

Letters

FOR THE RECORD

Several letters on these pages in recent days have called for valuable Aboriginal heritage material detected at the Hope Downs mine site in the Pilbara to be protected.

Focus has centred on artefacts found in a rock shelter at Hope Downs South, discovered last year during a standard heritage survey conducted by traditional owners and Rio Tinto Iron Ore heritage officers. This was in conjunction with independent archaeologists hired by RTIO on behalf of traditional owners.

This was undoubtedly an exciting discovery and demonstrates the value of all the heritage work we carry out before any operations. We seek to apply the highest standards to the management of indigenous

cultural heritage, wherever we operate. More studies on this discovery will follow, funded by us, as we learn all we can from the shelter.

It is important to remember that the rock shelter lies outside the proposed boundary for the mine pit and that we had already indicated to the elders and the media that we have absolutely no intention of mining it.

We have redesigned the mine boundary further to ensure a substantial protection zone.

To make it clear: it will not be mined.

**Sam Walsh, chief
executive, Rio Tinto
Iron Ore, Perth.**