she had a great week performing in the workshop.

"I feel much more confident in singing and drama after the workshop. It was lots of fun," Natalie said.

Opera Queensland development manager Donna Fahey-Macey said the programme has taken opera and music theatre into the classrooms of some 4000 secondary school students since its inception in 2002.

"Our programme offers much more than learning how to sing and perform. When children share singing and music together, they develop a strong bond that ultimately helps their overall development," Ms Fahey-Macey said.

"Our workshop encourages teamwork, communication, and self-expression helping to boost students' self-discipline and confidence."

General manager operations – Clermont Region Andrew Cole said the workshop is part of a broader goal to build a sustainable future for local young people and create opportunities that will help develop their skills.

"We are pleased to support this workshop to provide students in Clermont an opportunity to develop their musical creativity from professionals in the industry," Mr Cole said.

"The workshop encourages a wide range of social and communication skills that not only enriches the education of the students, but also the diversity and skills within Clermont to help build a sustainable community for the future.

"*Moving Opera!* was such a hit with the students and the community as a whole that we have asked them to come back to Clermont for a second time this year.

"Students who participated in the workshop will perform at the official opening of Clermont Mine in October, and we look forward to their performance."

Photo



Caption – Clermont's young performers take a bow at the end of their concert extravaganza at the Clermont Civic Centre last Friday night.

Media Enquiries: Naomi Jamieson 07 3361 4347 / 0457 824 672.