

Indigenous Leadership

RioInspire: Accelerating Indigenous Talent Globally



RioTinto

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Executive Summary

Following the destruction of the rock shelters at Juukan Gorge in May 2020, Rio Tinto undertook significant action to strengthen its approach to cultural heritage management. This included revising internal practices, policies and governance frameworks to improve how cultural heritage risks are identified, assessed and escalated across the organisation, as well as strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities through deeper engagement, partnership and shared decision-making.

Recognising the importance of stronger Indigenous representation in leadership and governance, Rio Tinto also committed to increasing Indigenous presence and influence at key organisational and enterprise decision-making forums. This included a focused investment to attract, develop and retain Indigenous professionals and leaders across the business.

The RioInspire Program, an Indigenous talent initiative, was established as a central pillar of this commitment. It is designed to build executive-ready Indigenous leaders who can embed Indigenous perspectives more meaningfully within governance and decision-making structures.

Co-created with AGSM@UNSW and Rio Tinto's Indigenous Leadership team, RioInspire provides executive talent development tailored to the complexity of a global mining environment. The blended model combines on-Country learning, executive-sponsored Strategic Challenges, targeted coaching and workshops that translate cultural insight into enterprise-level leadership capability.

Four years on, 71 Indigenous leaders have graduated from RioInspire, with a 90% completion rate. Promotion rates for RioInspire graduates are twice those of non-participants and retention outcomes are significantly stronger.

RioInspire graduates have led initiatives delivering measurable enterprise value, including an estimated A\$80 million in avoided costs, now embedded within mine design standards. Business impacts are evident at team, asset and Group levels, including improved clarity and consistency in the Safety Maturity Model, stronger alignment and reduced duplication, as well as strengthened delivery capacity for Traditional Owner businesses supporting rehabilitation.

Annual investment in Community-owned businesses now exceeds A\$1 billion, reflecting sustained economic participation grounded in strengthened governance and long-term partnerships with Traditional Owners.

Taken together, these outcomes show that RioInspire is delivering meaningful leadership, business and community impact. The program is strengthening cultural capability, improving decision quality, reducing enterprise risk and embedding more consistent, accountable and community-centered practices across the organisation.

RioInspire now operates as an enterprise platform developing Indigenous leaders, influencing systems and processes and elevating Indigenous voices in decision-making. In doing so, it is contributing to strengthened trust, sustainability performance and long-term value creation.

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About Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM)

AGSM is a leading graduate school of management within the UNSW Sydney, Australia, recognised globally for executive education, MBA programs and leadership development.

Rio Tinto

About Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto is a global mining and metals company that extracts and processes iron ore, aluminum, copper and other critical minerals essential to infrastructure, energy transition and industrial development.