

Indigenous

Employee newsletter

April 2023

Welcome and update from Adam Lees, Chief Advisor Indigenous Affairs

As we commence the second quarter of 2023, I want to reflect on our progress and share our plans for the year ahead. This year is set to be our biggest yet, with a strong focus on forward-thinking and progressive action.

As one of the largest employers of Indigenous Australians and a company that operates on Indigenous lands, we have long supported constitutional recognition for Indigenous Australians and were one of the first mining companies to publicly support the [Uluru Statement from the Heart in 2019](#). With the call for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament, we will be actively engaging with our employees to promote understanding of this important National issue as we head towards a referendum which is planned for the second half of the year.

Our commitment to finding better ways to partner with Indigenous peoples and communities to preserve and protect cultural heritage led us to announce our [remedy agreement with the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura people](#). As part of this agreement, we created the Juukan Gorge Legacy Foundation which will receive financial support to progress major cultural and social projects, including a new keeping place for storing important cultural materials.

This forms part of our commitment to move towards a model of co-management to ensure Indigenous voices are always heard as part of our decision-making. Last week, Environmental Resources Australia Pty Ltd, [published a summary of outcomes](#) from the independent audits we



Adam Lees, Chief Advisor Indigenous Affairs.

completed throughout 2021 and 2022 on our Cultural Heritage Management performance, finding that while we've made several improvements, there's still work to be done.

In this edition of the newsletter, I am particularly proud of the International Women's Day feature, highlighting the women making a positive impact across our organisation. And I am equally proud of our Indigenous Leadership team for receiving the "Excellence in Diversity Programs and Performance in Queensland Resources" award – an amazing recognition as we continue our efforts to increase Indigenous leadership in our business.

We also celebrated the graduation of sixteen RioInspire graduates who will play an instrumental role in shaping the future of our business and the broader community.

Looking ahead, we will once again be sponsoring the Garma Festival in August. Through our sponsorship, we aim to reaffirm our commitment to the local community as our Gove site transitions towards closure, and to build valuable relationships and stay informed of important developments in Indigenous Affairs.

Through all the work we do, we're committed to representing our values of care, courage, and curiosity, elevating Indigenous voices in the company, increasing cultural knowledge, and celebrating our successes and milestones. I am excited by the positive impact we can make together.

Adam

Two years of Indigenous Leadership in Australia

With your support, we have successfully led the delivery of programs including RioInspire, Two-way mentoring, Leadership Success, Cultural Onboarding and Cultural Connection.

We are partnering with Traditional Owners and local stakeholders to improve pathways to employment for Indigenous peoples in our business, increasing the number of employment opportunities and providing positive experiences for current and future employees so they can actively grow their careers with us.

We now have over 49 Indigenous leaders, which includes 3 senior leaders in our business, compared to 6 and one (respectively) since the program started.

With strong, empowered, and engaged Indigenous voices across our business in Australia and beyond, we can reach our potential and lead our industry and the world by operating in the right way.

Thank you to those who have taken part in or supported the programs. We encourage everyone to help ensure that Indigenous voices are truly elevated in our business. There is a lot to be proud of, and much more to come.

Watch this [video](#) to hear from our people about the impact our commitment is making.

Indigenous Cadetship Program – Weipa

Rio Tinto's Indigenous Scholarship and Cadetship programs have provided opportunities for three university students to live and work in Weipa for three months.

Proud Gamilaroi and Murrawari sisters, Kaiawa, Miriama, and Kayla, are undertaking projects that complement their university studies in environmental management, emergency services, and hydrocarbon project work. Kaiawa, who is studying Law and Environmental Science, is interested in working as an Environmental Lawyer in the mining industry.

Miriama, who is studying Paramedic Science, is gaining practical skills by working with the Rio Tinto Emergency Services team. Kayla, who is studying Environmental Practice, is working with team members to achieve [WCCCA](#) meeting outcomes and aiming for a graduate position in Rio Tinto upon completing her studies.

Rio Tinto's Indigenous Scholarship and Cadetship programs offer opportunities for Indigenous university students who aspire to work in the mining and metals industry, in disciplines such as engineering, science, technology, and humanities. The positive impact of the program can be seen locally in Cape York.



Kaiawa, Kayla, and Miriama

Celebrating International Women's Day

The 8th of March marks the celebration of International Women's Day. Australia's First Nations women, as part of the oldest continuous culture on earth, have been leading and instigating change for thousands of years.

Promoting women's advancement at Rio is crucial to establishing secure communities, sustainable economies, prosperous businesses, and a healthier, more harmonious society.

The strengths of Indigenous women contribute remarkably to the social, spiritual, economic, and political aspects of their communities and at Rio, and having true diversity of perspectives will rechart our company moving forward.

