

# Indigenous

## Employee newsletter

An update for Rio Tinto Indigenous employees

December 2022

## Welcome and update

from Adam Lees, Chief Advisor Indigenous Affairs

As we move closer to the end of 2022, I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on the significant contributions you have all made during the year.

From the events you've been involved in, to sharing your truths and to navigating the journey between two worlds, it's all in a day's work for you. It's not always easy so I want to recognise and thank you for all that you do in creating a culturally safe and inclusive environment here at Rio.

Each quarter is busy and Q4 has been no exception. Some highlights include the **PKKP remedy announcement**, launching the **Indigenous Communities Language Guide**, the **Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Engagement Protocol** and the final **Communities and Social Performance Commitments disclosure**.

We sponsored, attended and spoke at many events including the Indigenous Emerging Business Forum in Perth and Karratha, affirming our commitment to supporting Indigenous businesses to advance. I also recently presented at the The Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre in Canberra where I shared some of the work we're doing at Rio to empower Indigenous leadership across our business in Australia.

In October, I travelled to London to attend a series of investor meetings. It's clear that our investors are very interested in what we are doing in Australia and they were extremely pleased to hear about all the work to raise Indigenous voices at all levels.

We continue our partnership with Jawun, a not-for-profit organisation that partners with Indigenous communities in capacity building and fostering understanding between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. In February, our first secondees will leave their position at Rio for six weeks to work at an Indigenous Corporation in regional Australia, immersing themselves in culture. Their learnings will be shared throughout the business and forms part of our commitment to build cultural intelligence throughout the company.

Work on the Indigenous Affairs Action Plan is underway and once completed, will promote Reconciliation throughout Rio and our communities and make a positive, sustained and measurable impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples. Thank you to those who attended the webcast and gave your honest feedback which will shape the plan. Follow our **Element page** for updates.



Adam Lees, Chief Advisor Indigenous Affairs.

Last month, the Australian Federal Government committed to legislate new protections for Indigenous heritage sites in their response to the Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia's report into Juukan Gorge. Rio supports the safeguarding of cultural heritage and has long supported constitutional recognition for Indigenous Australians, having backed the "Recognise" campaign, through to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Next year, we will be actively engaging with our employees to promote understanding and support for an Indigenous voice in Parliament. I recognise that you may face difficult conversations or situations as you help educate people around this topic.

Lastly, I want to congratulate the new cohort of 19 leaders that started on their six-month RiInspire leadership journey and the 50 Indigenous team members that just completed the two-way mentoring program.

We've achieved great things this year but there is more work to be done. I am personally looking forward to the challenge, after a restful Christmas break. I wish you all a safe and happy festive season. **Adam**

# People Profile: Aron Kurzydlo Manager Business Resources, ERA



Aron Kurzydlo

## **What is your Country?**

Kamilaroi

## **What Language Group do you Identify with?**

Gamilaraay

## **What is your current role?**

Manager of Business & Site Services, ERA

## **What was your first job with Rio Tinto?**

This one!

## **What are the toughest challenges you've had at work?**

Being reasonably new to the mining sector, it's been a steep learning curve. As you could imagine the mine and ground teams are operating 24/7 so need continued support and direction whilst you get your feet under the desk. It's been a rewarding challenge juggling that responsibility whilst leading a diverse team, one I have thoroughly enjoyed.

## **What do you most look forward to at work?**

Really turning the dial and working directly with and creating outcomes for Traditional Owners is something I look forward to. Being part of the team delivering world class rehabilitation adjacent to the World Heritage listed Kakadu National Park is something special to be a part of.

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

Early pre-start, then straight into the day. I have multiple teams in separate locations, so I try to spread my time across the teams to be on the ground supporting them and having as much impact as possible.

## **What's the best advice you can give to someone who is just starting their career with Rio Tinto?**

Go for it! It has been the best decision I have made for both myself personally and my career. The culture and team environment are like nothing I have experienced anywhere else. Rio Tinto are doing amazing things and are only getting bigger and better with opportunities for career progression both across Australia and the world.

## **What do you enjoy doing outside of work?**

I am extremely family orientated and spend every moment of time with my wife and five children. We have a very busy household and our children are extremely proud and connected to our culture so when we aren't at weekend sport we love getting out on country to connect and slow down the pace to enjoy stories and learning.

