



Rio Tinto

MEDIA RELEASE

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Experimental trial blasts yield unique sculptural forms

Following the highly successful process of developing the FIVE digital portraits in Paraburdoo that took place throughout April, the FIVE project shifts its focus to the sculpture.

Over the past few months, work has been taking place on the development of the large-scale sculpture being built for the town.

Importantly, three trial blasts have taken place. The blasts are designed to create the forms that will be used in building the sculpture. Artist Alex Mickle is collaborating with Rio Tinto mining employees in Paraburdoo to use mining techniques to create a large public artwork for the town.

The trial blasts – which took place in March and May this year – experimented with ‘blast forming’, a science and a process using explosives to shape plate and create large shapes and forms. The process of trials has enabled Alex and Rio Tinto engineering and blast crews to refine the process to yield better results.

“It was during the round of explosions that we saw the vast differences produced when altering the type and quantity of explosive used,” said Mr Mickle.

“It was exactly the work scenario that I had originally envisaged for this project – an enthusiastic, enquiring and team building process. This project is very much process driven, and how we get there is equally as important as where the sculpture is going.

“There will probably always be random elements that will play in to what we are doing. This can be used to our advantage, as it can result in something unique.”

Scott Wilkinson, General Manager Rio Tinto Paraburdoo Region, said that the sculpture project has created an important opportunity for Rio Tinto to use its technical expertise to build something of significance for Paraburdoo.

“Alex has been the driving creative force on the project and his close collaboration with our engineers and blast crews means that we are generating something of unique and of lasting value for the town,” said Mr Wilkinson. “We hope that the sculpture builds a sense of community pride and identity for Paraburdoo.”

The next phase of the project will take place off-site and will involve engineering the larger sculpture using the blast forms created. Additional smaller structures that will provide detail for the larger work will also be created.

Much of this will take place in the Para Men’s Shed where the broader community is encouraged to participate. Community members with skills such as boiler making, welding and general mechanics are needed to make the sculpture.

To get involved, email jacqueline@dadaa.org.au or visit the FIVE website for details (www.five.org.au).

For those wishing to see the FIVE Paraburdoo digital portrait film, the film will be screened during intermission at the next Paraburdoo Drive-In event on 11 July.

Additional Information on FIVE

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.



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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.

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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