

# ARCHITECTURE

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Artspace Mackay was officially opened in February 2003 by Senator Rod Kemp, Commonwealth Minister for Arts and Sport; the Hon. Matt Foley MP, Queensland Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Minister for Youth and Minister for the Arts and Cr Julie Boyd, Mayor of Mackay. It was developed through the Queensland Heritage Trails Network (QHTN), a \$110 million partnership between Commonwealth, Queensland and local governments to celebrate the Centenary of Federation in 2001. The network developed a series of stimulating tourism pathways that trace Queensland's social, natural, built and cultural heritage.



Artspace Mackay was designed by Cox Rayner Architects and constructed by ABI Group. The following architectural statement is by Michael Rayner of Cox Rayner Architects, Brisbane:

"Artspace Mackay joins a network of outstanding regional galleries throughout Queensland, many of which are housed in adapted existing buildings such as Cairns, Townsville, Gladstone and Brisbane. By contrast, Artspace Mackay is housed in a new building on a 'greenfield' site, away from the main activity areas of its city and in a relatively austere setting of separated civic buildings.

Part of our response to this context was to treat the building as a sculpture and as a distinct corner-marker to the city's civic precinct. The sculptural form however is not indiscriminate. The governing idea was to clearly express its parts, the necessarily 'solid' gallery distinct from those areas that can be 'transparent' - the community workshops, cafe and administration - that combine to form a second wing. The foyer that connects the two areas is devised as a multi-functional space equally transparent and offering views to the retained existing treescape.

The angular plan and forms of the building have two main purposes. The first is to reinforce the diagonal movement route which people tend to take from the street corner to the library and administration buildings. The second and more important is to create shifts in perspective internally which create the impression of a much larger and more complex series of spaces than the brief contemplated. We are with the Council and community support, aiming for a new kind of civic identity and an intriguing experience of different kinds of spaces.

The buildings in the immediate vicinity are not especially tropical in character.

The broad roof canopies, narrowing the building elements to the east and west, and the creation of a shaded courtyard are intended to establish a contemporary tropical character in conjunction with the preservation of the existing trees on site.

The architecture also seeks to question the role of architecture as sculpture in a quirky way; first, the building's street façade peeling open to encase an old artefact from sugar cane farming, this work being undertaken with artist Craig Walsh. The spiral form that results is reflected in paving work by artist Jill Chism, which is stand-alone in the landscape."



## Awards

Since opening in December 2002, Artspace Mackay's building has received a range of awards including:

- Building of the Year - 2003 Mackay/Whitsundays Region Royal Australian Institute of Architects Awards;
- Commendation - 2003 Mackay/Whitsunday Region Royal Australian Institute of Architects Awards;
- Commendation - 2003 Australian Property Institute Excellence in Property Awards;
- Heritage and Cultural Tourism Award - 2003 Mackay Region Industry and Tourism Awards;
- Art and Architecture Award - Queensland Architecture Awards 2003, Royal Australian Institute of Architects;
- Public Buildings, Cultural Building Award - Queensland Architecture Awards 2003, Royal Australian Institute of Architects
- Community Services Facilities \$2m-\$10m Award - Queensland Master Builders Association (QMBA) Mackay/Whitsunday Housing and Construction Awards 2003.
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects – Art & Architecture Award 2003
- Architecture Award for Cultural Public Buildings
- Australian Property Institute Excellence in Property Awards – Commendation 2003