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Rio Tinto Coal Australia

RTCA manages and operates high quality coal operations in Australia.

In New South Wales RTCA manages Coal & Allied's assets at Hunter Valley Operations, Mount Thorley Warkworth and Bengalla. In Queensland, RTCA manages the Blair Athol, Tarong, Hail Creek and Kestrel Mines, and the Clermont Project.

RTCA is a wholly owned member of the Rio Tinto Group.

Welcome to Pathways

Welcome to the first edition of Rio Tinto Coal Australia (RTCA)'s Aboriginal Relations newsletter – Pathways. Over the past two years RTCA has significantly increased our engagement with the Aboriginal communities who neighbour our operations and the Traditional Owners on whose land we operate.

As a result, we now have a number of community development and support programmes underway and an extensive cultural heritage investigation and management system in place.

We have developed this newsletter to share information with members of our Aboriginal communities and Traditional Owner groups as well as with our employees, government groups and other interested stakeholders.

Through sharing ideas, knowledge and information we hope to raise awareness of the achievements of our community partners, generate new ideas and increase opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in our business and the regional economy.

We also need some help from our readers. To ensure our activities, and this publication, are relevant and appropriate, we would like your input. There are feedback details on the back page of this publication, and I urge you to give

us your comments on our performance, and what you would like to read about in future editions.

Jeremy van de Bund
Manager Aboriginal Relations RTCA



Traditional Owner Anthony Jarrod at the Clermont Project smoking ceremony

Traditional welcome for Clermont Project

The Wangan Jagalingou people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which Blair Athol Mine and the Clermont Project are situated, recently held a smoking ceremony on the Clermont Project site.

Smoking is a traditional ceremony to say goodbye to the country and elders, share goodwill and to make the site safer for people who work there.

RTCA's Manager Aboriginal Relations Jeremy van de Bund thanked the Wangan Jagalingou for the ceremony, and said it helped raise awareness about Aboriginal culture and traditions.

"This ceremony marks an important milestone in our relationship with the Wangan Jagalingou people, and we are privileged to be part of the event," Jeremy said.

"At Blair Athol Mine and now on the Clermont Project we will continue to work closely with the Traditional Owners and develop a structure to provide sustainable benefits for the Aboriginal community."

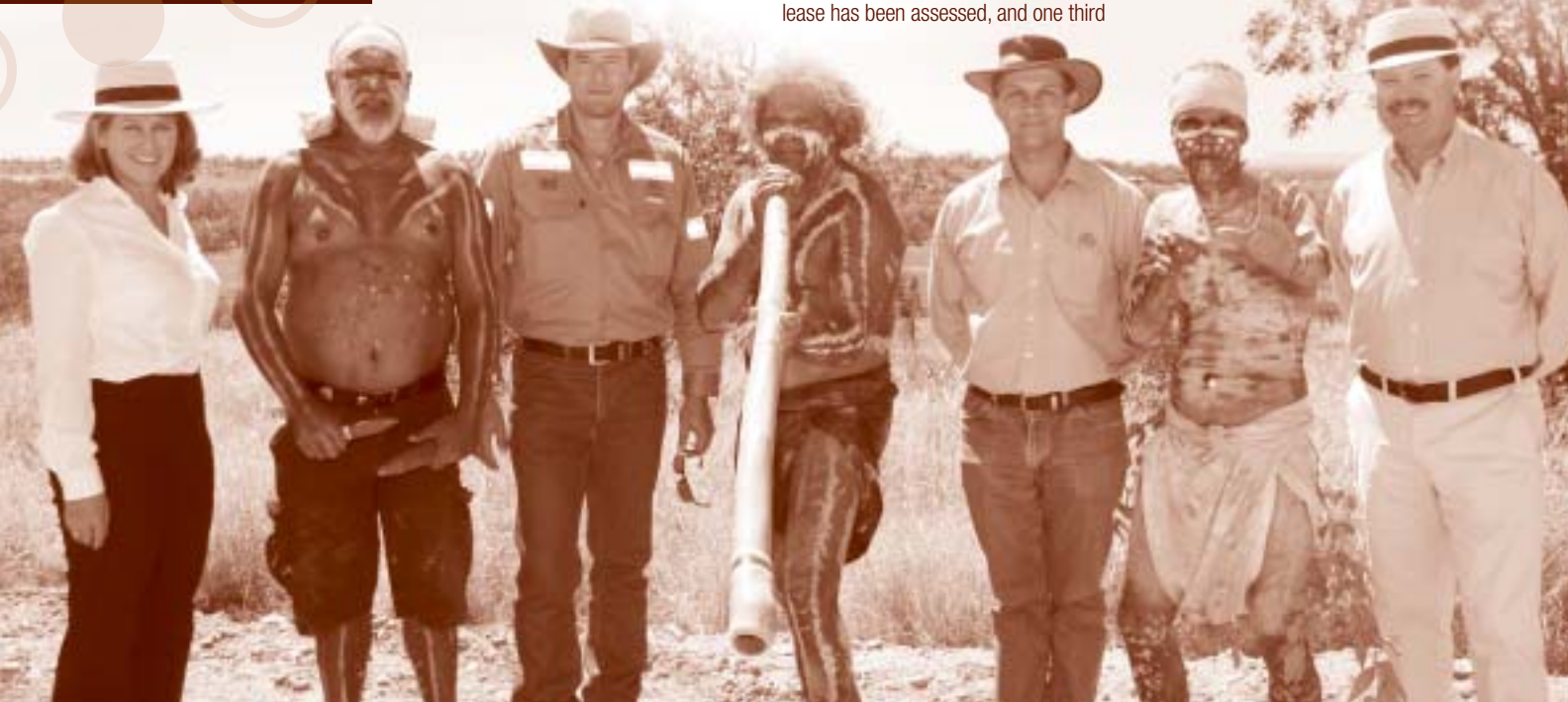
A Cultural Heritage Investigation Management Agreement (CHIMA) was agreed with the Wangan Jagalingou in 2005, and about 80 per cent of the lease has been assessed, and one third

