



A Noosa hinterland property designed for a horse whisperer has won a national award. 215354

Shhhh ... horses roaming

By Erle Levey

A farm with no fences has seen a Noosa hinterland horse whisperer's property recognised at a national level.

The Eumundi property saw architects AJ+C design a farmhouse and a series of outbuildings to dispense with fences to allow wildlife and a herd of brumbies to freely roam across a 35-hectare pastoral property.

The project, both ethically ambitious and modest in scale, has been named a winner in the 2020 Good Design Australia Awards.

It was in the Architectural Design Commercial and Residential category in recognition for outstanding design and innovation.

The property, which is being re-wilded by its owners, was commended in the 2020 Australian Institute of Architects regional awards.

The Good Design Awards jury praised Eumundi House, as "an appealing interpretation of the corrugated steel sheds scattered across Australia's rural landscapes.

"The lack of fences and ambition to 'accommodate' nature is an appropriate design response for this client.

"A good example of sensitive and affordable design that successfully meets the client's brief."

The annual Good Design Awards is Australia's oldest and most prestigious international awards for design and innovation with a proud history dating back to 1958.

The awards celebrate the best new products and services on the Australian market, excellence in architectural design, engineering, fashion, digital and communication design, design strategy, social impact design and young designers.

AJ+C principal Peter Ireland said the idea for turning a shed inside out for the horses came from watching how the herd would congregate under one of several mature fig trees on the property.

"They were sheltered but free to move, to adapt to both the weather and personality disputes within the herd.

"No fences, gates or corals that typical farm buildings use to control the movement of animals.

"So although it's a small project, it's quite radical in the rural context."

Eumundi House reflects a different approach to rural life.

The design maintains an original farmstead and adds two outbuildings: a modest home of one bedroom plus study, and a detached garage.



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Together with the farmstead, they define the property's domesticated zone without the fences or barricades typical to rural estates.

Downhill to the west, a horse pavilion is added beside a large unfenced paddock, where the owner works with the horses.

The lack of fences between house and outbuildings supports the clients' greater landscape projects of habitat regeneration to encourage diversity, and free movement of wildlife and the horses across the property. Their vision is not a wilderness as such, but a place for wildness.

New structures reflect Australian rural life in form and materials of corrugated steel and timber.

The new house is carved around the site, responding to the landscape, culminating in a high roof gable to the north, framing a view of Mt Cooroy - the significant natural feature of the region.

Geometry of the house evolved from a simple shed form of gable roof extending above the

living room and partially over the north deck.

The detached garage is a simpler form, a mediating fragment between the house and original farmstead.

The first new structure to be built - the horse pavilion - turns the typical horse shelter inside out, with no corrals or gates to confine or cause injury.

At its core are a 'tack' room, trailer and food store, supporting a broad cantilevered roof. Essentially a verandah, under which the horses can freely move.

The shed is separate yet visible from the house, allowing a respectful close contact between horses and people.

The house and outdoor decks are elevated to allow the horses safe, but limited access to the domestic edges of the house.

A strong working relationship with the local builder and tradespeople saw a skilled resolution of the west-facing timber screen, to operate effortlessly as a louvre, while referencing the slab huts of early settlement.



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