## Keeping it in the family

Clontarf Academy graduate, Dakota Tesling is the third generation of his family to work with us, following his grandfather Arno and father Ben.

Graduating from the Clontarf Foundation last year, Dakota landed a job as a Trades Assistant with Rio.

"I love what I'm doing. Usually it's all hands-on. You're learning new things every day," Dakota said.

Proud dad, Ben Tasling, Senior Supervisor Earthworks, Rail Maintenance said "Dakota is really happy at work. He looks forward to going to work, loves learning, loves developing, and it's the place where he feels like he needs to be."

Hear more from Dakota in a [video here](#).



Dakota and dad Ben

## AAG Perth

The Australian Advisory Group (AAG) held their final meeting for this year in Perth in November.

Joined by Kellie Parker, Chief Executive Australia, Simon Trott, Chief Executive Iron Ore and Rio Tinto Board member Megan Clark, the group had a packed agenda including presentations from current and former employees and a visit to our Iron ore Operations Centre.

## Words matter

The Indigenous Affairs and Communities and Social Performance teams have recently launched a new Indigenous Communities Language and Terminology guide.

The document is intended to guide respectful and inclusive language and terminology when engaging with and discussing Indigenous communities and individuals. This demonstrates respect for the peoples and cultures on whose land we live and work. Thank you to all of you who gave input into the guide.

Search “Indigenous communities language and terminology guide” on Element.

## Don't be a Copy Cat

The Indigenous Affairs Australia team recently launched a new campaign “Don't be a copycat” to ensure all Australian employees respect the cultural and intellectual property rights of Indigenous artists. The key message to employees is that written consent is always required before we reproduce artwork in any form and the **Rio Tinto Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property Engagement Protocol** is now available to help guide anyone wishing to reproduce artwork.



## Bond University celebrates Chantelle's journey to Rio

Chantelle Martin is a proud Gadigal woman and was recently recognised and celebrated at Bond University's annual Indigenous Gala.

Chantelle graduated from Bond University with a Bachelor of Laws / Bachelor of International Relations in 2022 and is now a Legal Graduate at Rio. The event was held in October and attracted over 500 corporate and community attendees from all over Australia. A video of Chantelle was played at the event sharing her story and successes with Bond University and Rio.

Well done, Chantelle!

If you know someone we should celebrate, let us know at [indigenousaffairsaustralia@riotinto.com](mailto:indigenousaffairsaustralia@riotinto.com)





# Launch of Cultural Onboarding program

In 2020, the Indigenous Leadership team saw an opportunity to better support Indigenous employees coming into our business so they feel culturally supported from day one. In July 2021, the Cultural Onboarding program was launched and after a year of being piloted, it has now been rolled out across Australia.

Our global pre-boarding technology provider, Enboarder, helps us improve the pre-boarding stage of the recruitment process for new starters and now Indigenous peoples joining our business in Australia in a globally banded role will have the opportunity to opt in and participate in the Cultural Onboarding program.

And feedback from new starters has been excellent:

**53** cultural onboarding participants in a 12-month period

**4.8/5** employee rating for feeling welcomed

**4.6/5** employee rating for feeling supported (+90 days after starting)

**4.4/5** for feeling culturally safe at work

**54.2** employee eNPS score (+30 days after starting)

Importantly, the Cultural Onboarding program also supports leaders of new Indigenous employees to grow their cultural knowledge and understanding, helping to create a culturally inclusive environment where Indigenous peoples can thrive. During the pilot phase, 82% of leaders self-identified cultural knowledge gaps during the process. 64% closed their knowledge gaps and provided score of 4.2 out of 5 for feeling supported to close cultural knowledge gaps prior to their new starter commencing.

The onboarding experience has a huge impact on engagement, particularly if someone feels culturally unsafe or that they can't bring their whole selves to work. So, this is a really great piece of work we are all very excited about and we'd love to hear your feedback about it. Find out more on Element [here](#).



# Polly Farmer Foundation Awards

In November, St Mary's College in Broome hosted the Polly Farmer Foundation's (PFF) Follow the Dream end of year Christmas party and awards night where students and staff shared their experiences of the program. Through Rio's ongoing partnership with PFF, the program continues to change lives by teaching students' life skills, providing academic support and mentoring.

Rio Tinto Indigenous Talent Advisor Shannon Stack attended the evening alongside West Angelas General Manager, Sean O'Hanlon and acting CEO of the Polly Farmer Foundation, Anthony Bevan.

