

Round & About

Short stories from Rio Tinto around the world.



Mine garden

In a wonderful illustration of how starting a mine can plant the seeds for a better future, Rio Tinto/QMM in Madagascar has breathed life into a new generation of farmers to supply mineworkers and their families with fresh produce. Construction and start up of the mine attracted thousands of additional people from within Madagascar and elsewhere. The incoming contractors, employees and families had different nutritional needs from the average local resident. Rio Tinto and catering contractor Universal Sodexho formed a farming collective to introduce additional fruit and vegetables.

Legal outsourcing

Rio Tinto has hired 12 lawyers in Gurgaon, India, near Delhi, to work full time alongside its Legal function's global in house team. An agreement has been struck with an outsourcing group, CPA Global of Jersey, UK, for the provision of the legal support services from India. The partnership will enable Rio Tinto to shift routine legal tasks such as basic procurement contracts, non disclosure agreements and review of documents to India in order to free up time for in house lawyers to focus on business critical issues.



Fiery furnace

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego would have survived this one too. Noted for their part in the Biblical account of the fiery furnace, here where temperatures can reach 1,800°C, hotter than the melting point of iron, they would have found these bricks rather cold. This is a rare look inside of one of Richards Bay Minerals' four fiery furnaces, where the mined ilmenite is smelted to produce titanium dioxide slag and iron. Richards Bay Minerals in South Africa, is nearing completion of a scheduled rebuild of Smelting Furnace 4, an event that occurs only at intervals of 15 to 30 years.

Payments transparency

Rio Tinto has earned praise from civil society coalition Publish What You Pay (PWYP) for taking an important step towards transparency by voluntarily disclosing, for the first time, the total tax and royalty payments that it makes to 13 of the countries where it operates. PWYP believes that transparency is a crucial first step towards insuring that revenues are used properly to reduce poverty, rather than being wasted or lost to corruption. In an online supplement to its 2008 Annual report, Rio Tinto published its total tax and royalty payments to each of 13 countries where these payments totalled US\$10 million or more.

Pink luxury

The glittering showrooms of luxury goods retailer Asprey, in London's fashionable New Bond Street, were the setting for Rio Tinto Diamonds' first preview of its 2009 Argyle Pink Diamond Tender in June. Rio Tinto's Argyle mine in Western Australia accounts for 90 per cent of the world's pink diamonds. These sought after gems make up only 0.01 per cent of the mine's annual production. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Rio Tinto Diamonds' annual offer of the pinks in a tender process. Forty three of the rarest and best pinks are on offer for sale through a sealed bidding process to an exclusive group of potential purchasers invited to viewings in Mumbai, Perth and Hong Kong.



Community of interest

Chairman Jan du Plessis likes to get out and about to meet communities that are part of Rio Tinto's operating sites around the world. So when the board toured Rio Tinto Iron Ore's mine, rail and port operations in the Pilbara of Western Australia, he had the opportunity of meeting the Ngarluma people, one of the traditional custodians of the Dampier area. Elders Pansy Hicks and Jeannie Churnside presented Jan with Pansy's painting *When the earth was soft*, which tells the story of a time when the earth was still liquid.
