

Media Release

Great Southern builders show innovation and style

- New Albany facility transforms ideas and expectations about aged care homes
- Architect/builder/carpenter Ascan Volckerts wins best home award for his own residence
- Great Southern Apprentice of the Year Jack Curlewis wins tight competition for No1 title

A preconception-busting aged care centre and a unique bush home in Albany have won the top prizes in the 2019 Master Builders-Bankwest Building Excellence Awards for the Great Southern.

Regional awards judge Charlie Baggetta said the range and quality of building work in the area was impressive. Judges assessed houses valued from under \$200,000 to \$1.5million and commercial projects ranging from \$1million to \$3million.

The total value of projects entered in the awards came to almost \$59million.

The Best Country Home award went to a contemporary Scandinavian-inspired home created by architect, carpenter and registered builder Ascan Volckerts.

“Mr Volckerts says being involved in his work as a designer and tradesman as well as a builder means he has already built a house three times in his head before it starts to rise from the ground. That in-depth knowledge shines through in the house he built for his own family on a bush block outside Albany,” Mr Baggetta said.

“The innovation was very good, alternative materials were used well and, most importantly, the workmanship was excellent.

“Metal sheeting was used for the roof and then bent down to form the walls. I have never seen that done on a residential project before and the effect was striking.

“The materials used contrasted with the natural surroundings but didn’t look out of place. The house looked like it belonged in its environment.

“A mix of materials were used for flooring including concrete and timber. In the living room, where the sun shines through the glass, the builder used material that warms up when heat is applied, adding to the energy efficiency of the home.

“The solar passive design, double glazed windows and carefully designed cross ventilation systems will make the home comfortable and economical to live in.”

Mr Volckerts’ company Red Dog Carpentry is a first-time entrant in the awards and won six prizes on debut: The regional top home award, excellence in external finishes, best alternative construction and best contract home as well as trade awards for cabinet making and roofing.



The Best Regional Project award went to the Lockyer Residential Care Facility in Albany, a high-level 100-bed aged care centre built by Crothers Construction.

It involved the construction of four double-storey accommodation wings plus kitchens, offices, roads, car parks and landscaping.

Mr Baggetta said the bright, airy and welcoming building blew away old ideas of aged care homes as being dreary and institutional.

"It's an amazing building full of smart ideas which have been well executed," he said.

"Large structures like these, with lots of corridors, can be difficult for visitors to navigate but each wing has different finishes and décor to help people find their way around.

"The construction features open spaces and lots of glass to make the most of natural light and enhance the connection between indoors and outdoors.

"The difficult, sloping site meant a lot of the brickwork had to be done from a scaffold, which adds to the complexity, but the standard was exceptional."

Mr Baggetta commended Crothers Construction for engaging with local suppliers and contractors to do the bulk of the work, which was completed in good time and to a high quality.

Along with the Best Regional Project title, the centre won Best Aged Care Building and Site Manager of the Year plus the Silver Trowel Award and prizes for ceilings and paving.

Master Builders Great Southern regional manager Linda Gibbs said building excellence could only be achieved by a skilled team working at peak performance, as shown by the variety of awards which went to the main commercial and residential projects.

She said the apprentice awards showed the skills required to be a great subcontractor or builder were being passed on to a talented new generation in the region.

"The four finalists for the Apprentice of the Year title were of such high quality that the judges had great difficulty choosing a winner. The difference between first and last place was just half a point. Congratulations to Jack Curlewis, who won the award against impressive competition," she said.

The awards were held at Lime 303 in Albany on September 14. Winners will be considered for next year's state-wide housing and construction awards.

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