

EMBARGOED 12 noon 25 March 2015

High profile patrons support installation to recognise Australian engineers

WEDNESDAY 11.30AM Mural Hall, Parliament House

The Hon Warren Truss, MP Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development has today announced two national leaders as Patrons for the **Engineers Australia Freefall Pin Oak Forest** Project:

- **Professor Brian Schmidt**, Laureate Fellow at the Australian National University and 2011 Nobel Prize Winner
- **Dr Chris Roberts**, CEO and President of Cochlear Limited

Engineers Australia is the proud sponsor of the Freefall Pin Oak Forest at the National Arboretum Canberra and in 2013 launched the *Freefall Experience* – a national design ideas competition for a showcase installation within the forest. Engineers Australia has now appointed two patrons to assist with the next phase of the project; design, development and construction of the Freefall installation.

The winning *Freefall* installation - designed by Queensland engineering firm, Bligh Tanner - draws its inspiration from the Cochlear Implant, an internationally recognised Australian engineering feat. The installation is an elegant sweeping shell shaped structure that includes interactive information nodes for visitors to learn more about Australian engineering innovations. It will be a significant contribution to the National Arboretum and promises to be a delightful experience that people will want to visit again and again – each time learning something new about Australian engineering.

Dr Chris Roberts, in accepting his role as Patron of the Engineers Australia Pin Oak Forest Freefall Installation project, said 'We are immensely proud that the winning design in the Freefall Experience Design Ideas competition was inspired by the Cochlear Implant. I am delighted to be able to support the fundraising and construction of this beautiful sculpture which will celebrate the continuing contribution of engineers to Australia.'

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Professor Brian Schmidt provided a video message at the Deputy Prime Minister's announcement. 'I am very excited to be part of this project celebrating the engineers of Australia. Engineers and scientists work hand in hand to take ideas that scientists come up with and making them a reality. Engineers are an important part of creating many things that make life in Australia so good. I'm looking forward, as Patron, in helping to ensure that the Freefall installation becomes a reality'. Professor Schmidt said.

Mr Rolfe Hartley, Chairman of the Freefall Pin Oak Forest Steering Committee acknowledged the importance of the Patrons.

'We are proud that Professor Schmidt and Dr Roberts have agreed to take on the role of Patrons of this project. They are both Australian leaders in the science and engineering fields and are role-models for the contribution that engineering innovation makes to society. We are looking forward to working closely with them to raise the funds to facilitate construction of the Freefall installation.'

'The Cochlear Implant was pioneering technology that revolutionised solutions for profound hearing loss and is still the world's industry leader. It is a true Australian engineering icon and a wonderful demonstration of the benefits engineering brings to our society. The Freefall installation will become a feature destination within the Engineers Australia Freefall Pin Oak Forest at the National Arboretum Canberra.

Engineers Australia will be seeking the funds to construct the Freefall installation from a range of contributors including corporate sponsorship, community donations and through the engineering sector. It is proposed that the installation will be completed by 2019 to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of Engineers Australia as a national organisation.

www.forest.engineersaustralia.org.au

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