



MEDIA RELEASE

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Rio Tinto–DADAA initiative brings its unique statewide community arts project to Geraldton

A major new community arts project in Geraldton will engage the local community in an effort to build social connection and community resilience in the region.

The project is part of a two-year partnership between DADAA and Rio Tinto that will work in five Western Australian communities: Geraldton, Busselton, Paraburdoo, Derby and Esperance. The statewide project will engage whole communities in several related projects, with some aimed at FIFO workers and their families, as well as members from Aboriginal, farming and young adult communities.

Named after the number of communities, the project – called FIVE – will build awareness around issues of wellbeing through a community arts and cultural development approach. The project addresses key components of the Mental Health Commission's 2020 strategy for Western Australia.

Three different projects will begin in Geraldton on 25 March.

- A whole-of-community sculpture, facilitated by installation and performance artist Hiromi Tango around themes of 'home' and belonging' with a unique large-scale sculpture created by the community; drop-in workshops at the Arts and Cultural Development Corporation studios run from 25 March to 27 April.
- About 50 digital portraits, filmed by highly regarded digital artist Craig Walsh and resulting in a single collective work about what home, belonging, family, work and living in Geraldton means to participants; filming at the Wedge building (part of the WA Museum – Geraldton) from 14 April to 4 May is open to everyone.
- A young adults project for youth from across Geraldton, held at various sites and led by local artists Sonal Kantaria, Anthea da Silva and Jordan Andreotta; activities will be held around the city from late March until 4 May.

A final community celebration on 8 May will showcase the project and its artistic outcomes, including the collective digital portrait from the filming project.

DADAA Executive Director David Doyle said that participatory arts have been shown to be a powerful tool in building community resilience and cohesion.

"DADAA is pleased to have been invited into Geraldton to work with the community in providing appropriate programs in the arts," said Mr Doyle. "Our early consultation work showed that programs for young people and in the area of mental health would add the most value.

"Our three FIVE projects will work in these areas using a community arts and cultural development model, which is designed to generate dialogue within a community and allow for self-advocacy around important issues."

With a local town office, and more than 200 employees flying directly from Geraldton to the Pilbara, Rio Tinto is strongly committed to the region.

"We aim to create an environment that acknowledges, supports and promotes good mental health in the workforce and the community," said Andrew Harding, Chair of the Rio Tinto Community Investment Fund and Chief Executive, Iron Ore.

"We also recognise that this is a complex issue that requires a whole-of-community approach and a variety of interventions. FIVE is just one way we are working together with the communities in which our employees live and work, to encourage dialogue around mental health."

City of Greater Geraldton Mayor Ian Carpenter said that the City was pleased to have DADAA as a community partner and excited to be involved in the statewide FIVE project.

“FIVE – and our longer term partnership with DADAA – will go a long way towards helping the community to understand mental illness, and will facilitate more interaction and commitment for community-based projects that support mental illness prevention,” he said.

“As part of the City’s Strategic Community Plan, we want to maintain a strong, healthy community that is equitable and connected. We want to create a city that supports families and people with disability, and I believe doing so through the arts is a powerful way to achieve this.”

All events are free. For more information, visit www.five.org.au or email geraldton@five.org.au.

Community members are invited to attend an event officially launching FIVE and welcoming project artists. This will take place on the foreshore next to the Dome Café, from 6–8pm on 4 April 2014.

Additional Information on FIVE

The initiative supports the Mental Health Commission’s Mental Health 2020 strategy, one component of which is to build peer-to-peer connection as a means of facilitating dialogue around mental health. FIVE addresses findings from recent research noting lack of communication and social isolation as contributing factors to poor mental health – particularly amongst the State’s regional communities.

A significant evaluation of FIVE will be conducted throughout the two-year pilot period. DADAA will work in partnership with researchers from Murdoch University to develop a framework for evaluation and then measure the impacts of the CACD models used on participants, organisations and communities.

FIVE is the first collaborative project to emerge from a unique memorandum of understanding between Rio Tinto and the Mental Health Commission that outlines a commitment to projects that support mental illness prevention and anti-stigma.

About DADAA

DADAA is a not-for-profit community arts and cultural development (CACD) organisation, focusing on creating significant positive social change and opportunities for people with a disability or a mental illness. Based in Fremantle, DADAA offers targeted arts and cultural programs that include a broad range of traditional and new media projects in almost 50 Western Australian communities.

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and New York Stock Exchange 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, thermal and metallurgical coal, uranium, gold, industrial minerals (borax, titanium dioxide and salt) and iron ore. Activities span the world and are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant businesses in Asia, Europe, Africa and South America.

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