



Malanda Falls Visitor Centre

Project type: Civic

Location: Atherton Rd, Malanda, QLD, Australia
Year of completion: 2007

Malanda is a town in Queensland, Australia, known for its indigenous stories of the seven sisters whilst nestling up to the pristine rainforest

sisters whilst nestling up to the pristine rainforest

OVERVIEW

The Malanda Falls Visitor Centre was established in 1996 by a team of enthusiastic and passionate locals. Their dream was to provide a place to help visitors and school children understand and appreciate this unique rainforest environment.

On 24th April 2010, the Malanda Falls Visitor Centre was destroyed by fire. It was a devastating blow to the staff and volunteers. All the original displays and many irreplaceable artefacts were destroyed.

After the fire, Tablelands Regional Council worked with volunteers and the community to rebuild the t y m

PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

The centre is a new and upgraded interpretive educational facility for the Atherton Tablelands. This project makes for a unique building prototype in that it is cost effective, modular in its construction and transportable, but the design is bespoke in its detail layout and in its external configuration.

Public consultation during the design development workshops ensured the delivery of a building that had real input from all stakeholders.

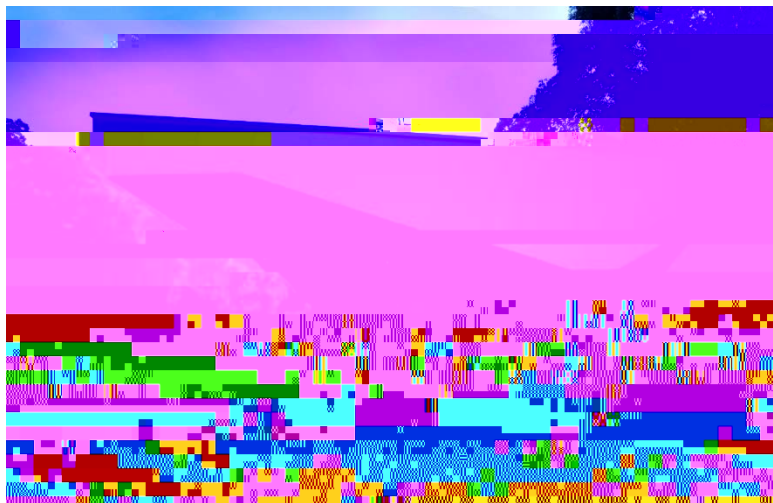
Innovation and new solutions to the problems of living with climate change in the 21st century are delivered by integrating the expertise of allied disciplines, in particular the hydraulic and structural engineering which not only facilitated the advanced sustainability initiatives but also the practical requirements for withstanding annual cyclonic weather events.

The project was developed and procured through an intensive value management process, resulting in a highly cost effective solution for a fully functional, exemplar public building prototype.



SITE

The centre has a roadside location on a busy highway leading into the town of Malanda. The site is controlled by the Queensland Government Department of Transport and Main Roads. Due to the nature of the tenure, it was a requirement that the building be transportable.



The site is part of major road setbacks leading towards the public car parking for the Malanda Falls Conservation Park and recreation area and is already cleared from vegetation.

The site slopes from west to east and stepped concrete footings and slab form the main base of the building.

DESIGN

The building design represents a re-think and new direction for tropical architecture, moving away from the conventional building vernacular toward new and progressive solutions that can be applied

The roof is a light coloured steel sheeting and the cavity is ventilated through large vents situated on the northern elevation fascia.

Much of the external wall cladding is extruded aluminium sheet with a decorative profile that is long lasting in the tropics, does not require painting and is easy to keep clean.

The external wall cladding to the western elevation that receives the full hot summer afternoon sun is light coloured colorbond steel sheeting.

The soffits and fascia's are clad with fibre cement sheeting, a durable and locally available material.

The decking is a reconstituted timber and recycled plastic product that is fully recyclable. It is very durable in a tropical climate and requires little maintenance.

Extensive solar tinting treatments have been applied to all glazing to reduce heat and UV light, which is important for the preservation of artefacts.

ENERGY

The centre is located in a cooler wet tropical climate. For much of the year the temperature is very pleasant and air conditioning is not required. The centre has artefacts and humidity

WATER AND WASTE

The project features stormwater harvesting tanks for non-potable uses and low water usage plumbing fixtures and fittings.

OWNERS/USER STATEMENT

"By working closely with all members of the user and client groups we were able to achieve unanimous council and public support for what is a challenging and innovative architectural proposal. Now that I see it linked to Country, I think it is beautiful. It is a building to make people stop." Eva Morta, Ngadjonji representative from the Choorechillum

PROJECT TEAM

Base building architect/ designer: Charles Wright Architects
 Civil & structural engineer: G&A Consultants
 Services Engineer: GHD
 Project Manager: Charles Wright Architects
 ESD Consultant: GHD
 Energy Efficiency rating consultant: Brad Pinches
 Other consultants: CMR Hydraulic Consultants.
 Builder: Hutchinson Builders

Photographs courtesy of Patrick Bingham Hall
 Photos of ramp, vents and western wall: Emma Thirkell

For more information visit: www.jcu.edu.au/tsd
www.greenbuild.com.au