Meet two Indigenous women who are making a positive impact on our organisation as part of Rio's strategy and commitment to elevating the Indigenous voices and cultural knowledge in our business and beyond.



Tanay Ropeyarn Specialist Agreements, Communities and Social Performance, Weipa Operations

What Traditional Owner Group do you identify with?

I am a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island woman who grew up in Injinoo, a small Aboriginal community located at the most Northern point of Australia. My Clan group is Ankamuthi which is on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

International Women's Day is a day of strength for me. It is a day where I reflect on the challenges women face, the courage women show, and the determination to keep going. It is also a day of self-reflection for me as an Indigenous woman navigating the career I am in now, from practicing Law in Queensland to now working in the mining industry. It is a time to recognise the achievements women make that contribute to society.

What was your first job with Rio Tinto?

This one! I completed my studies for a Bachelor of Law and a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice and joined Rio in November 2022.

What do you most look forward to at work?

I look forward to every day because not every day is the same. Each day has different tasks, which means I can work on a variety of things. I look forward to learning about the different departments, meeting new colleagues, and learning about their roles within the business.

What does a normal day at work look like for you?

Checking emails in the morning, prioritising tasks, and preparing for meetings with our agreements partners. Following up with different departments regarding meetings and working on queries. The Agreements Team has big weeks leading up to meetings with our agreement partners, which for me has been very interesting.

If you could offer one piece of advice to Indigenous women who are considering a career in the industry, what would it be?

Apply and give it a go! There are so many opportunities within the mining industry; it can take you anywhere!

Is there an Indigenous woman that inspires you in your career?

My mother has been my inspiration as she taught us the value of education from a young age. My mum was a stay-at-home mum, looking after me and my three siblings. She then later joined James Cook University and completed her Bachelor of Education and became a teacher, devoting her teaching career to educating Indigenous children.

Michelle Obama was my inspiration through my legal journey as she obtained her Law Degree as an Indigenous woman. On the day's University would get hard, I would read quotes of hers and put them up in my study room.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

When I am not at work, I am usually fishing, camping, or at the gym. I also enjoy watching documentaries.



Jenni Collard

General Manager Group Internal Audit

Tell us a bit about yourself

As a descendant of the Yadihagana/Wuthathi peoples of Cape York QLD, and the Guringji people of the Northern Territory, I bring a rich cultural heritage to my role as General Manager, Group Internal Audit. With over 25 years of experience as an Executive, I bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise, including extensive experience in government policy, strategy, and operational management in areas such as child services, rehabilitation in prisons, social and business development in regional communities, and Indigenous funding and employment initiatives. I have a large family throughout Australia, am married to a Noongar Man, and have four children.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

It is an opportunity to celebrate how far we have come and an opportunity to remind us that gender equality cannot be achieved without addressing the unique experiences and struggles of Indigenous women around the world.

What attracted you to work for Rio Tinto?

The company's reputation as a leading global mining organisation with a strong commitment to sustainability, innovation, and responsible resource development. I am also drawn to the opportunity to work with a talented and dedicated team of professionals who are passionate about making a positive impact on the world. I am excited about the prospect of leveraging my experience and skills to support our business and the communities in which we operate.

What's kept you engaged and motivated?

Several factors keep me engaged and motivated in my work.

1. I am driven by a sense of purpose and the desire to make a positive impact. Whether I am working on a project, solving a complex problem, or supporting a team, I am motivated by the knowledge that my efforts are contributing to something greater.
2. I am highly engaged by the work itself and I find satisfaction in using my skills and experience to achieve results and make progress. I am also motivated by the opportunity to learn and grow professionally, and I actively seek out new challenges and opportunities to develop my skills and knowledge.
3. I am driven by the people I work with, and I find great fulfillment in working collaboratively with others to achieve common goals. Whether I am leading a team, mentoring a colleague, or simply working with a colleague, I am motivated by the opportunity to build strong relationships, share knowledge, and work together to achieve shared objectives.

What are you most looking forward to about the future?

The desire to make a positive impact on the world and to contribute to the growth and success of Rio, while staying true to my Indigenous roots and values.

If you could offer one piece of advice to Indigenous women who are considering a career in the industry, what would it be?

Working at Rio has a diversity of opportunities and experiences. Indigenous women can have successful careers, and more importantly, they can make a positive difference.

Is there an Indigenous woman that inspires you in your career?

My mother is my role model, mentor, supporter, and critic! Without this grounding, I would not be who I am today.

Indigenous Leadership program recognised for excellence and innovation in inclusion and diversity programs

Held on International Women's Day, the 2023 Queensland Resources Council/Women in Mining and Resources Queensland Resources Awards for Women recognised our Indigenous Leadership Program for "Excellence in Diversity Programs and Performance in Queensland Resources".

