

Rio Tinto, BHP and Fortescue Collaborate on New Learning Programs to Create Safer Workplaces

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Rio Tinto, BHP and Fortescue Metals Group (Fortescue) have agreed to partner and fund innovative, industry-first learning programs as part of a continued commitment towards mining sector workplaces that are free from sexual harassment, bullying and racism.

Through this partnership, Rio Tinto, BHP and Fortescue will fund and contribute to the design, build and implementation of new social awareness education packages for deployment through a range of education providers such as TAFE, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), universities and high schools.

By starting conversations on these vital topics through education providers, the industry can make an important contribution to raise awareness of social wellbeing and related behaviours (collectively referred to as "psychosocial harm") for the benefit of all Western Australians.

The collaboration partners will invite leading experts in social wellbeing to form part of a working group bringing together government, community, industry and educators across TAFE, RTOs, universities and high schools in Western Australia to design and implement the program.

A pilot program for TAFE students will be developed through South Metropolitan TAFE. The pilot, to be developed in 2022, will form part of core learning requirements for students who may be planning to join Rio Tinto, BHP or Fortescue. South Metropolitan TAFE will go on to share this education package through the broader WA TAFE network.

The partnership will also explore the potential to work with universities and high schools to encompass broader education pathways across the State, as well as for delivery in workplaces. In time, these packages will be made available for application across broader industries and across other parts of Australia.

The education program is one of a number of initiatives introduced by mining companies to address sexual harassment, bullying and racism in WA's mining sector.

All three companies joined with the Chamber of Minerals and Energy earlier this year to pledge support for the parliamentary inquiry into sexual harassment against women in the FIFO mining industry and committed to work together to eradicate these behaviours from the sector.

Comments attributed to Rio Tinto Chief Executive, Iron Ore, Simon Trott:

"Our number one priority is the safety, health and wellbeing of our people and our communities.

"We recognise that we have some way to go to achieve workplaces free from sexual harassment, bullying and racism across our industry and we are committed to making the changes needed to create a safer work environment where respectful behaviour is experienced by everyone.

"Education is one part of a range of measures Rio Tinto is introducing to create safer workplaces, including building leadership capability, improving our camp facilities, new rules on the consumption of alcohol, as well as improving the way we prevent, respond to, report and investigate incidents in order to build a respectful, safe and inclusive culture.

"We expect this partnership with BHP and FMG will help build a safer workplace and help empower our future workforce to create the culture we need."

Comments attributed to BHP WA Iron Ore asset president Brandon Craig:

"Sexual assault and sexual harassment have no place at BHP or anywhere in our industry.

"We are committed to providing a safe and inclusive workplace at all times, where disrespectful behaviours are eliminated.

"Education and training are critical to ensuring common understanding of the behaviours that are appropriate and acceptable at BHP.

"This industry collaboration will complement our existing internal training programs, leadership training, communication campaigns, and upgrades to camp security, and support services available to anyone who experiences disrespectful behaviour."

Comments attributed to Fortescue Metals Group Chief Executive Officer, Ms Elizabeth Gaines:

"The safety and wellbeing of the Fortescue family is our highest priority and we are strongly committed to providing a safe, diverse and inclusive work environment for all our team members.

"There is no place for harassment and bullying of any kind in the mining sector or in any workplace, and we will continue to work with industry partners to take decisive action to ensure our workplaces are safe for everyone.

"In line with our value of empowerment, this partnership with Rio Tinto and BHP will provide young West Australians looking at a career in the mining sector with the skills to identify and speak up against inappropriate behaviour and enhance the safety, culture and experience of working in WA's mining sector."

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