

Alan Jones' transcript – SMC 3 December 2015

Gina and distinguished guests, may I please just apologise in advance but yes I am hosting a dinner at my place but a couple of days ago I was (I don't think Gina knew anything about this) invited to make a presentation tonight and say a few words. And I felt it was such an important occasion that it didn't matter what else was on, this was more important than anything.

Gina – you are going to be embarrassed but I don't apologise for that because it's time that one or two things were said. We're not gilding the lily when we say that we are in the presence tonight of an extraordinary Australian and an extraordinary world figure. One of the reasons I was happy to be able to be able to speak is to perhaps make one or two observations about some of the extraordinary media presentations that have occurred in relation to one of the all-time achieving Australians. I think I can speak from the perspective of having been involved in a lot of aspects of national life, in particular I guess, in the sporting world and yet when I ratchet up the kind of sacrifices, risks that had to be taken to get you where you are today there is no comparison. The thing is that there are two....one of the things I wanted to say tonight, there are almost two aspects here that we are honouring and there are two parts of this story that need to be told. The first is that we are talking about a lady who, from the time she was a child, had dirt on her hands. This was no royal road, this was not a world inhabited by Gina Rinehart which she always inhabited. She's a girl from the outback, she knows this scene inside out and much of the comment about this lady has been inspired by rank jealousy and it is regrettable that in a country such as ours we on the one hand say we're happy to extol the virtues of achievement, success and ambition and enterprise and on the other hand we seek to penalise them whenever they appear and Gina Rinehart has copped this endlessly, you handle it with enormous dignity and it's to your great credit but I know how tough it must have been. I was fascinated about the childhood now I can't but the little farm I came from in Western Queensland was certainly nothing in size compared to what your Dad had but when you talk about your job doing the windmill rounds and you had to check the windmills and if the windmills didn't blow or something was wrong then the stock weren't fed, and they died. And that's exactly with us and I love the story you had the nuts and bolts and if your Dad was up on the windmill wanted to fix something you had to have the right nut and the right bolt or you got in all sorts of trouble and you went home and it was red dust and red dust was dirty and Gina's mother said well your job is to sweep the floor twice a day and there was no water outside and no gardens, no nothing and I mean none of this is understood. Very few Australians can identify with this – an extraordinary childhood and yet you learnt so much. Your parents went to Adelaide I remember you saying – and they used to tell the taxi drivers not to take the scenic route it would cost another \$0.20. You know we had to be frugal because as you said here tonight to us, it doesn't drop out of the sky. Money doesn't grow on trees and you admired the resilience of your Dad, the creativity of your father but also the intellect, the capacity and application of you Mum. I love the way even tonight you don't stand up here and take the credit and pretend that it all just happened and you dreamt of all of this when you were going across the bridge and the legacy of your Dad will be with you forever. It's beautiful the way you pay tribute to that and so that's one aspect of Gina that I wanted to highlight here tonight. I mean it was a hot world. They talk about climate change, God, talk to Gina Rinehart about what the temperatures were in the north of Australia. I mean they have absolutely no idea. So I mean that is the first aspect of that but then of course tonight we're talking and you're being honoured and remembered for your baby and it is your baby Roy Hill and the pride and joy but again there is this perception that where we are today is where we always were and it really is unfortunate that people can't come to grips with the fact that this is an extraordinary story of achievement. Statistically it is a story of almost impossibility and you made reference to it very gently tonight but you said something about fortunately BHP got it wrong and drilled in the wrong

place but at the same time here was a lady that actually knew the world, living the legacy of her Dad, but everyone around is going don't go there Gina. Don't go there. What kind of intuition and guts and application. I tell you what, you leave us for dead. You leave us for dead to sort of prevail in the face of that advice from experts. I mean after all BHP casted it off, they didn't want it. And here is the daughter of the north. She says well hang on, we're happy to take over this tenement and fortunately I think to put it in lingo we understand, they drilled in the wrong place but if they had not and if it was a universal weakness that they had identified then we wouldn't be here tonight. I just thought that I'd share one or two of these statistics. Because I look at this in the perspective of someone that just reads everything and you sometimes can't digest some of the statistical realities of what Gina and her team, again this wonderful sharing and modesty that you always present and get no credit for. I don't know how many times tonight you thanked the fifty thousand people who had been part of this project. There is no I about any of this. Fifty thousand people, it's a wonderful thing, an enormous team in the far north that most people know nothing about and Gina ended her speech tonight by saying with extraordinary resources that we have to take seriously but project work began on this not so long ago in mid-2011 and the dredging. I was looking at a figure here, the dredging of the harbour, the figures 7.5 million cubic metres of material to a depth of 6 metres. Now we saw those beautiful pictures. 7.5 million cubic metres to a depth of 6 metres and so two shipping berths and we saw those rather graphic pictures and then the airport which Gina didn't say anything about. The airport at the mine site, the roads were done. I mean when you think of these iron ore trains, see what I love about you and I have made statements about you over and over again. Here you're on uncontested land, you're not looking to the taxpayer to do anything, you've actually built the road. You built the trains, you built the port and these are infrastructure developments of enormous proportions. 344km, 344km heavy haul. It's got to be able to handle standard gauge railway line from there we are to there we are, to Port Hedland. I mean Australians can't get their head around it and it's because of their incapacity to get their head around it that they can't properly appreciate it. Therefore they must imagine that it is going to fail. And you get the impression sometimes that they wanted it to fail. And it's very hard for any person but you have inhabited a very lonely world taking these risks and often at night time there is no one there to reassure you. The only reassurance you have got is the confidence of your own judgment and it's a hell of a thing to have to rely upon and yet it has prevailed and that's why we are here tonight to honour you that judgment has prevailed and at the end of the day if you haven't got that, you've got nothing. \$10B the talk has been tonight. It's an enormous amount of money isn't it and yet this is a woman basically exploring her home. She's the lady, the daughter of the Pilbara and always has been and proudly has articulated its virtues and has been prepared to embrace its risks. Yes there were mistakes, yes there were problems along the way. I mean the one thing that gets in my craw when I read that the notion is, yes her father was very successful and when she took over the chairmanship it was worth billions of dollars and there were trusts out there where money was stacked and there was billions of dollars everywhere. All of that is a complete myth. You touched on this lightly tonight but I read this and I say it in my lingo in relation to when you took over the chairmanship. The few remaining company assets were mortgaged to the hilt or under legal claim or under threat of legal claim, liabilities and contingent liabilities with cheques being written and left in drawers until the quarterly and then small royalty cheque arrived to cover them. Even dividends payable under the company constitution hadn't been able to be paid prior to Mrs Rinehart's chair. I read unlike many in the media chose to portray money just didn't spring out of the ground without years of work and effort and risk investment once a tenement is granted. That was the beginning, that was the beginning, there was no silver spoon in the mouth. It was dirty and soiled and potentially poisonous. 1992 here is a young woman, the youngest person when she takes on the chairmanship, the youngest person in the company. The youngest person in the company and yet