mitigated. Traditional Owners took part in the field surveys, collecting surface artefacts, test pit excavations and protecting scarred trees.

Owen McEvoy, a member of the Wangan Jagalingou Working Group, thanked RTCA for giving them the opportunity to hold the smoking ceremony.

"We didn't want to do this ceremony until we knew the mine was going ahead," Owen said.

"We are really pleased for the opportunity to hold this ceremony and thank Rio Tinto for helping us to hold it."



(from left) RTCA General Manager External Relations Fiona Nicholls, Traditional Owner Owen McEvoy, Blair Athol Mine General Manager Operations Andrew Cole, Traditional Owner Adrian Burragabba, RTCA General Manager Projects Hennie du Plooy, Traditional Owner Anthony Jarrod, and RTCA Managing Director Douglas Ritchie after the smoking ceremony



Traditional Owners
Ian Saltner (left) and Len Watson

Hail Creek Mine leading the way

Hail Creek Mine has been working with the Wiri people to remove culturally scarred trees, using a method that has been adopted across RTCA.

Cultural heritage survey and mitigation programmes have identified 30 scar trees on the Hail Creek Mine lease.

They were photographed and assessed by senior Wiri people and archaeologists to confirm if they are culturally scarred.

Hail Creek Mine's Scar Tree Removal Programme Coordinator Richard Savage

said scarred trees were immediately barricaded and the mine planning department determines if they can remain or have to be removed.

"If we can leave a scar tree in place, that is always our preferred option. However every care is taken when we have to remove trees to ensure the scar is preserved," Richard said.

"Since late last year we have removed eight scar trees and moved them to a temporary keeping place on site. The trees are cleaned to ensure the timber is free from insects that could potentially damage the timber or the scar, and then

they are tagged and protected during the drying out process."

The method of scar tree removal used at Hail Creek Mine ensures the root ball is removed with the tree, assisting with the process of preserving the timber. This technique is now being implemented across RTCA.

"We will have a standard method across the business that can provide assurance to various Traditional Owners that scar trees will be removed using a proven technique," Richard said.

Wiri Traineeship Programme

Hail Creek Mine, in partnership with the Mackay Area Industry Network (MAIN), has developed the Wiri Traineeship Programme to enhance traineeship opportunities for the Wiri people, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which Hail Creek Mine operates.

The programme will provide two 12 month traineeship positions in Business Administration with local businesses in

Mackay. Upon successful completion of the traineeship, each trainee will have obtained a Certificate IV qualification.

Hail Creek Mine General Manager Tom Palmer said the programme will provide an opportunity for the trainees to develop the fundamental competencies required to progress a career in these growing industries.

"A key component of the success of this programme will be to create opportunities that will build community capacity and provide long term sustainable benefits, particularly in the areas of training and skills development."

Hail Creek Mine has committed \$65,000 to the Wiri Traineeship Programme in 2007.

