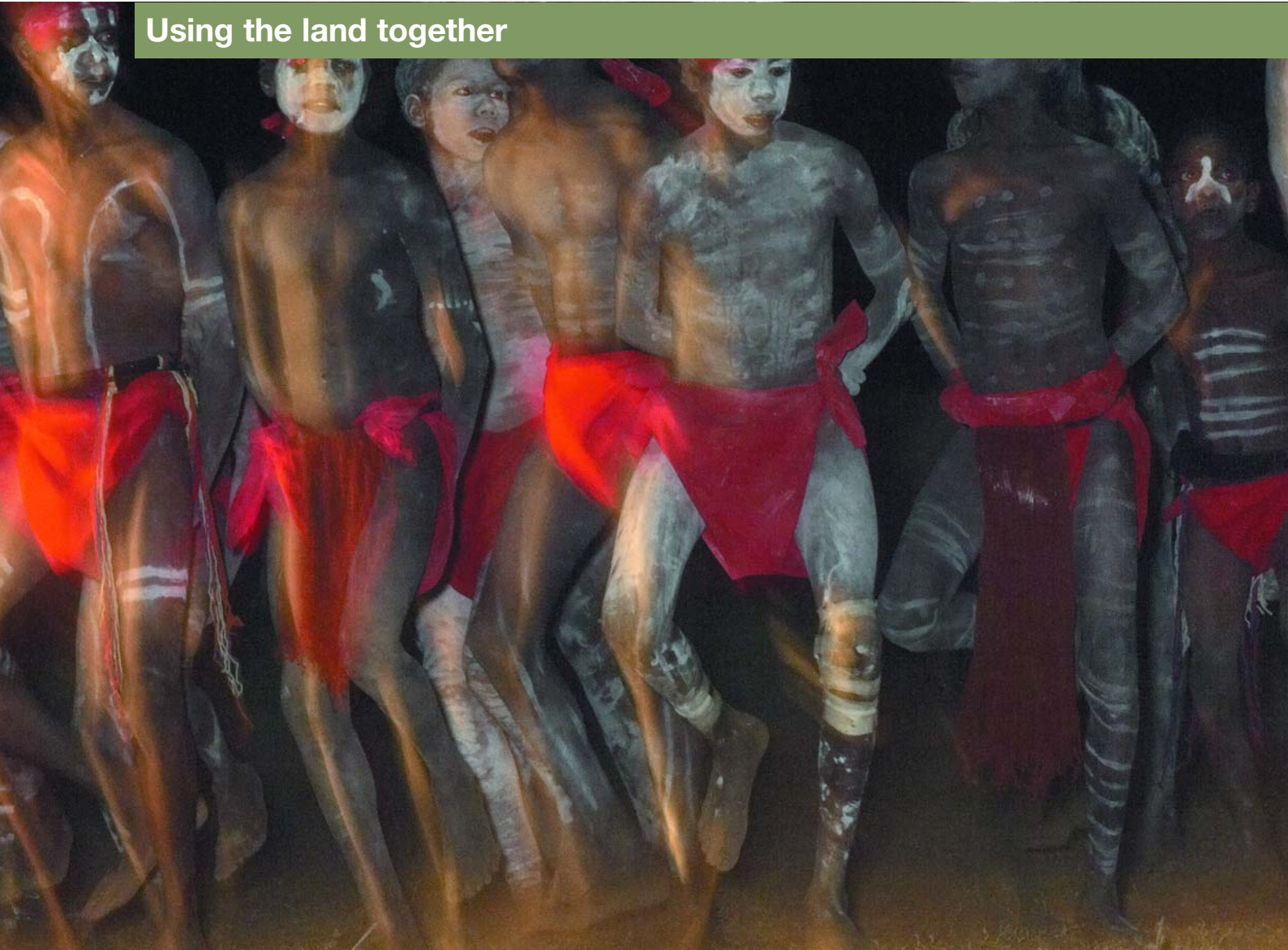


RIO TINTO

Using the land together



Working hand in hand

for regional development

Three years in the making, traditional land owners, Argyle Diamonds and the Kimberley Land Council signed the Argyle Participation Agreement in 2004, formally setting out a shared vision for regional development in the area of the mine.



Above: On 8th June 2005 indigenous and non-indigenous Australians attended the celebration of the completion of the Argyle Participation Agreement, an Indigenous Land Use Agreement made between Argyle and the Traditional Land Owners of the mining lease area.

Left: The Argyle lease area includes women's sites of significance to the Gidja and Mirruwung people. The women have key responsibilities for the land and ceremonies.

The traditional owners personally greeted politicians, business people and indigenous leaders to the celebratory event as guests to their region. Co-hosted by Argyle and the traditional owners of the mining lease, the event was attended by the Governor General of Australia and the Premier of Western Australia.

Three years in the making, traditional land owners, Argyle Diamonds and the Kimberley Land Council signed the Argyle Participation Agreement in 2004, formally setting out a shared vision for regional development in the area of the mine.

The agreement supersedes Argyle's 20 year old Good Neighbour Agreement and extends Rio Tinto's record of negotiating in good faith with traditional owners and others who live in the vicinity of its mines.

Besides outlining a view of the future, the Argyle Participation Agreement expresses a mutual recognition of rights, including traditional owner ceremonial responsibilities associated with the mine lease area. The terms emphasise economic participation and regional development. As evidence of its intentions, Argyle was able to point to a substantial increase in the number of Aboriginal employees to 20 per cent of the workforce that occurred during the three year negotiation period. It also provided for traditional owner approval for an underground mine, which was approved by the Rio Tinto Board in December 2005.

Benefits to traditional owners, to be governed through community controlled trust structures, provide for present day and post mining programmes in health, education and culture. There are eight management plans for active traditional owner participation in non operational activities. These include heritage protection, training and employment, cross cultural training for mine employees and contractors, access to non operational areas of the mine lease, participation in closure and decommissioning options, and a once a year land management inspection by traditional owners.

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