



MEDIA RELEASE

NORTHPARKES CELEBRATES THE COMPLETION OF THE E22 OPEN CUT CAMPAIGN

Parkes, 13 October 2010

Craig Stegman Managing Director Northparkes said today “We are proud to announce the completion of a very successful E22 Open Cut campaign.”

During the three and a half year campaign the project has continuously employed 100 people, many new to the industry, and tackled many operational challenges including pit wall instability and higher than average rainfall in 2010. The high grade ore from the E22 Open Pit was used to maintain mill production during construction of the E48 Mine. Craig Stegman said “Without this project Northparkes would have had to reduce its copper production”

The E22 Open Pit project has achieved a number of significant milestones including a very impressive safety record with only one recordable injury over the three and a half years sustained when an operator sprained her ankle when alighting from a truck. A total of 25 million tonnes of rock has been extracted from the open pit including 12 million tonnes of ore. 9 million tonnes of ore has been stockpiled for future processing.

Craig Stegman said “This excellent safety performance is a testament to all the employees and management who worked tirelessly in looking out for one another on the job.

Rob Cunningham Surface Mining Manager said “One of the highlights of the project has been that the E22 project was a training ground for people new to mining, the vast majority from our local community.” A total of 285 people have been trained on the project including 185 new miners who came to the project with no previous exposure to the mining industry.

A large number of our employees completed a Certificate 2 or 3 at TAFE in Surface Extraction, which is a nationally recognized qualification for operators. Northparkes is proud to have played our role in addressing the industry skills shortage.

Northparkes acknowledges the hard work of the team in bringing this project to a successful end and thanks all employees, contractors, consultants and other individuals involved with the project for their contributions.

Northparkes encourages everyone to come and explore our business, including the open cut mine, at the 2010 Open Day on Saturday 6 November. Visitors will also be able to go on a Mine Tour which will include a visit to the E22 Pit.

Ends

For more information

Northparkes Mine contacts

Jane Simmons

Telephone +61 (0)2 6861 3117

Mobile +61 (0)457 430 897

Email Jane.Simmons@riotinto.com

Questions and Answers

Will any more work be done at E48?

The job isn't over yet. Over the next few weeks demobilisation of equipment will occur. After this a crew will remain on site up until Christmas working on a make safe program and rehabilitating the work area. In 2011 the new Estcourt Tailings Storage Facility will commence construction and it is likely that the remaining crew will work on that project.

What will happen to the excavation?

Northparkes recently announced the \$90 million Pre-Feasibility Study for the Step Change Project. There are additional reserves underneath the E22 Pit and Step Change will assess whether it is economically viable to extract these reserves through either block cave or further open cut mining. An announcement will be made as part of the Step Change Project as to the future of the E28 pit.

What will happen to the workforce?

The closure of this project is part of our "life of mine" planning and is occurring as scheduled. Over the last few months the size of the workforce has been gradually reduced. A total of 80 contractors will leave the Northparkes business. Northparkes has worked very hard to transition these people into alternative employment. 72 contractors have secured new roles with other projects including Weipa, Telfer, Cadia and Cowal. All Northparkes employees have either been absorbed into other areas of the business or are moving on to other Rio Tinto mine sites.