

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Barunga's mining past steams into future through CDP innovation**

Patrons attending the 32<sup>nd</sup> Barunga Festival will notice a colourful change to the community's iconic park dweller when they arrive to celebrate Indigenous culture over the Queen's Birthday long weekend in June.

As part of a community beautification push, Roper Gulf Regional Council Community Development Program (CDP) participants are undertaking a transformation of the dilapidated 1904 Avery steam tractor that has remained motionless in Heritage Park for more than four decades.

The machine is identifiable to anyone who has ever visited Barunga, but the Council is hoping its makeover will help to promote the link between the community and the region's rich mining past.

Community members operated the steam tractor at the nearby Maranboy tin mine until it closed in 1946, before it was dragged by a grader through the bush and across a creek for about 10 kilometres to its current location in 1974.

The refurbishment began on March 30 when the 14-tonne piece of Barunga's history was craned onto a purpose-built slab in Heritage Park in front of dozens of excited onlookers.

Council Municipal Services Officer and Barunga artist Owen Henry will play a crucial role in the final step of the transformation by leading the team that will repaint the steam tractor in a combination of traditional colours and stunning Indigenous artwork.

The 28-year-old said he was thrilled to be involved with a project that would preserve the role Barunga played in the mine's operation.

"It's been sitting there for so long, it's going to be nice that it's going to be turned into something good," he said.

"It's got trees growing through it at the moment, so to be able to display it for other people to see when they come in for the festival is going to be good, because people will see it a bit differently and learn what it means to the community."

Work on the steam tractor is scheduled to be completed before the Barunga Festival begins on June 9, and CDP Senior Employment Supervisor Sommer Meadows said there was an air of excitement around the community about the revitalisation.

“It’s of big significance to the community, because it’s basically taking back ownership of something that was theirs many years ago, because they had a milling station down at the Maranboy mine,” she explained.

“A couple of men relocated it along the back tracks from the old mill, and that’s where it’s always sat [in the park] since.

“This project is going to leave a permanent mark on Barunga and allow visitors to learn more about what community members did at the mine when it was running.”

The Council delivers CDP projects in 10 communities on behalf of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The Federal Government initiative assists jobseekers in remote communities to find employment as they contribute to their communities and gain new skills in the process.

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