44 Indigenous Leaders | **17** are women

The program focuses on the attraction, retention, and growth of Indigenous Australians, and has seen the number of Indigenous leaders increase from six to 44 since November 2020, including 17 women.

"What an amazing surprise! We're excited and humbled that the work of the Indigenous Leadership team has been recognised at the WIMARQ awards," said Angela Clive, Senior Manager, Indigenous Leadership.

"The Indigenous Leadership program is focused on accelerating Indigenous leaders and elevating their voices in our company. We know we still have a way to go, but this is a great milestone and continues to push us forward as we are committed to making a difference. Thank you to everyone who joined and everyone who has stayed to be part of the change."



Adam Lees, Sara Tuhi, Christi Chapman, Angela Clive and Lucy Bellinger



Vacation program student, Isabelle, wins Capability Development Excellence Award

Hosted by Capability Development, the Vacation end of program celebrations were held on Friday, 17 February at the Perth Convention Centre.

Isabelle Turner graduated after 3 months in the Vacation program and made her mark in the Indigenous Support team and the Communities and Social Performance Iron Ore team. Up against two other worthy nominees, Isabelle took out the Excellence Award. Amelia Scheele, Senior Advisor, Indigenous Support nominated Isabelle after recognising her hard work throughout the program.

"Isabelle achieved so much within her short time at Rio. She took ownership of the projects she worked on, using her initiative to identify additional business improvement opportunities, and navigated communication processes to stay connected with her geographically dispersed team. She strongly engaged and did so with curiosity and care, implementing an initiative to increase Indigenous new starter engagement outcomes while supporting a broader culturally safe setting for all Indigenous Vacation students to connect on a regular cadence," Amelia said.

We hope to see Isabelle back at Rio Tinto soon.

Rio supports CareerTrackers awards

CareerTrackers is a purpose-driven national organisation that provides support to pre-professional Indigenous university students, connecting them with employers for multi-year paid internships with sponsorship organisations, with the goal of transitioning to full-time employment upon graduation.

The CareerTrackers Gala Awards were held earlier this year in five cities across Australia, allowing each region to celebrate in their hometown, and to recognise the key individuals in their state that have contributed to their local program and community's success.

As the major sponsor, we awarded the Academic Excellence Award which recognises students' hard work and dedication to their university studies. This award is presented to students who have achieved a distinction average or higher across the year in 2022.

We are proud to support the event and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander excellence in our community!



Time for a cuppa?

Tune in to Episode 2 of Cuppa Conversations.

In the latest episode of Cuppa Conversations, our panellists delve into Intellectual Property Law, respecting Indigenous IP and our newly created Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property Engagement Protocol. Our Host Adam Lees, Chief Adviser Indigenous Affairs is joined by Sarah Basford, Legal Counsel and special guest Terri Janke from Janke & Co Law firm.

The full episode is available to watch on [Microsoft Stream](#) and RT Connect.

Cultural Connection Gathering workshops

Our first Cultural Connection gathering workshops in 2023 were held last month in our Brisbane and Perth hubs.

The workshops are part of a learning pathway that supports our leaders in Australia to successfully navigate the cultural landscape and expand their cultural knowledge to enable them to contribute to becoming a more understanding business.

Participants are not only building a deeper level of cultural maturity but are actively immersing themselves in a sensory journey that provides awareness, knowledge, skills, and tools to be respectful, informed, confident, and successful in all cultural interactions.

[Watch our video](#) to hear from leaders who are participating in the program.

Investing in Western Australian communities

We partner with local organisations to help build thriving communities across Western Australia.

Over the next month we'll be featuring some of the organisations who make it all happen through a social media and print campaign.

The campaign promotes our partnerships with the Pilbara Cultural Land Management Project (PCLMP), Derby District High School, Emama Nguda Aboriginal Corporation, City of Karratha, City of Albany and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA).

Visit our [Thriving WA page](#) here to learn more.



RioInspire welcomes 16 more graduates

Towards the end of March in Brisbane, the second cohort of the RioInspire program graduated.

The leadership development program is delivered in partnership with the [Australian Graduate School of Management \(AGSM\) at UNSW Business School](#) and focuses on developing executive-ready Indigenous leaders who will have an instrumental role in shaping the future of our business, and the broader community. This year, the program expanded to include Māori leaders from our New Zealand operations. Through the second cohort, 16 Indigenous leaders graduated, taking the total number of leaders through the program to 33.

Graduate Shane Edwards, Superintendent, Heritage Fieldwork Iron Ore said:

“The RioInspire program has been an amazing experience meeting so many of my brothers and sisters from across Australia and New Zealand, leading successfully within Rio Tinto. We have embraced each other’s experiences and knowledge, helping us all strive to be the best leaders in Rio and our communities.”

