



Paraburdoo Sculpture Design to Reflect the Resilience of the Pilbara

The concept and design for the large-scale sculpture being built for the town of Paraburdoo has been finalised.

After months of collaborative work involving artist Alex Mickle, Rio Tinto mine workers and mine management, a design has been developed that references the mining industry, the local landscape and the resilience of Pilbara communities.

Based on a unique and universally significant geometrical shape called the torus – in essence, a spherical shape – the work references a multitude of physical phenomena, including the form of pressure waves produced by an explosion.

In this way, the torus shape symbolises the blasting processes used in mining and in the formation of the sculpture itself, which used blast forming to create the sculpture's steel plate cladding.

Artist Alex Mickle, who has worked with Rio Tinto employees since mid-2013 to develop the work, says that the sculpture also aims to highlight the unique and beautiful landscape of the Pilbara.

“Public art, if done well, always embodies the local environment and responds to the values and identity of a particular community,” said Mr Mickle. “This sculpture is no different in that it carries layers of significance in terms of what it symbolises and how it was made – not least of which is the land itself.

“I think that one of the most striking elements of the work will be its upper arch of polished hematite stone. Hematite is part of the banded iron formation present in the immediate vicinity of Paraburdoo. It is the main element in iron ore and has had significance to Aboriginal culture for thousands of years, being used as pigment in red ochre paint.”

The lower arch will be built from the steel plates produced during a series of controlled blasts onsite at Rio Tinto. The cladding will be reinforced structurally with a series of large steel ribs – part of the work to take place at the Men's Shed during September and October.

Loader tyre steel chains, covering the upper arch of the sculpture, will reference mining equipment – its function as ‘protective armour’ of relevance in a community-based project that aims to promote individual and community resilience.

Scott Wilkinson, General Manager Rio Tinto Paraburdoo Region, said that the sculpture has been a significant undertaking, with design, materials and the final location for its installation based on extensive consultation with the local Shire, Traditional Owners, Main Roads and other stakeholders.

“Our aim has been to build a public sculpture that leaves a legacy, not only to the iron ore industry of Western Australia, but also to the people of the Pilbara,” said Mr Wilkinson.

“We hope that, over time, the sculpture builds a sense of community pride for those who live and work in the Pilbara, and a point of interest for the many people who travel through this geologically interesting and uniquely beautiful landscape.”

Community members with a range of skills are needed to help finish the work at the Paraburdoo Men's Shed. Skills include welding, boiler making, automotive bodywork, aluminium fabrication, stone mastery and general mechanical skills are encouraged to participate.

To get involved, visit the Paraburdoo Men's Shed from 4 September 2014. You can also email jacqueline@dadaa.org.au or visit the FIVE website for details (www.five.org.au).



RioTinto

Additional Information on FIVE

FIVE is a two-year partnership between leading community arts and cultural developing organisation DADAA and Rio Tinto. Arts activities have already been completed in Busselton and Geraldton, with Derby commencing in mid-September and the Paraburdoo sculptural project ongoing for the remainder of 2014.

The initiative supports the Mental Health Commission's Mental Health 2020 strategy, one component of which is to build peer-to-peer connection as a means of facilitating dialogue around mental health.

FIVE addresses findings from recent research noting lack of communication and social isolation as contributing factors to poor mental health – particularly amongst the State's regional communities.

A significant evaluation of FIVE will be conducted throughout the two-year pilot period. DADAA will work in partnership with researchers from Murdoch University to develop a framework for evaluation and then measure the impacts of the community arts and cultural development models used on participants, organisations and communities.

FIVE recently received national recognition when it won a silver Achievement Award at the Mental Health Services Awards ceremony for 'Mental Health Promotion or Mental Illness Prevention'.

About DADAA

DADAA is a not-for-profit community arts and cultural development (CACD) organisation, focusing on creating significant positive social change and opportunities for people with a disability or a mental illness. Based in Fremantle, DADAA offers targeted arts and cultural programs that include a broad range of traditional and new media projects in almost 50 Western Australian communities.

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Image Caption (attached) and Description of Work:

Title: Resilience

Design: Alex Mickle in collaboration with the miners of Paraburdoo

Digital Rendering: Michael Kimble

Materials: Blast formed steel, hematite, aluminium and loader tyre chains

Dimensions: 4200mm OD x 900mm