

Press release

RIO TINTO DREAMTIME TEAM OFFERS FOOTBALL DREAM TO STUDENTS

24 October 2008

Tips in football and lessons in The Dreaming took centre stage at Sydney Football Stadium today.

Rio Tinto Australian Indigenous Dreamtime Team members took time out to coach 35 students from Maroubra Bay and La Perouse public schools in a mini football clinic, 48 hours ahead of their SCG clash against the New Zealand Maori squad in the 'Welcome to Country' game ahead of the Rugby League World Cup curtain raiser Australia vs New Zealand game on Sunday night.

Today's community event in Sydney, supported by Dreamtime Team sponsor Rio Tinto, incorporated a training session, a performance by the Nunukul Yuggera Aboriginal Dancers, while players read and gave out copies of The Rainbow Serpent to the students.

"It was great to have the whole Dreamtime Team here today to meet these kids, who'll be cheering on the team from 'Koori corner' at the ground on Sunday," said Rio Tinto spokeswoman Fiona Nicholls.

"Both of these schools have a high Indigenous quota of students, and they look up to Dreamtime Team captain Preston Campbell and his team mates Ty Williams and Dean Widders as role models.

"Rio Tinto is proud to sponsor the Dreamtime Team, as it is yet another way that we are highlighting the many ways we look to provide opportunities for Indigenous Australians, and how we recognise their contributions.

"For the kids here today, these are their idols, and help reinforce that they really can achieve their dreams if they put their mind to something."

Thanks to Rio Tinto, the 35 students are among more than 100 young rugby league fans who have got to meet and train with the Rio Tinto Indigenous Dreamtime Team this week.

The 2008 Rio Tinto Australian Indigenous Dreamtime Team will play the New Zealand Maori in the Welcome to Country game as part of the Rugby League World Cup Official Opening on 26 October in Sydney.

Through its sponsorship of the team, Rio Tinto is showcasing its work with Indigenous communities across Australia.

“Rio Tinto has a strong history of proactively providing opportunities for Indigenous people, built on years of partnerships with Australian Indigenous communities,” Ms Nicholls said.

“Rio Tinto is a leader in Indigenous employment.

“We currently have 1,400 Indigenous Australians working across our sites.

“From less than 0.5 per cent in 2001, today some eight per cent of our total workforce is Indigenous. For example, 25 per cent of our employees at the Argyle Diamond operation in the Kimberley region of Western Australia are Indigenous, while the Weipa bauxite operation has a target of 35 per cent and the Pilbara iron ore operation a target of 20 per cent.

“Collectively, each year these Indigenous employees are earning in excess of \$100 million.”

Rio Tinto has been proactively seeking to create opportunities for Indigenous Australians in communities neighbouring its operations since the early 1990s by:

- Creating employment opportunities
- Building strong community partnerships
- Establishing health and wellbeing programmes
- Fostering participation in creative industries and the arts.

“Rio Tinto has agreements in place with many of our local Aboriginal communities which aim to provide education, training and employment opportunities,” Ms Nicholls said.

“These agreements are also designed to provide opportunities for commercial ventures, such as business contracting, and to increase our direct Aboriginal participation rates.

“As our mines expand, we need to recruit many more workers and we are committed to employ as many Aboriginal people as possible.

“By drawing on the broad talents and diversity within our communities, we are ensuring that we are building a long term, successful and sustainable business.”

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