

Media Release

Mid West builders put skill and creativity on display

- Champion Bay Senior High School wins Best Regional Project for Crothers Construction
- Top home award goes to McAullay Builders for a country house with eclectic style
- Best Regional Apprentice title won by trainee plumber Bailey O'Donnell

Builders in the Geraldton region are defying the industry downturn by showing impressively high standards of quality and innovation at the regional building awards.

Judges of the 2019 Master Builders-Bankwest Building Excellence Awards, presented at Geraldton Grammar School on October 12, said anyone looking to build an original and top-class home in the Mid West region was spoilt for choice.

"It's refreshing to see the enthusiasm shown by the builders and the exceptional rapport they have with clients," said regional awards judge Charlie Baggetta.

"There are several newer builders who have the drive to put in the extra work to give clients what they want. It's good for the area and gives people options.

"The number of entries in the awards was down this year because of the building slump but each one stood out as original.

"Alternative houses are generally built to a high standard because builders don't take on the job unless they are passionate about what they're doing and do it well."

The Best Country Home award, won by McAullay Builders for a custom house on a bush block in Waggrakine, is a striking example of unique and inventive building work.

"The home has a smorgasbord of external finishes including rammed earth, local granite, corrugated iron and recycled timber," Mr Baggetta said.

"Inside, the home has polished concrete floors, more rammed earth and recycled timber as well as recycled brick in the kitchen. It has a high energy efficiency rating, with lofty ceilings and lots of glass facing north to capture the winter sun.

"The workmanship is excellent throughout and the home won a swag of trade awards including plastering, roofing, concreting and external finishes."

The home was built on a block with a Bushfire Attack Level rating of 29, which added complexity to the planning and management of materials and construction methods.

A total of 11 awards went to the home and, among them, McAullay Builders won the title of Small Builder of the Year and prizes for alternative construction, energy efficiency and recycling.

The best commercial project award went to Crothers Construction for the upgrade of Champion Bay Senior High School.

Three new state-of-the-art blocks were built for performing arts and music, materials and technology and student services. The refurbishment of the administration buildings and extensive landscaping was included.

“The judges looked at project management, value for money and site management in giving the school the awards for Best Regional Project and best education building,” Mr Baggetta said.

“It was a challenging site, where the ground flowed away downhill so retaining walls had to be established.

“Access to the site was also difficult to manage because the school was operating while construction was going ahead.

“The school staff had high praise for the builders, which showed how well the project was handled.”

The Best Regional Apprentice award went to Bailey O’Donnell, a third-year plumbing apprentice who was described by supervisors as proactive, motivated and hard working.

“Judging the apprentice awards was challenging because the list of finalists was excellent,” Mr Baggetta said.

“The winner, Bailey O’Donnell, impressed the judges with his knowledge of his trade, his interaction with his work colleagues, level of competency and high moral standards.

“Bailey is exceeding expectations and he surprises his employer with his ability to evaluate situations, factor potential outcomes and make logical decisions on site.”

Master Builders regional manager Paul Kerr said local builders and trades had been hard hit by the economic doldrums of recent years but they maintained first-rate professionalism.

“Geraldton is known for having high quality trades such as bricklayers, tilers and carpenters. It’s partly due to stability because people don’t blow in and blow out, they tend to stay,” he said.

“They need to produce good results or they won’t get work. Reputation and word of mouth are important in the local industry.

“For the awards this year, judges assessed houses valued from under \$150,000 to \$2.5million and commercial projects ranging from \$1.5million to \$20million. The total value of projects entered in the awards came to over \$36million.”

Award winners will be considered for next year’s state-wide housing and construction awards.

**For more information please contact: Regional manager Paul Kerr – w: 9921 5061 m: 0438 207 558
or regional awards judge Charlie Baggetta w: 9729 3731 m: 0418 931 784**