Shannon said, "The highlight of the night for me was seeing the students' learning skills of the future in "coding" by controlling robots to move in all directions including programming them to pick up water bottles. Having the chance to learn these skills from a young age will open so many employment possibilities in a wide range of industries."

Congratulations to all the award winners.



Anthony Bevan with St Mary's staff and students, and Rio West Angelas leadership project team members

## Rio Tinto and Yindjibarndi people strengthen ties with updated agreement

Last month, the Yindjibarndi community and Rio Tinto were together on Country to co-sign an updated Partnership Agreement, aimed at strengthening ties and delivering improved outcomes for the Yindjibarndi people for generations to come.

This new agreement will support the Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation's (YAC) 3C's strategy, which is focused on developing Community, Commercial and Culture projects and programs to assist YAC to fulfil its aspirations of self-determination.

Our rail network, which connects our Pilbara mines to ports at Cape Lambert and Dampier, traverses through Yindjibarndi Country.

We are changing the way we work with Traditional Owners in the Pilbara and this updated agreement is another step on our journey to rebuilding trust and modernising our relationships with external partners.



Rio Tinto and members of the Yindjibarndi community

## \$5.6M partnership with the Pilbara Cultural Land Management Project (PCLMP)

Amid the ancient rock art at Murujuga National Park, Rio Tinto and members from the Pilbara Cultural Land Management Project (PCLMP) officially launched a new partnership.

The PCLMP is an alliance of 12 Traditional Owner groups that support a regional solution for a regional community and connection across Pilbara Traditional Owner groups, recognising the critical work of all PCLMP members in the preservation of Country and culture.

Over the next five years, the members of the PCLMP will strengthen their ranger programs, creating a network of knowledge-sharing and career development. The priorities and training programs have been developed by Traditional Owners for Traditional Owners and aim to increase Aboriginal ownership and determination of the program and its outcomes.



Rio Tinto and members from PCLMP

## Employee spotlight Joelene Puntoriero

After growing up on a property in rural Darwin, it's not surprising that Joelene Puntoriero, Graduate Environmental Advisor at Gove, was passionate from a young age about caring for the environment. But she also has unique insight into how much we can learn from Indigenous peoples' deep knowledge of the environment.

"Recognising the need for meaningful and culturally driven engagement fuels my passion – especially as an Indigenous environmental scientist working in the mining industry.

Indigenous peoples have so much rich knowledge about environmental management, it is formally being recognised now as Traditional Ecological Knowledge, but few people naturally possess the cultural awareness required to engage with Traditional Owners effectively and meaningfully.

It's very early days in establishing these relationships. I am very mindful of my place within the community and developing and managing these relationships with great care, trust and respect.

It is my responsibility as an Indigenous person within the business to protect and safeguard cultural heritage sites of significance and ensure that they are treated with the care and respect that they deserve".



Joelene Puntoriero



## Applications for Indigenous Scholarships now open

Do you know anyone who would like to apply for a Rio Indigenous Scholarship?

The 2023 Rio Tinto Western Australia Indigenous Scholarship program supports Indigenous people who are at a tertiary level. This is a direct result of the shared commitment between Rio and Aboriginal groups within the area of operations in the Pilbara.

For more information please contact [IndigenousAffairsAustralia@riotinto.com](mailto:IndigenousAffairsAustralia@riotinto.com)

## Applications for Indigenous Cadetships now open

Do you know someone who might be interested in becoming a Rio cadet?

The 2023 Rio Tinto Indigenous Cadetship program supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete their undergraduate degree and gain professional work experience within the organisation.

Rio Tinto provides a study allowance and 12 weeks of paid vacation work to students on the program.

For more information please contact [IndigenousAffairsAustralia@riotinto.com](mailto:IndigenousAffairsAustralia@riotinto.com)

## HOME OWNERSHIP GOALS?

IBA supports First Nations people to get ready for home ownership and to buy their own home.

We offer free workshops around budgeting, credit clarity, and preparing for home ownership. Our home loans come with low deposit requirements, depending on your income, and no mortgage insurance.

Find out if IBA is right for you – visit [iba.gov.au](http://iba.gov.au) or call 1800 107 107.



# Indigenous Affairs team volunteers with FareShare

FareShare is a charity whose purpose is to cook with care, creatively transforming food into nutritious meals that feed people's dignity and wellbeing, regardless of their circumstances.

