

# TIMEOUT

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## Welcome to the desert

SARAH McNEILL

■ Lily and Curtis rescued an abandoned phone booth. Photo: Paul McGovern



**Phone** booths in the middle of the vast Western Desert are testament to the melding of the traditional and the contemporary by indigenous Martu communities in the Pilbara.

As part of a far-reaching exhibition called *We Don't Need a Map*, Martu filmmaker Curtis Taylor from Parnngurr (Cotton Creek) and Melbourne visual artist Lily Hibberd created *The Phone Booth Project*.

Curtis explained that Martu people had given phone booths, an essential means of communication, the nickname *Waru*, meaning fire.

Traditionally, during law time, when people are on the move, lighting a community fire would let people know they were welcome.

Each of the five major Martu communities has two phone booths and Lily, who had never been into the desert before, and Curtis filmed how they were used.

Their video stories record how people could ignore a ringing phone, how messages are relayed, and how people sometimes sit next to a booth for hours waiting for a call.

Lily said: "The Martu people have a very clear idea of how they want to progress and phone booths are a way of understanding how they adapt and communicate."

Curtis, who grew up with paint brushes, turned to film-making "to show the outside world how we live". He said that a lot of young Martu people were returning to

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Bowls from Dinosaur Designs new collection 'Dream'

## Australian designed art and gifts

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