Indigenous-owned mine training centre and mining operation open in the Northern Territory

5 August 2017

A mining training centre and bauxite mining operation established by Gumatj Corporation in Northeast Arnhem Land with the support of Rio Tinto officially opened today.

The Gulkula Regional Training Centre and Gulkula mining operation are 100 per cent owned by the Gumatj clan. The mine aims to deliver sustainable economic benefits for local Yolgnu people.

Located on the Dhupuma Plateau in Northeast Arnhem Land, the regional training centre is adjacent to the Gulkula mine, a small-scale bauxite operation which will deliver on-the-job training for participants.

The announcements were made at the 19th annual Garma Festival where, at a signing ceremony attended by Gumatj clan leader Dr. Galarrwuy Yunupingu AM, Rio Tinto committed to purchase bauxite produced from the new mine.

The Gulkula Regional Training Centre was established with $2.4 million in funding from Rio Tinto. Gumatj Corporation, along with the Northern Territory and Australian Governments, also contributed funding to the project.

Gumatj Corporation CEO Klaus Helms said it was a significant day for local Yolgnu people and Indigenous communities far and wide.

"The commencement of a 100 per cent Indigenous-owned training centre and mining operation is a testament to what Indigenous people can achieve working in partnership with business and government – this a major step forward in building a sustainable future for our local people.

"With Rio Tinto’s support, Yolngu people can now receive on-the-job training through Gumatj mining operations. The skills they develop will open up opportunities for them to build careers in the mining industry in the Northern Territory and beyond.

"The bauxite sales agreement we signed with Rio Tinto today also signifies their commitment to ensuring the success of our new mine. We are very excited to begin production later this year and start generating economic benefits for our local region," Klaus said.

Rio Tinto Aluminium Pacific Operations managing director Bruce Cox said Rio Tinto was delighted to see these projects driven by local Yolngu people come to fruition.

“As a result of this training centre even more local Indigenous people will be able to build long-term careers in the mining industry. We hope to see increased Indigenous participation at our own Gove bauxite mine as participants move on from the centre and into the workforce.

“Rio Tinto is very pleased to see our local partnerships evolve as we take on a new role as a customer of the Gulkula mine. We remain committed to supporting initiatives to ensure the sustainability of the Northeast Arnhem Land community now and into the future," Bruce said.
Note to Editors

The Gumatj Corporation builds sustainable local industries which benefit the traditional land owners and the clans of Northeast Arnhem Land. We do this through small-scale enterprises which focus on education and training, helping to build skills and capability that lead to new employment opportunities for our communities. Our core interests are life-long learning and education, job creation through community businesses, and supporting the cultural and ceremonial life of Yolngu people. The Gumatj Corporation currently employ 65 Yolgnu people through small business.

Rio Tinto is one of the largest private sector employers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with more than 1,600 Indigenous employees and hundreds of additional Indigenous contractors. Rio Tinto is supportive of the national push for constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Pictured: (L-R) Northern Territory Minister for Primary Industry and Resources Ken Vowles MLA, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Prime Minister of Australia the Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP, Rio Tinto managing director Aluminium Pacific Operations Bruce Cox, Gumatj Foundation CEO Klaus Helms and Senior Gumatj Traditional Owners and Gumatj Corporation Board Members Balupalu Yunupingu and Djawa Yunupingu
**Pictured:** Inside the accommodation facility at Gulkula Regional Training Centre

**Pictured:** Aerial view of the Gulkula Regional Training Centre accommodation facility
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