

Art and history hang in balance

ART

Marie Sansom

IF YOU look down through the metal grate inside Robyn Backen's cylindrical artwork at Ballast Point Park you can see jellyfish in the harbour.

Lean over and you can peep at the Harbour Bridge through the concrete structure's rectangular holes or look up at a framed circle of cobalt sky.

The Camperdown artist's *Delicate Balance* was chosen from a number of public art designs for the 2.6ha park.

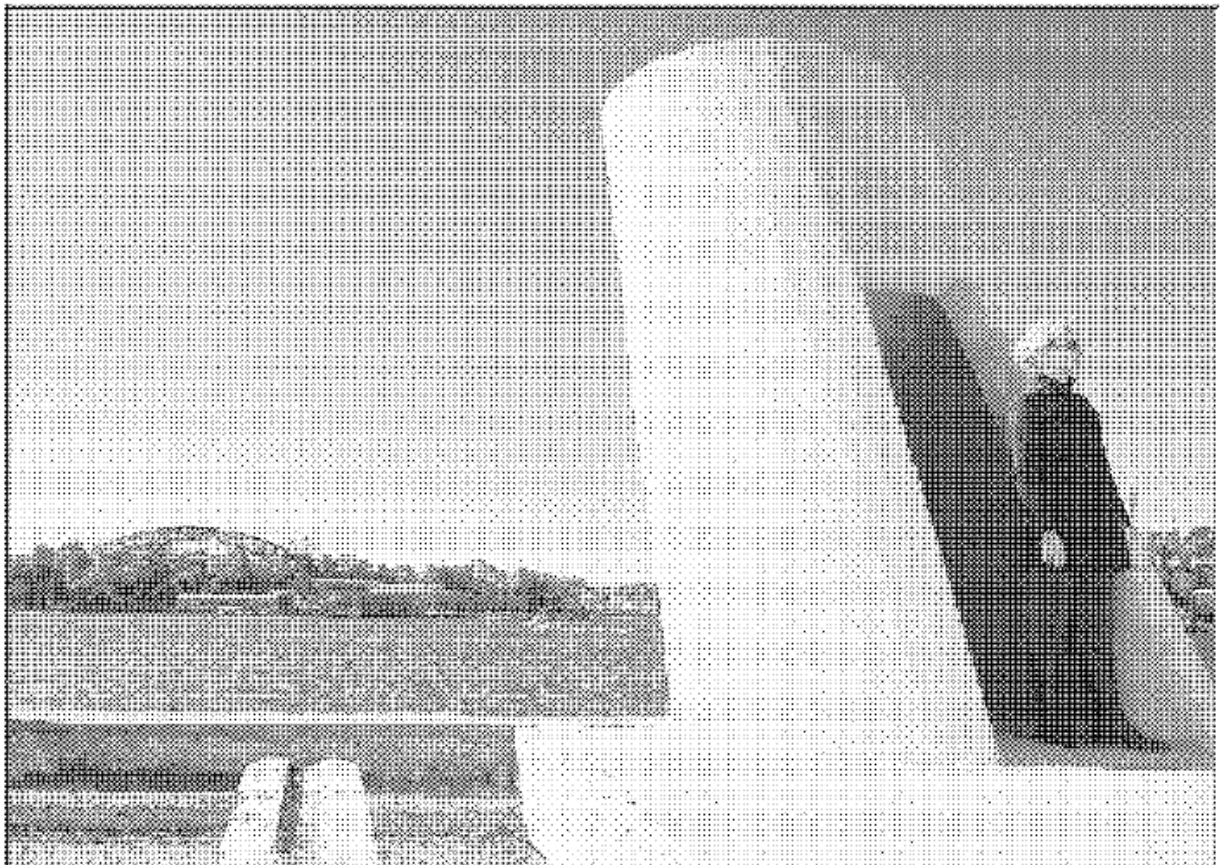
The work reflects the area's industrial past, symbolising the ballast of ships that transported oil off the site.

"I wanted to make a work that was a bit dangerous because (in) most public art you're always being controlled," Backen said. "I think children will really like to go into it because it's already dangerous. Our world is very protected."

She wanted people to almost feel vertigo when they saw it. "The form itself takes on a sense of lift-off," she said. "There's a sense of the work really falling off the edge."

Backen also wanted to create a listening chamber where you could hear the wind, the waves and "the echoing of your own being".

The land was bought by the NSW Government for \$10 million in 2002 and \$10 million has been spent on creating the park, due to be finished by July.



Robyn Backen with her artwork in Ballast Point Park.