Graduate Josh Webb, Superintendent – Projects NZAS agreed and said:

“Sharing Aboriginal and Māori culture between each other has given me a greater depth of understanding of both cultures and the opportunity to reflect on the progress Te Ao Māori has made in modern-day New Zealand.”

Congratulations to all graduates.

16 Indigenous Leaders graduated in second cohort

33 total graduates (first and second cohort)



“The world is evolving, and I want to be part of the change.”

Christi Chapman

Volunteers wanted for Vacation and Graduate program interviews

Our 2024 Graduate Program recruitment campaign launched across Australia and New Zealand in our search for 150 top graduates to join us next year. It's our biggest intake ever and we again have a strong focus on building our future Indigenous pipeline and striving for 20 per cent representation, but that's where we need you!

Last year, we had a number of Indigenous professionals and leaders involved in the interview and placement process alongside hiring leaders to help provide a culturally supportive environment. This is an exciting opportunity to help attract future Indigenous leaders to Rio Tinto by being part of the process.

We're proud that last year's campaign helped us reach 16 per cent representation in our intake and excitingly, this recruitment campaign showcases some of our talented current graduates and highlights in their words “what's great” about working at Rio Tinto. More than half of the graduates featured in the campaign are Indigenous and we want to thank them for their courage in sharing their stories to inspire others.

If you'd like to be involved in the interview process for this intake, please contact [Shaniah Satour](#) who will match you to an interview where a student's discipline is aligned.

Expressions of interest for the Vacation and Graduate programs are open for another couple of weeks where university students can complete three months paid work experience across the summer semester break later this year (November - February) so please encourage any contacts within your networks to apply.



Follow us on Facebook!

Have you joined the Rio Tinto Indigenous Employees Facebook page yet? [Join here!](#)

Check out the Raise the Bar program in partnership with Athletics Australia.

Watch the video [here](#).

Mark your calendars!



Native Title Workshop, Perth
– 3 May

National Day of Healing (Sorry Day) – 26 May

National Reconciliation Week
27 May – 3 June

Anniversary of the Torres Strait Islander flag – 29 May

Mabo Day – 3 June

NAIDOC Week – 2 – 9 July

Garma Festival – 4 – 7 August

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
– 4 August

Two-way mentoring going strong!

Thank you to those who expressed interest in taking part in the next round of the [two-way mentoring program](#).

With strong, empowered, and engaged Indigenous voices across our business, we truly believe we can reach our potential and lead our industry and the world by operating in the right way.

The [two-way mentoring program](#) represents an important opportunity for senior leaders in Australia to offer development and career guidance to Indigenous professional employees while gaining a better understanding of the rich culture and history of Indigenous Australia, and some of the challenges Indigenous employees may face in our business. The program is helping to grow Indigenous leadership and build a culture of understanding across our organisation while fostering strong connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees.

[Watch the video here.](#)

If you're interested in participating in future rounds of the program, please contact [Gabrielle Graham](#) for the details of the next round of expressions of interests.



In celebration of this year's NAIDOC theme 'For Our Elders', we'll be highlighting the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders play in our country and society.

We'd love to include some meaningful quotes from you to feature in some of our internal communication. [Click here](#) to let us know what your Elders mean to you and/or how they've influenced your life.





Let's go global

What's happening outside of Australia?

Over in Quebec, Canada, the Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach and the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) signed the Aganow Agreement, which aims to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the company and the community. The agreement will provide opportunities for the Naskapi people to participate in IOC's activities through training, employment, environmental projects, and procurement. It will also protect traditional activities and provide long-term financial benefits to the Naskapi Nation.

The agreement is the result of two years of negotiations and includes an expression of regret from IOC for its lack of understanding of the Nation's historic reality, culture, and livelihood in the past. Chief Theresa Chemaganish of the Naskapi Nation said that the agreement will help address many priorities, such as promoting language and culture, providing adequate housing, creating employment opportunities, protecting the environment, and improving the general quality of life:

"Our Elders have suffered prejudice and discrimination, most often quietly. The Aganow Agreement is not a conclusion, but rather a new chapter in the reconciliation process and will hopefully help those who suffered to heal and find meaning."

IOC President and CEO Mike McCann said that Aganow reflects IOC's commitment to developing mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous partners. [Read more here.](#)

The community of Kawawachikamach is located near Schefferville, Quebec, where IOC carried out mining operations and exploration activities between 1954 and 1982. IOC's operations straddled the Quebec-Labrador border. Approximately 975 Naskapi live in Kawawachikamach and the surrounding area today.



The Naskapi Nation of Kawawachikamach and IOC sign the "Aganow" agreement

Ask our team

Got a question? Want to share your story? Or have an idea on how we can provide better support to our communities? Please reach out to a member of the Indigenous Affairs team at indigenousaffairsaustralia@riotinto.com

Please feel free to share this newsletter with your family and community.