

HOME FRONT *Sensitivity triumphs over urban steel in architectural awards*

# Beach house coasts to top design prize



Sorrento House by NMBW (top) beat the fancied Law Street House by Muir Mendes (left and above) to the top residential prize.

BY PHILIP HOPKINS AND RAY EDGAR

**A HUMBLE beach house, the Sorrento House by NMBW Architecture Studio, has taken out Victoria's top residential architectural prize — the Harold Desbrowe-Anneer Award.**

The "sensitive development of a sensitive coastal site" emerged as the winner from a strong field at the Australian Institute of Architects Victorian awards.

Sorrento House, elegantly designed from an economy of materials, impressed the jury with its inventive system of dividing partitions that fold,

retract, swing and slide to define social and personal spaces.

Jury chairman John Wardle of John Wardle Architects said the house's ambitions had crossed the boundaries of the site to the benefit of neighbours. Outlook, wind patterns, the structure of the landscape and the composition of building mass had been negotiated with great care, he said.

The house defeated a firm contender for the top residential prize, the Muir Mendes Law Street House, whose striking steel envelope might well have been worthy of the steel award.

Other contenders included sophisticated city-based projects such as Robert Simeoni Architects' Brighton House, de Campo Architects' Williamstown House and Multiplicity's evocatively titled "not in my backyard thank you very much".

In the Heritage section, no "named award" was presented due to insufficient entries, but the Heritage Architecture Award was taken out by Atelier Wagner for an East Melbourne residence.

Chairman of the heritage jury Philip Harmer, of Harmer Architecture, said the work was an assured example of reconstruction. Based on research and physical evidence, the project

reconstructed the facade of a mid-19th-century terrace house designed by Joseph Reed.

Mr Harmer said the building was not of individual significance, but the reconstruction of the facade made a "significant contribution" to the Victorian streetscape.

"In particular, the finely crafted timber work to the reconstructed two-storey Regency-style timber verandah is commended," he said.

Houses given Residential Architecture (New) Awards were the "austere" Law Street House by Muir Mendes, "powerfully folded" Beached House by BKK and "warm and textured" Western-

port House by Sally Draper Architects.

Awards for Residential Houses (Alterations & Additions) went to the "playful, beautifully sculpted" Foy-Johanson House by Harrison and White, the "effortless" Boston Villa by Nest Architects and the "detailed and refined" Gallery House by Denton Corker Marshall.

Hill Plains House by Wolveridge Architects, was a winner in the Sustainable category, using a mix of "time-honoured" passive solar principles, recycled materials and modern technology, to "create an autonomous home with no grid electricity or water connections".

# Disgraced ex-judge faces fresh investigation

BY KATE McCLYMONT

**POLICE are investigating a car accident in which disgraced former judge Marcus Einfeld is alleged to have left the scene.**

Mr Einfeld, 72, was released from Silverwater jail in March after spending two years behind bars for lying and attempting to pervert the course of justice to avoid a \$77 traffic fine.

The former Federal Court judge's current driving mishap is alleged to have occurred in

Sydney's CBD at 4pm on Sunday, June 5.

Passers-by watched as a woman accused an unknown man of being responsible for damaging her car, which had been scratched in the alleged bingle.

The man is then alleged to have called the woman "stupid" before getting into his car and driving away.

The woman took down the registration details and then reported the matter to The Rocks police.

A police check revealed the car in question was registered to Mr Einfeld and that the description of the woman provided to police matched that of the former judge.

"Investigations are ongoing," a police spokeswoman said yesterday.

The day he left prison in March, Mr Einfeld told waiting reporters he had learnt "a very painful lesson" and that he planned to redeem himself by working with the Reverend Bill Crews's Exodus Foundation and

the Salvation Army's Oasis foundation.

Reverend Crews said the only occasion he had seen Mr Einfeld was on Easter Sunday, when Mr Einfeld had been part of a group that had helped feed the homeless.

Similarly, a spokeswoman for Oasis said that to her knowledge Mr Einfeld had not been working for the foundation.

Mr Einfeld's fall from grace began when his silver Lexus was caught speeding on January 8, 2006. The former president of

the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission sent off a statutory declaration declaring he was not the driver. On his letterhead, which read "The Hon Justice Marcus R. Einfeld AO QC PhD", the retired judge wrote that Teresa Brennan, a friend visiting from the US, had been responsible.

His subsequent "swearing" in court that Professor Brennan had been the driver proved to be his downfall, as the prominent academic had been dead for three years.

# Farmers hit Coles on pricing, misinformation

BY DARREN GRAY RURAL AFFAIRS REPORTER

**VICTORIAN farmers have blasted Coles, accusing the supermarket giant of devaluing the price of food by aggressively discounting fresh food prices, of using "misinformation" to promote lamb sales and of threatening the viability of farmers.**

The condemnation came yesterday during and after an address by a senior Coles manager, Robert Hadler, at the Victorian Farmers Federation annual conference in Ballarat. Criticism came from the conference floor from farmers in a range of fields, including beef, dairy and prime lamb producers. It also came from the stage, where VFF president Andrew Broad said he was "pissed off" by a Coles campaign promoting lamb.

Mr Broad said Coles had used signs in its supermarkets promoting the lamb it sold as being free of growth hormones. But Mr Broad, a lamb producer from Bridgewater, said Australian lamb did not contain such hormones and never had.

"You are using misinformation to create a marketing advantage and we don't think it's appropriate," he said.

Mr Broad said the signs tried to create the impression that other outlets might sell lamb that had been given growth hormones. "It was a marketing ploy. And I was so pissed off I ripped the damn sign out and I walked out with it," he said, of a visit to a Coles supermarket in Bendigo earlier this year.

