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Garma 2024

Kellie Parker, Chief Executive Australia

Acknowledgement of Country

I feel deeply privileged and humbled to be here speaking to you today, together with Klaus and Djawa.

I would like to acknowledge the Yolngu (yoon-gool) Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet and recognise their central role in the life of this region. I pay my respects to their Elders past and present. Thank you for allowing us to gather here.

I extend my respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

I recognise the significance of cultural connection and the heritage of Indigenous Peoples who have traditional custodial responsibilities and continuing deep connection to the land and waters on which our business operates.

I acknowledge the Prime Minister and other elected representatives from across the country including Senator Malandirri McCarthy who I congratulate on her appointment as Minister for Indigenous Australians.

In doing so, I'd like to take a moment to publicly thank and recognise Linda Burney, upon news of her retirement, for her dedication and commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge Professor Peter Yu who is Chairman of Rio Tinto's own Australian Advisory Group.

Partnership with Garma

This year I am delighted that we are building on our long-standing partnership with the Yothu Yindi Foundation by supporting the Garma Festival as a principal sponsor over the next three years.

I would like to thank Denise and the Foundation for all they do to bring this important festival to life each year, which allows us to share and experience the Yolngu (yoon-gool) culture.

Thank you also to our Rio Tinto team at Gove and many in the community who have been working hard for months in support of this amazing event.

Our connection to the region

Rio Tinto has been mining in this region since 2007, and our predecessors for 40 years before that.

Throughout this time, we've come to learn just how special the Gove Peninsula is; a place where culture and songlines remain strong.

Our time in the region has also taught us just what can be achieved when communities, industry and local government work together in partnership, openly sharing knowledge and important lessons to create positive change and a strong vision for the future.

Importance of partnership in closure

Mining at Gove is only a small chapter in the ancient history of this landscape.

And at the end of this decade, mining in the Peninsula will cease.

But with closure brings new opportunities for the local community to continue to grow and prosper beyond our presence.

We share and support this community's vision to see the local region rejuvenated as a business and services hub for all of Arnhem Land.

Partnership will be critical to making this happen.

And I truly believe that we are all committed and united towards a common purpose.

We all want to see the community of Gove continue to thrive.

In the last few years, I have seen a deepening of our relationships.

And these relationships continue to strengthen and evolve to ensure the local community is empowered to determine its future. I will talk about some examples of this today.

Change during closure

"The only constant in life is change". This is a statement used frequently, and for Gove, it rings especially true.

While change can be hard, there are good reasons for it during the mining lifecycle, and particularly for closure.

Closure needs different technical skills to mining operations, so we need to bring in new and different experience and expertise to help.

Faces on the ground may change, but the ultimate plan remains the same.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Traditional Owners to make decisions to ensure projects continue to run smoothly.

They are integral in deciding how our alumina refinery site will be left after we undertake the largest demolition project in Australia's history.

We have already begun shipping the equivalent of three Sydney Harbour bridges, or 21 Eiffel Towers, in scrap steel for recycling, and together with Gumatj we are creating employment and economic opportunities for local people.

Their business arm is supplying us with equipment for the demolition process and they have played a key role in deciding what is kept or removed.

Gumatj will also influence the rehabilitation of the refinery and mine site, with Rirratjingu (Rirr-at-jin-goo) overseeing the remediation of the tailings facilities, ensuring ongoing environmental monitoring as we return the site back to them.

In short, the Traditional Owners are helping us prepare to leave their land.

Expectations to leave behind a sustainable town

Rio Tinto is very aware of the responsibility we hold to leave Gove better than when mining started in 1971.

Like the Yolngu (yoon-gool) Traditional Owners, we want to create a positive legacy.

A legacy that aligns with our value of care: to care for Country, to care for the community and to care for

People.

We are investing in the region.

Rio Tinto has committed \$4 million to build a new, permanent and purpose-built school, Dhupuma Barker, as part of our commitment to supporting a thriving and prosperous community.

The school will also serve as a community centre and cyclone shelter.

A major solar project here at Gove is another part of our shared vision with Traditional Owners.

Two new 5.25MW solar farms will be built on Gumatj and Rirratjingu (Rirr-at-jin-goo) Country as we work to secure a more sustainable power supply for the region beyond mining.

The solar farms will be built on Rio Tinto leases, following agreement with the Gumatj and Rirratjingu (Rirr-at-jin-goo) Traditional Owner Groups on the location of the facilities, and will help underpin a low-carbon future for the Gove community after mining operations cease.

Aggreko will construct, own and operate the solar farms for Rio Tinto for up to 10 years.

Construction has now begun with completion scheduled for early 2025.

The project is also part of our ongoing commitment to decarbonise our business. Once operational, the solar farms are expected to reduce annual carbon dioxide equivalent emissions at our Gove operations by up to 17%.

Meanwhile there is complex work being led by Rirratjingu(Rirr-at-jin-goo) to ensure a sustainable future for the town of Nhulunbuy, which includes identifying appropriate post mining tenure options to encourage local business growth.

Announcement of the MOU on Gulkula mine

I am also pleased to announce that we recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Gumatj to commence contract mining within our bauxite mining lease.

The partnership will be with one of Gumatj's businesses, Gulkula Mining, which is the world's only Indigenous owned mining company.

You would have passed their mining operation on your way here to Garma.

We recognise that at the end of their own mine, Gulkula will have transferable skills and equipment that can be utilised on our bauxite mine site.

This creates a natural progression for Gumatj to determine its future use.

Closing remarks

The important relationships and partnerships forged across the Peninsula that I've touched on today are key to creating a sustainable future for this beautiful region.

I truly believe these combined efforts can set the standard for responsible and successful mine closure.

I would like to once again thank Djawa and Klaus for their guidance, friendship, and the opportunity to speak today about our work together – work that I feel so privileged to be part of.

Their strength and vision has been, and continues to be, critical to the success of this region.

And I would also like to thank everyone gathered here today for listening.

Thank you.

Ends.