



RioTinto

MEDIA RELEASE

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Small Town of Paraburdoo Comes Up Big in *Resilience*

Miners and community members from the small Pilbara town of Paraburdoo are nearing the end of an 18-month journey to create a large public artwork that pushes the boundaries of contemporary sculpture in Australia.

The 4.2-metre spherical work will be installed about three kilometres from the town of Paraburdoo, on the road leading to Tom Price, and will be a unique landmark in the rugged and beautiful landscape of the Pilbara.

Titled *RESILIENCE*, the sculpture will be unveiled on 18 December 2014 by Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Mental Health Andrea Mitchell MLA. A community celebration will also be held in the evening.

Arts and health organisation DADAA and Rio Tinto collaborated on the project to enable the experimental work that has engaged the remote mining community and will leave a legacy to the iron ore industry and the people of Paraburdoo.

The sculpture is part of the statewide FIVE project that aims to address the stigma of mental health by using art to bring communities together and facilitate dialogue around difficult issues.

Sculptor Alex Mickle began working with Rio Tinto management, engineers, and drill and blast crews in mid-2013 to determine a method for using mining techniques to create steel forms that could be used in the sculpture.

Previously a miner himself, Alex turned to blast forming, a largely unknown steel fabrication process where steel is pushed into particular forms by harnessing the pressure wave produced from an explosive charge.

Rio Tinto worked with Alex to conduct a series of controlled blasts, testing processes and ultimately generating forms that have been shaped into the lower arch of the work.

About 50 community members did the hard physical work required to shape and finish the sculpture at the Paraburdoo Men's Shed. In total, more than 140 people have helped to build the impressive steel and stone work.

"The possibilities that exist when you remove the normal restraints can really push the boundaries of what contemporary sculpture is capable of," said Mr Mickle.

"The fact that we have done this as a community project, in a tiny town in the middle of the West Australian outback, is amazing. That we did this, first, with a bunch of miners using explosives to create art and, second, with a group of community members working from dawn to midnight – while attempting to affect social change at the same time – is in itself a particularly unique challenge."



Rio Tinto

David Doyle, Executive Director of DADAA, worked closely with Rio Tinto to develop the idea that drove the project.

“Living away from family, hard work during long shifts and lack of opportunities to engage with community can lead to increased isolation for many people,” Mr Doyle said.

“The idea behind this project was to aim big in order to draw widespread attention to the people living and working here, building WA’s iron ore industry and facing tough challenges in this environment.”

Rio Tinto Paraburdoo General Manager Scott Wilkinson said the project had far-reaching benefits for Rio Tinto.

“Certainly the artistic concept of blasting and shaping rock and steel raised a few eyebrows within our safety-focused business,” Mr Wilkinson said. “But these very aspects are what lured people in.

“Alex has worked tirelessly with our community to deliver a visually striking legacy for the region that reflects the resilience of our residents and the grit of our workforce. FIVE has connected our community, been a source of real pride and initiated so many positive conversations about mental health.

“I commend the entire team on tackling a seemingly unachievable task and delivering something that is iconic to the industry, the region and our community.”

Additional Information on FIVE

FIVE is a partnership between leading community arts and cultural development organisation DADAA and Rio Tinto. To date, arts activities have taken place in Busselton, Geraldton, Derby, Esperance and Paraburdoo.

The initiative supports the Mental Health Commission’s Mental Health 2020 strategy and 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.

In August 2014, FIVE 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’.

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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