



# ART*icle*

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# **Enviro Aelia:**

## **a public sculpture involving art and recycling**

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*'I have walked past Enviro Aelia and seen students interacting with it. When students spin the bottles the patterns blur and the sculpture makes a sound.'*

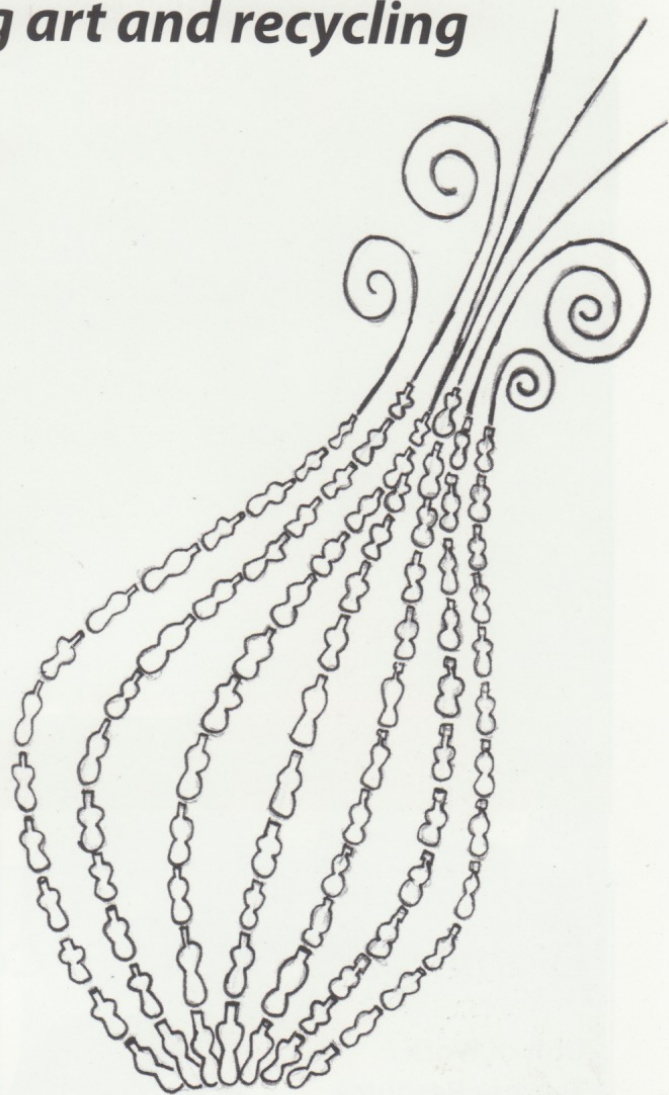
In Term 4 last year, a group of Year 7 students worked together in Activities Week to create a permanent sculpture out of recycled plastic drink bottles. The sculpture was installed and opened in March 2007 for the Billanook community to enjoy.

In an assembly early Term 4, I presented over 100 Year 7 students with a design for the potential sculpture and asked for volunteers to help with the project. Four volunteers met weekly during Term 4 to complete a number of lead up tasks such as: creating a large recycling box, preparing assembly speeches and daily notices to inspire middle school students to recycle and collecting, washing, counting and drilling holes in bottles. At times the volunteers enlisted their friends to help (especially with bottle washing – revolting!). The volunteers were Kieran, Bea, Jacob and Jack.

Before Activities Week I was given time release to weld the metal frame for the sculpture over a two day period. Fred and John, technicians in the Technology Department, were invaluable in this process.

During Activities Week thirty Year 7 students painted 250 bottles and the metal frame for the sculpture over a two day period.

The volunteers came up with potential colour schemes for the sculpture. Jacob's colour combination of brown, green and blue was chosen as the best



colour scheme. At bottle painting sessions students spent the morning painting bottles with a base colour. In the afternoon students created patterns using line and other colours. The colour scheme was outlined on a poster that students could refer to.

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Later in Activities Week I assisted three volunteers to finish constructing the sculpture over a long day. We used this time to come up with names for the sculpture. Bea came

up with the name *Enviro Aelia*. It was a busy week for the project!

What I found important to the design of the metal frame was that when the bottles perish over time they can be removed from the frame and newly painted



bottles or other objects can be re-strung. The frame is bolted to a permanent base and can be unbolted and shifted back to the Art Department when the sculpture needs to be recreated.

I was impressed with the small band of volunteers who were prepared to work hard to complete this project. At the opening I thanked middle school students for

recycling, and volunteers encouraged students to take more care recycling as a result of first-hand experience with sorting out rubbish. In the future I would like to reach out to a greater number of students in the combination of environmental issues with art.



Collecting bottles to create the sculpture



Painting the bottles



Assembling the frame



The finished sculpture