

RIO TINTO

News release...

Date: 21 January 2004
Ref: PR344g

Rio Tinto's 75.7 per cent owned subsidiary, Coal & Allied Industries Limited, issued the following news release in Australia. All dollars are Australian currency.

Coal & Allied production report for the quarter ended 30 December 2003

	4Q	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	12	12
	2002	2003	2003	2003	2003	months	months
	2002						
	2003						
'000 tonnes (100% basis) (a)							
Hunter Valley Operations							
Thermal coal production	2,266	2,363	2,136	2,028	2,620	9,183	9,146
Coking coal production	845	800	805	875	381	3,442	2,862
Mount Thorley Operations							
Thermal coal production	637	510	361	416	433	2,465	1,720
Coking coal production	365	356	330	369	377	1,827	1,432
Bengalla Mine							
Thermal coal production	1,517	1,298	1,776	1,122	2,008	5,385	6,203
Moura Mine (b)							
Thermal coal production	-	-	-	-	-	1,018	-
Coking coal production	-	-	-	-	-	1,381	-
Narama Mine (b)							
Thermal coal production	-	-	-	-	-	370	-
Ravensworth East Mine (b)							
Thermal coal production	-	-	-	-	-	387	-
Warkworth Mine							
Thermal coal production	1,871	1,634	1,152	1,212	1,371	6,314	5,369
Coking coal production	42	112	168	127	93	568	500
Total coal production	7,544	7,074	6,728	6,147	7,284	32,340	27,232
Total sales ('000 tonnes) (c)	7,486	7,174	6,633	6,802	7,278	31,549	27,887

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Production in the fourth quarter of 2003 was 18% higher than in the third quarter of 2003 due primarily to higher production from Bengalla, where quarterly production increased as mining progressed through higher productivity areas of the mining sequence. Total coal production and sales for the fourth quarter of 2003 and for the full year 2003 were down from comparable prior periods due to the operational changes implemented in the third quarter of 2003 to reduce saleable production capacity to align with market demand. Port and rail congestion remain an issue.

Notes

- (a) Rio Tinto increased its stake in Coal & Allied from 72.7% to 75.7% in September 2002.
- (b) The sale of Coal & Allied's share of Narama and Ravensworth was completed on 14 March 2002. Coal & Allied sold its interest in the Moura coal mine with effect from 24 May 2002.
- (c) Sales relate only to coal mined by the operations and exclude traded coal.

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