



pure kiwi mettle

**NEW ZEALAND'S ALUMINIUM SMELTER**

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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Rio Tinto extends counselling programme to Invercargill and Bluff communities**

NZAS' mental health and support services, previously offered exclusively to the smelter's employees, will be extended to assist the residents of Invercargill and Bluff as part of Rio Tinto's COVID-19 relief package.

From 1 June 2020, the private and confidential Rio Tinto Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), provided by counselling service, BSS, will be expanded to support people living or working in Invercargill and Bluff.

Counselling will be offered to those experiencing situations such as stress, depression, anxiety, relationship problems, addiction (alcohol and drug use), conflict management, anger management, sleep and fatigue problems, family and domestic violence, loss and grief, and unresolved trauma.

NZAS chief executive and general manager Stew Hamilton said, "The COVID-19 crisis has been a difficult time for people in our workforce and communities, and the impact this can have on mental health and wellbeing shouldn't be underestimated.

"We believe the counselling services offered to our employees can also really help support the people connected to our company in other ways, and we are pleased to now offer this assistance more broadly."

Invercargill Mayor Sir Tim Shadbolt said, "It is in times like now when we see the very best in people, business and industry. We are very fortunate to have the support of one of the region's largest employers, NZAS, extending key services like counselling, to the broader community. The Council is very aware that COVID-19 will have had a detrimental effect on some people's state of mental health. The services on offer will ensure everyone has an opportunity to get the care they need."

The BSS counselling service, which is private and confidential, is available to Invercargill and Bluff residents for the next six months and can be accessed by contacting BSS direct on 0800 820 035.

**Ends**

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