

GREEK ORIGINS OF GAMES RECOGNISED AT HOMEBUSH BAY

A tribute from Australia's Hellenic community is the latest feature to be added to the unique collection of public art transforming Sydney's Olympic venues.

The Australian Hellenic community has taken up an Australian Hellenic Education Progressive Association (AHEPA) initiative and chosen Sydney as the location for the second in a trilogy of major public art projects in Olympic cities to celebrate the Greek origins of the Games.

Hellenic Tribute Inc is funding the public art which will be located in Stockroute Park next to Olympic Park Station at Homebush Bay. AHEPA USA funded a comparable project in Atlanta and intends to complete the trilogy in Athens, the host of the 2004 Olympic Games.

Acclaimed Melbourne sculptor, Robert Owen, has been selected to design the art work which will sit amongst the gums trees of Stockroute Park, along with an olive grove and row of cypress trees that are intended to reflect the original Olympia.

Owen's work, *Discobolus*, is based on Castor (the original discus thrower) who metaphorically throws the discus from Greece to Homebush Bay. A seven metre high metal discus will be used to symbolise a contemporary discus – the CD ROM, which refers to modern technology, information and culture.

Chair of Hellenic Tribute Inc, Tasha Vanos, said Robert Owen's proposal helped capture the essence of Hellenic culture.

"The discus thrower (Discobolus) is a symbol of the Olympic Games and represents a synthesis of all the Hellenic virtues of a "sound mind and sound body," Mr Vanos said.

"It is this balance and perfection that Hellenic culture esteems greatly. The discus of Discobolus can be taken as a symbol of perfection."

Mr Vanos said that, to date, the Hellenic Tribute Inc had raised 90 percent of their target funds of \$435,000 for the project which is scheduled to be completed in June 2000.

Robert Owen is among artists from throughout Australia and around the world who are creating up to 12 large scale, permanent outdoor public art projects at Homebush Bay and venues in Western Sydney.

Director General of the Olympic Co-ordination Authority, Mr David Richmond, said the \$7.5 million public art program would create a lasting cultural legacy for Olympic venues. He said each piece of artwork provided a different interpretation of the site's colourful history and its transformation into a world-class recreational precinct.

"We have done more than just build a magnificent array of sporting venues," Mr Richmond said. "This innovative program of public artwork leaves an imprint of culture on the sporting infrastructure which interprets the surrounding landscape and environment and tells a story about how the Olympic venues have evolved."

Nine public art projects are in varying stages of completion at Homebush Bay, with five of these located along Olympic Boulevard. Completed are:

Lost and Found at Sydney SuperDome by Elizabeth Gower. This public art project is a terrazzo version of a design by Elizabeth Gower which adorns the SuperDome foyer. It features bold broken line drawings of sports people and sporting motifs.

"Relay" at Fig Grove by Australian artists Paul Carter and Ruark Lewis. A prose poem celebrating Australia's Olympic past and future and graffiti designs derived from Olympian autographs are engraved in granite seating at the water feature.

"Osmosis" at Haslams Pier by Australian sculptor Ari Purhonen which creates an optical effect that changes as visitors stroll along the pier.

"5,000 Calls" in the Urban Forest by Australian sound artists David Chesworth and Sonia Leber who recorded 5,000 different sounds of human activity including sporting cries and fragments of song. A customised computer program allows different sounds to interact with each other at different times, so that each visit to the Urban Forest provides a unique experience of "5,000 Calls".

Other projects underway at Homebush Bay include:

"Luminous Threshold" at the Holker Street busway by New York-based artist James Carpenter. A collection of masts will record the activities of the wind and sun, with each mast fitted with mist-emitting nozzles. A heliostat will direct golden light onto the mist creating ever changing abstract drawings in the sky. This is due for completion in June 2000.

"In the Shadow" at Southern Boulevard Terminus by Australian artist Janet Laurence which reflects the processes of remediation of the Homebush Bay site.

Boundary Creek will feature 21 transparent wands inscribed with the chemical formulae of water remediation. The area will be framed with a dense planting of casuarinas bulrushes. Due to be completed in April 2000.

Overflow Park sculptures by Melbourne-based artists Peter Cripps and Terri Bird, which will reflect the abattoir history of Homebush Bay. The 3 sculptures will be located on the western side of the Sydney Showground and will be completed post-Olympics.

"Feathers" and "Skies" at Stadium Australia by New Zealand artist Neil Dawson. This project features two sculptures, each 21 metres in diameter, at the eastern and western entries to Stadium Australia. Steelmesh rings will span the two central columns over the stadium entries and will include motifs of the birds and skies. The sculptures reflect the Western Sydney environment and the tradition of victory wreaths. These are due for completion by March 2000.

Forthcoming projects include public art for the Sydney International Shooting Centre and Millennium Parklands at Homebush Bay.