For an end-of-year Christmas team activity, the Indigenous Affairs Australia team volunteered at FareShare in Brisbane, helping to pack over 3000 nutritious meals for people in need. The team also heard from Jason Mollenhauer, FareShare First Nations Officer, who coordinates the meal program for First Nations regional and remote communities around Queensland.

Chief Advisor Indigenous Affairs Adam Lees said, "The activity was a whole lot of fun but it was also a very humbling experience being able to help out in this important food program. FareShare does such vital work and I encourage all team members to get involved in volunteering in their communities."



Indigenous Affairs team volunteering at FareShare

# RioInspire

Nineteen Indigenous leaders from across the business have recently commenced the next round of the RioInspire program.

Previously named Emerging Indigenous Executive Leaders, 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.

Rachel Massey, Principal Knowledge Management - Knowledge, Innovation and Technology is participating in the program and describes the experience so far as informative, challenging, and thought-provoking.

“Spending time on Country, connecting with other Indigenous employees over our shared experiences, and offering each other support is invaluable. I’m truly lucky to have been selected to participate,” Rachel said.

This year, we opened the program to Māori leaders working out of the New Zealand Aluminium Smelters. We were also fortunate to engage Dr Kiri Dell, a leading Māori academic, to facilitate discussions around leadership in the New Zealand and Māori context.

On completion of the program, all participants will receive a Certificate of Executive Management Development (CEMD) and receive two credit points towards the AGSM Master of Business Administration (MBA) program.



RioInspire participants spending time on Country.

Senior leaders dance around campfire with members of the Gumatj clan



## Bawaka Cultural Experience program

Early in October, senior leaders at Gove spent time on the Yolnu ancestral lands of the Burarrwana families of the Gumatj Clan.

The Burarrwana people hosted the team and treated them to three days on the Bawaka homeland where they had an amazing opportunity to learn and share in strengthening their cultural awareness of Yolnu kinship relations, moiety, traditional lore, language and to gain a better understanding of how Yolnu people are connected to the land and each other.

Building on their cultural knowledge, the team participated in the Bawaka Cultural Experience program which included a range of daily activities from fishing, gathering and preparing bush foods and medicine, dyeing and weaving pandanus, dancing (Bunggul) ceremonies and storytelling. Of all the activities undertaken, the one that resonated the most with the team was learning how the Yolnu moiety and kinship system culturally connects Yolnu people and their culture.

The Bawaka Cultural Experience is a fully Indigenous owned and operated business that specialises in Yolnu cultural awareness and immersion programs for tourists and corporate groups. In addition to providing experiences that promote cultural understanding, the Burarrwana people’s business aim is to create employment and training opportunities for Yolngu people and to pass on and share their cultural knowledge.





## How will you be spending the festive season? And what do you hope Santa will bring you?



**Rhianna Couzens,  
Advisor Indigenous Affairs**

I will be spending Christmas in Perth with my family, then heading up north to beautiful Malgana Country (Shark Bay) to enjoy some time in the sunshine.



**Carleen Kelly,  
Facility Coordinator,  
Dampier Ports**

I'm spending the holidays with the family in Coral Bay for a few days, Geraldton and then going out bush.

There are a lot of things I want but I'll be happy with good health, keeping safe and the winning lottery ticket.



**Adam Lees, Chief Advisor  
Indigenous Affairs Australia**

I'll be staying in Brisbane and am looking forward to my large extended family coming to stay with me for two weeks, something that wasn't possible this time last year.

As for Santa....he can bring me anything as long as it's not another pair of socks and a Lynx deodorant gift pack.



**Josh Norman,  
Superintendent, Rail Maintenance**

I will be spending my festive season with my family at home, eating waaayyy too much food, staying well hydrated and swimming in a blow-up pool. I hope Santa brings me a real pool.



**Christopher Christie,  
Manager - Studies**

I will be heading back to Central Queensland for a few weeks; it has been such a long time since I was back on my Country. While there, I will take the opportunity to go hunting, dig for opals, and visit some of the dinosaur tracks around the area. My 4-year-old is so excited! As for something from Santa, I am a lover of good espresso, so anything related to that. As long as there is a large leg of ham on the day, I will be happy regardless.



