

Byron takes major urban design prizes

The elite of the architecture and development communities turned up at the new Fins at Salt restaurant last Thursday night, where Byron Bay excelled at the 2007 Mayne Investments Northern Rivers Urban Design Awards Dinner.

'Byron developments took the top awards in all of the categories amongst a very strong line-up of projects,' says Awards Chair Steve Connelly.

Tropo Architects' commercial and residential development on the corner of Bay and Fletcher Streets received both the overall Grand Winner prize and the Award For Excellence in the Public Domain category. The Byron at Byron Resort, Spa and Conference Centre received the Award for Excellence in two categories,

Sustainability and Private Domain.

Eight projects were awarded altogether, including the A&I Hall in Bangalow, which received a Merit Award in the Sustainability category and 'Defining Bruns' by University of Melbourne students, which took a Merit Award in the Planning, Analysis and Research Category.

The Urban Design Awards Jury Chair, Phillip Follent (City Architect for the Gold Coast City Council) praised the local industry, saying 'The Jury noticed during its travels that there was a tangible community spirit evident in many of the projects and a desire by councils to firstly, capitalise on the best assets of the area and secondly, to make more of ordinary and sometimes

neglected spaces to do something special for their citizens. Overall the entries exhibit quality in their intent and mostly in execution with some excelling on both counts. I wish many were in fact on the Gold Coast.'

Yet at the same time Mr Follent advised that councils be vigilant and have the right staff to assess the appropriateness of design decisions. 'While it is natural for planning sections of councils to have planners, it is also essential that their skills are complemented by staff who are trained in design, such as architects and landscape architects, who can provide invaluable assistance in the assessment process... More well articulated, robust assessment decisions are much more legally defensible and the investment in

well trained and qualified credible staff is far less than potentially very expensive court costs.'

SHE
THE MU



ART