here we are tonight. She's taken that responsibility to take it from where it is which was nothing, absolutely nothing, a hole in the ground to where we are today. As I said, everyone saying to her don't do it. 1992, not yesterday as the media would have you believe 1992. This woman has been at the helm for a long time fighting this battle to bring her to where we are today. One of the, I don't understand all this technology stuff, kept on running around there while Gina was speaking and I know Helen and I were sort of not listening because of our attention. I said Helen, those are the approvals I think they are now four thousand [background speaker] approvals. Four thousand and you make speeches around this country and no one takes any notice saying look for god sake if we are going to go on, can government get out of our way. And this is one of the great crises we face. And you constantly highlight that and you're proof of the fact that you can prevail. But nonetheless government gets bigger and bigger and more and more bloated and more and more useless. And when I coached the Wallabies. When I was first appointed to coach Australia. I'm sorry to impose my own thing here but I suppose it is relevant to what Gina is about. You know we have the coat of arms and that's the emu and the kangaroo and here are these young blokes and we'd lost everything, couldn't beat a mid-week team in France...and I thought god where am I going here. I said you know the first thing we should do is we should rip that thing off our pockets and we should put on our pockets a replica of the Melbourne Cup because that's a true symbol of national life because in the Melbourne Cup you take the best horse in the country, sorry we're the only country in the world whose premier horse race is a handicap race. That's a metaphor for Australia. Premier horse race is a handicap race. You take the best horse in the country, you put so much weight on its back that it can't win and then you cheer like hell when some no-hoper gets up and beats it. That's the way we operate in this country. We take those people who work hardest, save most, invest most and we tax them to the eyeballs to pay for people who don't work, can't save and won't invest. And you, you have prevailed over that, by god, do they still give knighthoods out in this country? We'll give you one. But when you say it, it trips off the tongue, both of you but it trips too easily off the tongue. Negotiating, I saw that beautiful picture beside the Fortescue River. They were the bankers. 19 of the world's largest banks, including the 11 largest banks in the world, astonishing. Even to get a deal over the line, you hate dancing but you were happy to dance with the bloke who had the money and you obviously didn't stand on his toes. A wonderful job. I mean and so many people said she won't ever pull it off. I was reading some media stuff today in a bit of a hurry before I came here. And yet there she's got 4 large pits, mine pits. Their production is way ahead of schedule and Gina made that point. Way ahead of schedule. This massive railway line, 344km. How many carriages on those iron ore trains? 232 carriages per iron ore train. It's astonishing and we don't have train drivers. Currently two but hopefully eventually that will be co-ordinated. Look this is an amazing achievement Gina. I said when I started out that I am delighted that I had the opportunity to make some observations here tonight because you are a remarkable Australian and you have done this in the face of insurmountable odds. I do want you to understand one thing, the reason we are here tonight is we love you, we honour you and we salute you. We actually see you as a person we would love to have been but we wouldn't have the guts, the capacity, the intuition and the strike power to be able to get where you are. Don't ever imagine that the critics prevail. I used to say to people they'd never build a monument to a critic ever, ever and they are not likely to. The contribution you have made to our life and your Dad has made, your father, to provide through the income you have generated and the taxes you have paid through an Australian outfit, the contribution you have made to the lives of many is indelible. The nation is in your debt. We don't need recognition from those who are the knockers and those that undermine you. We don't need that. You have your own satisfaction knowing you have put everything on the line and you have come out at the other end and we aren't finished yet. We have only just begun. I love the way you say there is one ship being

loaded as we speak and another lovely smile on her face and another one coming in tomorrow. Long may they keep coming.

So on behalf of the people who are here Gina, and the millions who aren't here. The embarrassing thing I am going to say to you is I regard and I speak publically in a lot of places. I think there are two great living Australians. My two greatest living Australians are Richard Bonyngé who in the world of the arts has taken us to a pre-eminent position, the husband of Joan Sutherland, the like of which will never be properly appreciated. Then other great living Australian is with us tonight. It's this woman we are honouring, Gina Rinehart and I am delighted to be able to, on the behalf of the people who are here and the millions who aren't here to endorse the feelings of many when they say we are deeply in your debt. We congratulate you on what you have done and we wish you well. It's appropriate that this is happening at Christmas time because you deserve after what you have done, a wonderful Christmas and a splendid 2016.