**Brendan Church,  
Principal Advisor  
Indigenous Growth**

I am probably the worst person to ask a question about holidays and Christmas as I never plan and just do things quite spontaneously and don't love receiving presents!



**Sara Tuhi,**  
**Indigenous Affairs Coordinator**

Cooking with my sister on Christmas Day which will feed 30 people. I'm looking forward to it!

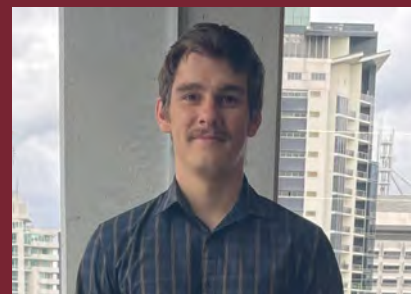


**Domino** I'll be spending it with family in Perth sightseeing.

**Blandina** I'll be out at Norton bore but that depends if the rivers are up. I'll head to Bow River fishing though.

**Zerreth** I don't have plans; I'll be with the family gathering.

**Clinton** I don't have any plans; I go with the flow.



**Nathan Micallef,**  
**Graduate Scientist**

I'm going to be spending the day with my family and I hope Santa brings me a nice pillow which I know is boring but I really need a good one ha!



**Elle Sossi,**  
**Advisor Indigenous Affairs**

Christmas day will be spent at Shoalwater beach with all my family (60 of us come to lunch!) then a little staycation at Karrinyup Waters with my kids to bring in the new year.



**Alicia Bingham,**  
**Specialist Survey Engagement -**  
**Biological Assessments State**  
**Agreements & Approvals**

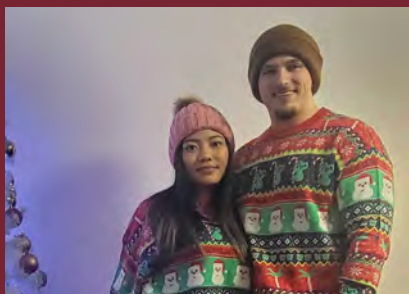
I will be spending the festive season over in New Zealand with my daughter sunning, swimming and hiking. This year I'm hoping Santa brings me a new bike!



**John Angel-Hands,**  
**Superintendent RFD**  
**Project Delivery**

For me, the festive season break is about connecting back with family, aiming to do all the things they want to do, as they have supported me throughout the year with my commitments, including work.

I hope Santa finds a way to get me a PS5 disk console, and some up to date clothing, as my clothes are circa 1995.



**Griffin Humphries,  
Graduate Data Science & AI**

I'll be travelling back to my hometown of Taree for a Christmas get together with my close friends and family. Afterwards, I'll be travelling back to Brisbane just before Christmas day to spend it with my fiancé and her sister. As for under the tree, I'm a nerd at heart so I'm hoping to get some Dungeons and Dragons related items however the best gift is something that I already have and that's been able to spend it with my partner and create fond memories for the future.



**Alec Isaac, Advisor Indigenous  
Support West Angelas**

I'll be spending Xmas with my family at home, away from my other family here at West Angelas. As tempting as it is, I will be trying my best to not let my belly look as good as Santa's! I hope Santa brings me a new fishing rod to enjoy when on my R&Rs with my sons back home in paradise (The Kimberley). Wishing all a very joyful, merry and safe Christmas from West Angelas.



**Christi Chapman,  
Graduate Indigenous Leadership**

I don't have much planned over the Christmas Festive season... just a bit of relaxation and quality family time and enjoying the catch ups with the nieces and nephews. And Santa has a choice of bringing me a multi-million dollar winning Powerball ticket (ha-ha) or some jewellery – rose gold necklace with a matching pair of earrings.



**Karita Button,  
Graduate Communications**

This year I will be celebrating Xmas in Rockhampton. I hope to spend some time going fishing and playing board games with the family. As for what I want Santa to gift me? I always say a Dymocks book voucher is never wasted on me.



**Jai Ingram, Principal Advisor,  
Indigenous Engagement**

I'm looking forward to reconnecting with family on Ngarigo Country (Snowy Mountains) after being separated since the start of COVID and the blacksummer bushfires... camping, fishing and hiking on Country. I hope Santa brings me a remedy for dropping the kgs after all the festive food consumption.

**Wishing you all a  
wonderful break  
and festive season  
– see you in 2023!**

## 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](mailto:indigenousaffairsaustralia@riotinto.com)

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