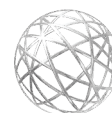




**MARCH 8 #InspireInclusion**

**HAPPY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**



INTERNATIONAL  
**ALUMINIUM**

Aluminium, shaping a better tomorrow

# 'The industry fosters a wonderful culture of learning'

Shona Markham, Rio Tinto's Weipa Operations



**Shona Markham, General Manager of Rio Tinto's Weipa Operations, explores the evolving landscape of the industry, while celebrating positive strides in diversity and showing her commitment towards further progress.**

## How did you come to work for the aluminium industry?

I had my heart set on being a part of the industry long before I joined 20 years ago, even before I got into university and started my engineering degree.

I got my start in the aluminium industry as a graduate engineer for Rio Tinto at Bell Bay Smelter in Tasmania. I've always loved the idea of combining the practicality of science with a career focused on people. The industry fosters a wonderful culture of learning - every day we're improving, building stronger communities, and increasing prosperity as we supply the world with the materials it needs.

## What about the aluminium industry most excites you?

I love being part of an industry that supplies a critical material, one which is contributing to everyday lives around the world, through employment and economic development. In addition, the rapid growth towards renewable and clean energy for the future is exciting.

## We know that the aluminium industry is considered to be a male-dominated sector. What do you think is the most pressing issue facing women today in the sector?

The most pressing issue is creating an environment where everyone can be valued for their contribution. Being able to show up as your authentic self, being accepted for that and being valued for the unique contribution you can make is the key to success. Currently though, we're seeing that, for many women, this isn't the case. Without true physical and psychological safety in their environment, we cannot attract and retain women.

The industry needs to do more to create an environment where everyone can be included and valued for their contributions, and I'm determined to play my part. I aspire to leave the industry having made a difference. Through my leadership, I have worked hard to ensure we can set up the conditions so that people feel valued and can flourish.

## How has the landscape changed since you first started working in this industry?

We have made strides in the industry compared to when I started. I know first-hand the challenges and barriers, particularly in the beginning, when I was sometimes the only woman on the floor, in the room or in leadership. There is still work to be done, but our industry is transforming, there is more diversity across the board, particularly in roles that even recently wouldn't have been available to women.

I'm seeing it every day when I come to work, whether that is women in apprenticeships, out on the floor, in technical roles and frontline leadership positions, through to senior leaders.

This has an incredible impact on our industry as a whole and I see it becoming an industry of choice in the future.

## What is your advice for young women aspiring to work in the aluminium sector?

My advice is to be authentic and never pretend to be someone you're not. Who you are brings value.

Secondly, adopt a "values first" mentality - this is a perception shift from being just results-driven to being focused on achieving value through values.

## Can you highlight some of your career successes?

I am proud of my contributions, alongside my team, to securing a future operating vision of the Bell Bay operation. I am also proud that I was a board member of the Tasmanian Mining, Minerals and Energy Council and a key driver for the creation of and the inaugural Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee.

My proudest achievements though are in the real culture change I have been a part of, which has resulted in safe and inclusive workplaces - leading to a tangible impact on the number of women and Indigenous people in our operations.

**I have worked hard to ensure we can set up the conditions so that people feel valued and can flourish.**