

Press release

Rio Tinto's Colours of our Country exhibition arrives in Perth

25 August 2009

A Pilbara storybook full of paintings, textiles and artefacts has arrived in Perth as part of Rio Tinto's 2009 Colours of our Country exhibition.

The collection of more than 180 works from 41 established or emerging Aboriginal artists will be on display from 31 August to 12 September in the Central Park foyer.

Rio Tinto has brought the artwork over 1,500 kilometres from the Karratha/Roebourne region of Western Australia for the annual Colours of our Country exhibition, which has been held in Perth since 2006.

Rio Tinto Iron Ore chief executive Sam Walsh said the exhibition was a shining example of how the company works collaboratively with Aboriginal people in the Pilbara.

"We recognise and respect the importance of protecting the cultural interests of traditional owners and their connections to country," Mr Walsh said.

"Increasingly there are opportunities for Aboriginal people in the Pilbara to earn an income outside of the resource industry, and Colours of our Country is a great example of this. Importantly, all profits from the exhibition go directly to the artists and their art groups."

This year the artists' creations on show are expected to fetch more than \$230,000 highlighting the consistent upward trend of Pilbara art since the exhibition's foundation.

More than three quarters of the artwork from the past two exhibitions has sold, raising \$167,000 in 2007 and \$178,000 in 2008, all of which is paid commission-free to the artists.

Colours of our Country and the Cossack Art Award, sponsored by Rio Tinto, have provided a springboard for Aboriginal art from the Pilbara, which is growing in prominence alongside the established traditions from the Kimberley and Western Desert.

Exhibition co-ordinator Nan Rickards said the 2009 collection tells a range of ancestral stories of the land and also explores individual life experiences and beliefs.

"The Pilbara artists have developed an eclectic array of creations over the year. Works range from traditional pieces to creations that mix vibrant colours reflecting the Pilbara landscape," Ms Rickards said.

Paintings from Cossack Art Award winners Clifton Mack, Marine James, Wendy Warrie and Wendy Darby are highlights of the exhibition. Pansy Hicks, a Telstra Art Award finalist and respected Ngarluma elder, also has several paintings in the exhibition.

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Key information

- Colours of our Country will be held from 31 August to 12 September
- Opening times are 10am to 4pm daily
- Location is Central Park foyer, 152 -158 St Georges Terrace, Perth
- Admission is free
- The catalogue of works will be available at www.ciwa.riotinto.com/coloursfourcountry from Thursday 27th August

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. For further information, please contact:

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