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## Press release

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### **Tennis star celebrates with Argyle pink diamonds**

**PERTH, Friday June 6, 2008**

Tennis phenomenon and pop culture icon, Maria Sharapova, recently celebrated her twenty first birthday in style with a one off "jewellery camera" featuring an Argyle pink diamond studded "M" charm on the wrist band of the camera.

Accessorising watches, phones and cameras with diamonds is presenting a whole new range of product development options for jewellery designers. Larry West, designer of the Argyle pink diamond "M" charm for Sharapova comments "Diamond consumers are increasingly looking for the finest in everything and when it comes to bejewelling accessories, pink diamonds from the Argyle mine are the ultimate".

Sharapova, ranked among the top ten female tennis players in the world, was one of the youngest champions ever at Wimbledon. She has built a global fan base, captivating all with her style, intelligence, wit and poise beyond her years. A truly global personality who enjoys the latest trends in fashion, Sharapova comments on her pink diamond gift,

"I love the Argyle Pink Diamond signature "M" created for my new Canon camera. This special accessory, made up of rare pink diamonds from the Argyle Diamond Mine in Australia is the perfect gift - it is fun, individual and fashionable".

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**Notes to Editors:**

**About Rio Tinto's Argyle Diamond Mine**

Rio Tinto's Argyle Diamond mine (100% owned by Rio Tinto), in Australia, is the world's only consistent supplier of rare pink diamonds and provides a large proportion of the world's champagne and cognac diamonds. Production commenced in 1983 and includes small, coloured diamonds - on average produces 30 million carats per annum.

The discovery of the Argyle diamond deposit is one of innovation, patience, foresight and meticulous attention to detail in an area that is remote, even for Australians.

The search for diamonds in the Kimberley region began in 1972 with a number of exciting finds proving uneconomic. However, in October 1979 diamonds were found embedded in an ant hill in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia.

In a classic exploration exercise these discoveries were followed up along a creek bed and led to what is known as the AK1 pipe, the remnant of an ancient volcano and the site of the vast Argyle deposit. Today most of the valley floor is occupied by the Argyle open pit.

Pink diamonds' value is directly related to their rarity. For every coloured diamond, there exists at least 10,000 colourless ones because the physical conditions needed to colour a diamond naturally occur very scarcely.

It has long been a mystery and the subject of ongoing debate of how the pink diamonds are formed. It is now generally accepted that the pink colour is derived

from a distortion in the molecular structure of the diamond, following formation in the earth's mantle or during their ascent to the earth's surface. This process is referred to as plastic deformation and the degree of the distortion in the structure impacts on the way it reflects light and the resulting colour.

Rio Tinto's Argyle mine occupies the traditional land of the Gidja and Mirriuwong speaking people and neighbouring language groups who have a very different view on how the Argyle diamonds became coloured. The Aboriginal people believe that the Argyle mine was created when three women were trying to trap a barramundi fish, however the barramundi was too clever and jumped through the net and landed at the site where the mine was established. It's believed that the colours of the diamonds come from different parts of the barramundi as the fish wiggled through the net, with the pink diamonds coming from the heart of the barramundi.