New funding opportunity for the Upper Hunter Valley Aboriginal community in NSW

In September 2006, Coal & Allied launched the Aboriginal Development Consultative Committee (ADCC) in the Upper Hunter Valley in NSW.

The ADCC is designed to assist Aboriginal people to achieve their vision for the future. This vision aims to achieve improved access and outcomes for Aboriginal people in education, training, employment and economic participation. These will form the foundations for a strong and sustainable community. The Committee is comprised of four representatives of the Aboriginal community, two Coal & Allied representatives, an independent Chairperson and is supported by an Executive Officer.

At its first meeting in November 2006, the ADCC approved \$203,000 for seven projects that will create employment and training opportunities, deliver educational programmes, assist in the establishment of new Aboriginal businesses and foster Aboriginal artists and culture in the Upper Hunter Valley.

At the second meeting in March 2007 approximately \$70,000 was approved to support a key Aboriginal community services organisation, to provide

education assistance funding to 30 Aboriginal students at local high schools and tertiary education assistance to a mature age student. One of the projects funded by the ADCC is featured in this newsletter.

The committee meets up to six times per year and meeting dates are advertised regularly in all Upper Hunter Valley newspapers. For more information or to obtain copies of the Guidelines and application form, contact Cate Sims, Executive Officer on 02 6570 0360.



Denise Hedges, an Aboriginal artist from Singleton in the Upper Hunter Valley is pictured with her artwork entitled, 'Brother Kangaroo'. This is her representation of the life blood of the Wonnarua people of the Valley.



Kids get back 'ON TRACK' in NSW

With funding support provided by the ADCC in November 2006, the 'ON TRACK' programme provides alternative education pathways for Indigenous young people who had dropped out or were at risk of dropping out of school. The Upper Hunter Valley based programme stemmed from collaboration between the Police, Aboriginal organisations and range of government and non government agencies in the Muswellbrook community.



Students and community partners at the official unveiling of the 'ON TRACK' artwork at the Muswellbrook Regional Gallery

Seven students from South Muswellbrook Primary School took part in the first programme, which ran for two days a week for five weeks and combined literacy, numeracy, life skills, personal development and cultural

activities. All the students have achieved great results, with six continuing or returning to school and one being home schooled.

A key cultural activity was the production of an artwork, which began with each

ACICC addressing key community issues in the South Burnett

In its first two years of operation Tarong Mine's Aboriginal Community Interest Consultative Committee (ACICC) has supported some innovative programmes addressing key issues facing the Aboriginal community in the South Burnett.

The ACICC was launched in late 2005 and operates under a set of guidelines established and agreed to by the Bunya Working Group and RTCA. The projects funded are those most likely to deliver long term, sustainable outcomes meeting the South Burnett Aboriginal community's vision, with a focus on education, training and community and business development.

Strong Smart Readers

The ACICC provided support to Cherbourg State School by funding a series of reading resources created specifically for young Aboriginal students. The resources, known as Indij Readers, have provided teachers and students at Cherbourg State School with new opportunities to read about culturally specific characters and stories.

Vashti Bruyn, teacher aide at Cherbourg State School, said the Indij Readers are a great way to get young Aboriginal people interested in reading.

"Traditional reading resources are fine, but there's been a huge need for these sorts of books for a long time," Vashti says.

"Literacy is such a core skill and anything we can do to get our children comfortable with reading should be pursued.

"That's why books that make sense to young Aboriginal students are so popular here. Teachers and parents have seen a lift in confidence and participation in reading programmes since these books were made available."

Cherbourg State School students enjoy reading about culturally relevant stories and characters



'ON TRACK' students pointing out their handprints on the artwork

student placing their handprint on the canvas and with assistance from a local Aboriginal man, the students gradually incorporated in their own ideas and what they were learning about their traditional culture. The artwork took one month to complete and was then officially unveiled at the Muswellbrook Regional Gallery, where it was displayed for three weeks. The artwork was subsequently entered into the school age art competition at the Muswellbrook Show and took first prize in their division.

'ON TRACK' has helped to build the self confidence and pride of the students, contributed to better relationships with the Police and provided the students with an increased awareness about the organisations that are available in their community and how they can assist local Aboriginal people. More importantly, the kids who took part in 'ON TRACK' have learned more about their culture and are proud to share this knowledge. A second five week programme started in early May.

