

## Press release

---

### **Rio Tinto Coal Australia reports on its contribution to sustainable development**

**18 May 2009**

Rio Tinto Coal Australia has released its Sustainable Development reporting data for 2008, revealing it was a year free of any critical environmental incidents, or incidents carrying regulatory fines or penalties, across its four Queensland coal mines and three New South Wales sites.

Releasing the results, Managing Director Bill Champion said he was particularly pleased with the achievements obtained in environmental categories in which the company voluntarily set its own stretch targets, over and above the statutory requirements.

“Last year was a challenging year for a number of reasons; flooding rains in Queensland in early 2008, production ramp-ups at our operations in response to strong demand, then a weak commodities cycle as a result of the global financial crisis,” Mr Champion said.

“Rio Tinto Coal Australia is committed to integrating sustainable development into everything we do. However to do this we have needed to be flexible in our business planning and day-to-day tasks to ensure we meet these new challenges head on, but remain focussed on our goals and targets.

“During 2008, our energy management programme accounted for reduced emissions of more than 38,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas, through a range of efficiency programmes across our sites.

“This built on the reduced emissions of just over 18,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas achieved in 2007.

“Overall, Rio Tinto Coal Australia was significantly below its freshwater usage target.”

Mr Champion said while the results were positive, the sustainable development data highlighted some areas for further improvement, and this was already being incorporated into 2009 activities.

“For example, while our Queensland sites met their voluntary energy target to use 0.011 gigajoules per tonne of equivalent material moved, our New South Wales sites narrowly missed their voluntary energy target of 0.013 and instead used 0.014 gigajoules per tonne of equivalent material moved,” Mr Champion said.

“This was due to mine plan changes throughout 2008, additional semi soft coking coal processing to meet market demand, and the use of additional fleet vehicles, which increased our operations’ fuel usage.

“We have started to design our operations to reduce fuel use, for example Hunter Valley Operations is already using recycled oil in its explosives which is reducing the amount of diesel that is used on site while also making use of a waste product.

“We also plan to reduce fuel usage with the new in-pit crushing and conveyor system at Clermont Mine which will greatly reduce the number of trucks needed to mine effectively, while Hail Creek Mine

is leading the way with the recent commissioning of an extensive fuel measurement system that will help us understand how to reduce fuel use even more.”

It is the seventh year that Rio Tinto Coal Australia has voluntarily reported on its contribution to sustainable development. Full details, targets and results for both Rio Tinto Coal Australia and its sites are available online at <http://www.riotintocoalaustralia.com.au/>.

A highlights document is also being mailed to key stakeholders in the local communities surrounding Rio Tinto Coal Australia's operations.

“Sustainable development is not a here today, gone tomorrow set of actions. It is also not something that a single organisation can achieve on its own, and it is not a single project that can be completed and ticked off as finished,” Mr Champion said.

“It is about the way we work, within our business and in our interactions with others, to meet the multiple objectives of social wellbeing, environmental stewardship and economic prosperity, throughout the life of a mine and beyond.

“We believe that Rio Tinto Coal Australia's projects, operations and products can contribute constructively to the global transition to sustainable development.”

Rio Tinto Coal Australia develops and manages high quality coal operations in Australia. In Queensland, Rio Tinto Coal Australia manages the Blair Athol, Hail Creek, Kestrel and Clermont mines.

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