

Press release

Rio Tinto-ANU Partnership to build stronger links with China

14 July 2010

The successful Rio Tinto-ANU China Partnership to build strategic understanding of long-term developments in China will be expanded, providing potential for Australia to benefit from greater collaboration and deeper relationships with China.

At the 2010 China Update launch in Canberra, Rio Tinto and the ANU announced the five-year Partnership will be extended for at least another three years, delivering scope for broader intellectual, cultural, business and political awareness of China across the world.

The Partnership's economic research will complement work in history, literature, philosophy and cultural studies being undertaken by the Australian Centre on China in the World at the ANU.

Australian Foreign Minister and Trade Minister Stephen Smith said the Rio Tinto-ANU China Partnership and the Australian Centre on China in the World had an important contribution to make in the development of Australia's relationship with China, in association with growing government and business links.

"To make the most of the opportunities that will emerge from the next 20 years of reform and development in China we need to raise the level of China skills in Australia," Mr Smith said.

"That is also why Foreign Minister Yang and I have agreed that we now take forward a one and a half track dialogue. The Australia China Forum, as it will be called, will bring together Ministers, senior officials, business people and academics to consider the entirety of our comprehensive bilateral relationship."

China's Ambassador to Australia, Zhang Junsai said: "Over the years, the annual China Update event and Rio Tinto-ANU China Partnership have grown in scale and influence, and they have increased people's understanding of China and its development. I congratulate everyone on the success of the Partnership and I am sure it will be even more successful in the future."

Rio Tinto chief executive, energy and chief executive, China, Doug Ritchie, said the Partnership will help forge stronger ties with China by leading to greater awareness of China globally, particularly in Australia.

"While it is impossible to predict with certainty how China and Australia will develop, it is safe to say we will become more interdependent. The interdependence can be a source of mutual and sustainable prosperity for both countries if we aren't afraid to adapt," Mr Ritchie said.

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“We will rely on centres of expertise such as the ANU to help guide us towards that goal, building a lasting relationship based on mutual understanding and respect in the process.”

ANU China Economy Program chairman Ross Garnaut said the renewed Partnership would help strengthen the University’s China research and training capacity and lift co-operation with Rio Tinto to a new level.

“The Rio Tinto-ANU China Partnership represents a model for building the institutional link between the university and corporate sector to the benefit of both.”

The annual China Update is an integral component of the Partnership. In collaboration with the Brookings Institution and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Update is acknowledged as a leading international forum on the Chinese economy in the world. The theme of the 2010 China Update is “China: The Next 20 Years of Reform and Development”.

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and NYSE listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange.

Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in South America, Asia, Europe and southern Africa.

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