Healthy Diet and Exercise

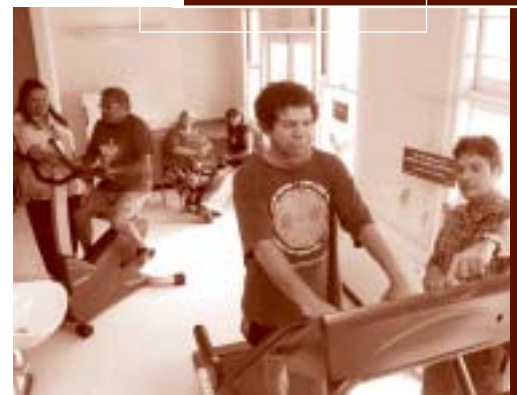
Cherbourg Community Health Service successfully applied for \$10,100 funding to purchase gym equipment and resources for hands on nutritional information.

The Health and Lifestyle Obesity programme has also helped obese or diabetic people living in Cherbourg make lifestyle choices that help them overcome the limitations of their health condition.

Programme coordinator Tarita Fisher said the gym equipment has allowed residents to undertake their exercise in a friendly and supportive environment.

"The project has been successful at addressing chronic disease self care and management with participants having an active input into their exercise regime," Tarita said.

"In the exercise room, people are able to do their exercises, talk about their health in a relaxed atmosphere and share their experiences with others who are contemplating lifestyle changes, which is a real, positive outcome."



Using gym equipment helps diabetic or obese Cherbourg residents



RTCA Manager Aboriginal Relations Jeremy van de Bund

Practitioner Profile: Jeremy van de Bund

Manager Aboriginal Relations

As RTCA Manager Aboriginal Relations, Jeremy van de Bund leads a small team in building sustainable relationships with the Aboriginal community, and managing cultural heritage and native title processes for the seven mine sites and new and potential projects across the business.

Jeremy initially began his career with Rio Tinto as a field geologist in Western Australia in 1981. In 1992, he began to specialise in Aboriginal relations, previously at Hamersley Iron in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, then with Coal & Allied in the Hunter Valley and now at RTCA, based in Brisbane.

Jeremy said his interest in Aboriginal relations began when he worked as an exploration geologist, as he found himself working closely with local Aboriginal groups.

"Exploration teams are often the first to enter an area, years before mining. It was due to the relationships I developed with the local Aboriginal people that I moved into the Aboriginal relations specialisation. I was always interested in and keen to work with people," Jeremy said.

At RTCA, Jeremy works with diverse Aboriginal communities across a wide geographical area, including New South Wales and Queensland. It is a diverse role that focuses on maintaining varying levels of relationships.

"In my role at RTCA I work in the areas of building relationships, cultural heritage management, education, training, employment, enterprise development and agreement making.

"I really enjoy interacting with Aboriginal people and my long term goals are to have RTCA in a position where Aboriginal communities and Traditional Owners actively support our business through structured relationships."

We need your help ...

RTCA is seeking an illustration to use in this, our new Aboriginal Relations newsletter, *Pathways*. The title has been chosen to represent the travelling paths between tribal boundaries that become neutral ground for various reasons including meetings and ceremonies and become a valuable way to pass information and news. It is our hope this newsletter will become a valuable way to pass information and share news.

We are looking for Indigenous artwork that represents this name and approach and will feature in all future editions of the newsletter. The featured artist will be acknowledged in the next edition of *Pathways*.

Please send your illustration to
Richard Savage
Hail Creek Mine
21 Evans Ave
North Mackay QLD 4740
by 1 August 2007

Feedback

This is our first edition of *Pathways* so we would appreciate your feedback on the stories we have included, the style and format of the newsletter, other issues you would like to see included or any other projects we might write about.

Please email us at info@rtca.riotinto.com.au

Or telephone

Jeremy van de Bund Manager Aboriginal Relations RTCA	Phone: 07 3361 4295 Email: jeremy.vandebund@riotinto.com
David Cameron Cultural Heritage Systems Specialist RTCA	Phone: 07 3361 4279 Email: david.cameron@riotinto.com
Richard Savage Aboriginal Relations Specialist Hail Creek Mine	Phone: 07 4951 6426 Email: richard.savage@riotinto.com
Darren Schmidt Aboriginal Relations Specialist Tarong Mine	Phone: 07 4160 7234 Email: darren.schmidt@riotinto.com
Cate Sims Aboriginal Relations Specialist Coal & Allied	Phone: 02 6570 0360 Email: cate.sims@riotinto.com

Traditional Owner Adrian Burragabba at the Clermont Project smoking ceremony

