



Giant stone playground

CATEGORY

AUSTRALIAN STONE

- BEST CIVIC PROJECT -

ARCHITECT: Mike Hewson Studio, in association with Fiona Robbe Landscape

DESIGNER: Mike Hewson

BUILDER/DEVELOPER: Mike Hewson Studio

STONE SUPPLIER: Bundanoon Sandstone

STONE INSTALLER: Bundanoon Sandstone

Three large sandstone carved units weighing 16 tonnes, 17 tonnes and 30 tonnes were lifted into place to form the main structure of the certified children's playground. In addition, 42 "forklift rocks" weighing an average of 3.1 tonnes were placed in Wollongong's Crown Street Mall.

Project manager, Mike Hewson, said: "The artwork brings the Illawarra's unique geographical feature, the escarpment, into the mall both conceptually and

physically. The two elements selected to represent this transportation of nature were firstly sandstone, the geological formation and secondly, the cabbage tree palm, a distinctive tree native to the Illawarra.

"These elements were placed in the mall in a provisional manner as if it was temporary decoration in the mall. The forklift slots cut into the base of the beautiful weathered stone blocks is an almost irreverently practical modification. The four palms are also placed haphazardly throughout the mall, one strapped up a lamppost like a flag or an extension to the pole, two are laid on their sides to be used as seats and the fourth is slotted through a giant stone for kids to climb on.

"The playground became to the most prominent and important aspect of the project, something that thematically ties the rest of the artwork together. The three giant stone formations were carved in collaboration with Troy Stratti of Bundanoon Sandstone into specific forms that assembled together like an abstract modernist maquette."