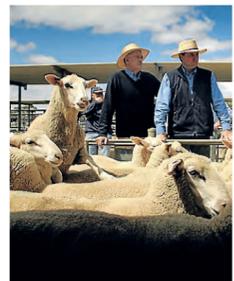
Mr Hadler, Coles corporate affairs general manager, defen-

ded the supermarket's actions. "That's the first time I've heard that allegation, that we deliberately, that we deliberately put those signs in to create that perception," he said.

"We did it in good faith. And if there was a concern we've now heard the concerns. We're happy to listen and we're happy to change what we do."

He said Coles displayed some signs indicating their lamb was hormone free after queries from customers. "Customers were ringing and saying, 'We like what you're doing with HGP-free beef (hormone growth promotants free), but can you tell us whether it's also HGP-free pork, chicken and lamb,'" he said. "I think that was an unintended consequence of the HGP-free beef campaign."

Questioned about the Coles strategy to heavily discount milk, Mr Hadler said "no dairy producer now has been suffering as a result of Coles milk discounting". The cost of the discounting was all being borne by Coles, he said.



But Gunbower dairy and beef farmer John Smith told Mr Hadler the Coles strategy of heavily discounting produce like milk was unsustainable. "You're saying that food is of very little value. . . It's cheap, you should get it for nearly nothing and you're destroying the industry that you're asking to produce quality food. . . It's good for Coles and good for your customers but unsustainable in the long-run," he said.

Asked about the anger towards Coles, Mr Hadler said the company had a "very positive" relationship with the vast majority of its suppliers.

"And we're continuing to broaden and develop better relationships with a wider range of growers. In my experience the people who whinge the most are not suppliers to Coles, and they tend to be involved with agri-politics and have a wider agenda," Mr Hadler told *The Saturday Age*.

Before the fireworks, Mr Hadler told the conference that Coles was "worried" about the departure of food manufacturing operations from Australia in recent years.

All of Coles's canned vegetables were sourced from Australia and most of its frozen vegetables were too, he said. "We have an Australia first policy. We'll continue to source from Australia where we can get it," he said. "We're not going to pay over the odds for Australian food, it has to be competitive. And that's where the Australian government I think needs to work with the manufacturing industry to do more to make Australian food manufacturing more competitive," he said.

# Triple murder Coombes deserves prison for life, mother tells court

BY ANDREA PETRIE

**A TRIPLE murderer who strangled and dismembered a Melbourne woman should never be released, her mother has told his pre-sentence hearing.**

John Leslie Coombes, 56, has pleaded guilty to murdering early learning teacher Raechel Betts 27, in August 2009, before he cut her up in a bath tub, placed her body parts in plastic bags and threw them off a Phillip Island pier. The bags later washed up nearby.

In her 50-minute victim impact statement, Sandra Betts yesterday urged Supreme Court Justice Geoffrey Nettle to lock Coombes up for life — especially given Coombes already had two murder convictions before killing her daughter.

"This murder ought not to have happened," she told the court, adding that Coombes's actions had handed her family a "life sentence of grief and loss".

"He represents a definite threat to society of murder and mutilation. Although the justice system has failed Raechel, it should never fail another

person again," she said. "I don't want to find in 11 or 20 years John Leslie Coombes has been released and has again murdered another person."

Prosecutor Peter Rose, SC, also argued a life sentence without parole was the appropriate disposition for such an offender.

But Coombes's defence lawyer argued Ms Betts was a drug dealer and said his client had "snapped" after she offered him a young girl for sex, having been sexually abused himself as a child. Coombes will be sentenced at a later date.

JULIAN KNIGHT

**Killer gets legal OK**

Mass murderer Julian Knight has won the right to appeal against the sentencing plan that keeps him in maximum security.

The Hoddle Street killer has been declared a vexatious litigant and is prohibited from beginning legal proceedings without court permission. Knight wants to be moved from maximum security as his earliest parole date of 2014 nears.

Yesterday Victorian Supreme Court justice Karin Emerton ruled that it could not be said Knight's application was "foredoomed to fail" and therefore it would not be an abuse of process. She granted Knight, who appeared in court via video link, leave to begin his proceeding. No date has yet been set for his trial.

Knight shot dead seven people and injured 19 in 1987.

PORNOGRAPHY

**Former teacher jailed**

A 66-year-old former art teacher has been jailed for his cache of 215,000 child pornography images and abusing a boy in his care almost 30 years ago.

Richard Ufnalski claimed he required the images for his thesis which "discussed the belief that adult pornography models are groomed to demonstrate . . . erotic fantasies and erotic behaviour".

County Court Judge Phillip Coish yesterday rejected that Ufnalski required the images for "artistic, scientific or educative purposes".

Ufnalski pleaded guilty to one charge of possessing child pornography and two charges of indecent assault. He indecently assaulted a boy in his care in 1982. He was jailed for two years and must serve a one-year non-parole period.

FATAL CRASH

**Long sentence sought**

A driver who killed three members of one family in a head-on car crash should be jailed for up to 12 years, a court has heard.

Gurwinder Singh, 25, formerly of Murrumbidgee, was speeding and overtaking before he lost control of his car and crashed into another vehicle at Merton, north-east of Melbourne, in May 2009. Husband and wife Basil and Robyn Rehe died, along with Mr Rehe's sister Suzanne.

A Victorian County Court jury last month found Singh guilty of three counts of culpable driving.

At a pre-sentence hearing yesterday, prosecutor Sarah Thomas called for Singh to be jailed for between 10 and 12 years with a non-parole period of seven to nine years.

He will be sentenced on a date to be fixed by Judge Rachelle Lewtan.

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