

Rio Tinto Community Forum Wickham

27th May 2008
54 attendees

Future of the Town

There have been three feasibility studies done and the facilities are old and the town is run down.

Wickham was built in the early 1970s and many of the town facilities are dated. Steps are being taken as part of the CLU80 expansion to update social and recreational facilities. There has been significant community consultation through a number of focus groups and the Community Advisory Group.

Where are we heading in the next five years?

Rio Tinto is committed to Wickham as a residential site and will remain the primary source of residential employees to service the Cape Lambert port; a portion of the workforce will remain fly-in, fly-out. We recognise significant funding is required to modernise social and recreational facilities in Wickham.

Sports Club

What is happening about the Sports Club?

This is currently at feasibility stage.

Is the sporting complex dependant on funds being available?

Funds have been allocated to develop the sports club.

Communication

We try to reach all of the community through a number of regular communications such as the Wickham Observer, Community Advisory Group and noticeboards, and we will look for other avenues to improve communications.

No projects have been communicated to the community.

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Will the policy for home improvements and information on the feasibility study be communicated to households?

Yes, through the channels mentioned above and through site communications.

Housing

Why are there 70 empty houses in Wickham and is it your plan to refurbish?

Rio Tinto has significant capital expenditure approved with a program in place to complete full refurbishments on empty houses. In the past it has been difficult to secure tradespeople to complete the work.

Rio Tinto's housing policy is being developed for home improvements and reimbursements such as garden improvements and patios, however reimbursements will not be back-paid.

Can we be reimbursed on work we've already done?

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Rubbish

The shire put out bins but they soon get damaged. Are we able to get more bins that aren't able to be burnt?

The bins have been ordered.

Housing

The vandalism is very bad in Wickham, are there any suggestions to what can be done?

Community members are encouraged to report anyone seen vandalising. Everyone can take a role in protecting our community and not let vandals get away with it by reporting them to police.

Playground Shade Sails

There are hooks but no sails, where are they?

The sails are now up but may need to be removed due to cyclones or vandalism.

Old Wickham Pub

What is the future of the old Wickham pub?

It will remain staff accommodation and the sports club will be developed as a social venue

Beach/Yacht Club Access

Will we still have access?

We will assess requirements in line with further expansion.

Child Care

Can Rio Tinto provide before and after school child care?

Not at the moment, however work is being done through the Pilbara Partnership Fund to source a provider to run a pilot program similar to what has been run in Dampier.

BHPB Bid

What's happening? Is it reasonable then to assume that nothing will be done in terms of spending all this money that you're talking about until a decision has been made?

As stated in the media, BHP has put forward a conditional offer on Rio Tinto which will expire at the end of the year. Currently information on the proposal is limited and can be found in the public arena.

Land Release

Why has no land been released to buy?

Rio Tinto is working with the Shire and State Government to identify potential residential land.

Hospital/Medical Care

Is there any mention of a hospital in the new plan?

We can get the staff but we can't get accommodation. We can offer them full-time employment but there's no housing. We have to address the housing issue.

Rio Tinto is a member of the Pilbara Industry Community Council (PICC) and has been working to influence the State Government to address key issues in the region. A business case was put to the government on health - addressing accommodation, staffing and facilities. Rio Tinto is putting as much pressure on the State Government as we can and will continue to do so.

Rio Tinto has invested in two ambulances and we are happy to assist where possible. The medical centre in Wickham is already supported by Rio Tinto. If there is anything that is really causing distress let your community development liaison officer know and we will try to work towards a solution.

Rio Tinto and the PICC members recognise that accommodation is at the centre of a great number of service level issues in the Pilbara with health and education being examples. We continue to meet with and lobby government departments and relevant ministers to highlight the housing issues and encourage government expenditure to secure additional housing in the region.

Will there be a chance to donate blood?

Rio Tinto has undertaken to meet with West Australian Country Health Services manager of West Pilbara Operations to discuss a potential partnership regarding a blood bank service.

Taxes

Why doesn't Rio Tinto withhold royalties and use them to improve services to the region?

We are obliged to pay royalties to the State Government and whilst we continue to advocate increased spending in the region, it is wholly a government decision as to where the royalties are spent.