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Media Release

How best to remember the smelter?

Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri is calling for ideas from the community for how to commemorate the aluminium smelting heritage around Kurri Kurri and Weston.

Aluminium smelting has been a part of the Kurri Kurri and Weston communities for almost fifty years since production began in 1969.

Operating under five different business names: Australuco; Alcan; Capral; VAW; and Hydro, the smelter employed many local people, with more than 500 employees during peak production.

In closing the smelter, Hydro recognises the now historical link between smelting and the local community, and wishes to commemorate that history.

Hydro is calling on ex-employees and their families, or other community members, to propose a way to remember the region's aluminium smelting history.

"We are open to ideas", said Hydro Managing Director, Richard Brown.

"Kurri Kurri is known for its murals, the BHP Newcastle site has been commemorated with sculptures, and other memorials around the region come in all shapes and sizes".

"We want the community to tell us what they think, so we can do something that resonates with former staff and their families" he said.

Hydro is seeking suggestions both on the overall way the history should be remembered, and also particular elements of the history that should be included, if it was to be a mural or a sculpture, or similar.

We are asking people to call 1800 066 243 or email community.kurri@hydro.com with their ideas. Feedback is requested by the end of August 2015 so ideas can be considered and planning can commence.

Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri is planning to redevelop areas of land on the smelter site and the two thousand hectare buffer zone, and is looking to masterplan the land.

Current proposals include the rezoning of around 175 hectares of land to residential zoning, of around 200 hectares as business and industrial zoning, the bio-certification of around 1300 hectares of land containing high value endangered ecological communities, and the demolition and remediation of the smelter site.

Richard Brown

Managing Director

Hydro Aluminium Kurri Kurri Pty Limited