

BROOME IS DIFFERENT BUT ENTICING

Amongst other things, Broome is renowned for its magnificent sunsets along Cable Beach. Master Builders director Michael McLean reports on some of the things that distinguish Broome from Perth.

FEEL very fortunate to visit Broome at least once each year to attend the Master Builders-Bankwest Building Excellence Awards for the Kimberley-Pilbara region.

The setting for these prestigious awards is Zanders on Cable Beach – an open-air event at one of the best locations in Western Australia.

This year the top home was built by Custom Lifestyle Homes, whilst the top commercial project was The Quarter in Karratha built by Doric Contractors.

Other builders who received awards this year included Broome Builders, H&M Tracey Construction, PGM Constructions, DLR Building Co, Connolly Homes, Pindan Contracting and CWD Builders & Developers.

All the winning projects and builders can be accessed via www.mbawa.com/awards/awards-winners.

Driving around Broome, it is noticeable that building activity is subdued with vacant land competitively priced (below \$200,000 in some areas) to sell.

Like Perth, Broome's population is not growing very fast which has had an impact on many businesses. The proposed marina project appears to have stalled, tourism is being increasingly relied upon and everyone is holding out for an upturn in the WA economy.

When you visit Broome, you immediately notice lots of different things, such as:

- No traffic lights but lots of roundabouts
- Mainly underground power
- Very few gutters on houses
- The prevalence of steel-framed homes instead of double brick homes
- No letterboxes, which can create difficulties in locating addresses
- No multi-storey buildings
- Low-maintenance landscaping and natural or hardy vegetation like colourful

frangipani

- Breezeways designed into new homes to capitalize on cooling airflows
- Relatively large car ports to accommodate cars and boats
- Pindan red soil
- The added protections to prevent termite infestations
- Provision for wide drains to cater for heavy rains and possible flooding. Broome recorded over 1100mm of rain this year
- Significant tidal movements and a magnificent coastline with turquoise waters
- The prevalence of four-wheel drive vehicles and backpackers from all over the world
- Very few group dwelling units but these are becoming more popular for community housing projects

Broome has a much more diversified economy than some of its mining dependent neighbouring towns. Being about 2200kms north of Perth, it is located in a very different climatic zone which attracts thousands of visitors during the cooler months of the year.

There are about 12 reputable builders based in Broome and fewer in Karratha and Port Hedland. Those that do have building businesses in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions are well versed in the cyclone standards required and the challenges associated with inclement weather and the many logistical problems in building in remote areas.

Looking at the winning projects in our awards this year, it is a credit to the professionalism and skills of our Kimberley and Pilbara builders. They are creating our future communities, growing our economy and enhancing our standard of living every day. Well done!

