



New Zealand Institute of Architects Incorporated

Top student architecture award announced

James Durcan of Victoria University's School of Architecture has received New Zealand's top prize for architecture students.

Durcan was announced as the winner of the 2015 NZIA Cadimage Group Student Design Awards in Auckland last night. The judging followed two days of presentations by 12 final year students from the country's three Schools of Architecture, which are departments of Victoria University of Wellington, the University of Auckland and Unitec.

In the winning project Durcan, who was brought up in Timaru where he attended Roncalli College, combined contemporary digital fabrication techniques with traditional Māori craft methods and design approaches. The proposed structure was conceived in collaboration with Poverty Bay's Ngai Tāmanuhiri iwi, and is intended for off-grid construction at a coastal site near Gisborne.

Competition judges Pip Cheshire, the President of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, Wellington architect Cecile Bonnifait and Michael Banney of Brisbane's m3 architecture said Durcan's work was "the result of huge engagement".

"It reveals willingness, on all sides, to learn and collaborate to produce a meaningful outcome."

The judges made two Highly Commended Awards. One went to University of Auckland fifth year student Tessa Forde for her proposal for a new Parliament sited in downtown Auckland. The scheme, which the judges described as "sophisticated, engaging and compelling", blended satire and architecture to make some trenchant points about New Zealand's current political culture.

A Highly Commended Award also went to Unitec student Hannah Broatch who had drawn on her extensive research and fieldwork in India to design accommodation for migrant construction workers in Ahmedabad.

"The elegant and beautifully illustrated project reveals a palpable awareness of community sensibility and a realistic appreciation of what might be possible," the judges said.

The four Awards finalists from each of the three Schools of Architecture submitted widely varying schemes. From the University of Auckland, Chirag Jindal presented a project set in lava caves beneath houses under Three Kings, in Auckland. Jindal's research involved recording this hidden world with the help of experienced speleologists.

Classmate Robert Pak prepared a scheme to alleviate the blight around Auckland's old Railway Station by bringing in a canal to link the area with the harbour, and introducing some community spaces into the

heavily privatised precinct.

Kate Turner, also from the University of Auckland, turned to Eleanor Catton's novel 'The Luminaries' for inspiration. Turner produced an architectural plotting of the structure of the book, and re-imagined buildings from the novel's setting in gold rush Hokitika in Coromandel's Karanagahake Gorge, another historic mining location which currently faces renewed mineral exploration.

From Unitec, John Belford Lelaulu presented a proposed building which, the judges said, "beautifully describes some of the processes and artefacts of Samoan culture and draws design inspiration from La Malofie, traditional Samoan tattooing." The building is intended to showcase Samoan culture in its New Zealand heartland of south Auckland.

Unitec's Don Pengpala also submitted a scheme with a community focus. He proposed a system for providing clean water to his own family's village in northern Thailand.

"Research into the rhythms of village life and techniques for improving the water supply are complemented by some wonderfully expressive architectural elements," the jury said.

Kiri McKenna, also from Unitec, chose the grounds around Old Government House at the University of Auckland as the site for her project. She proposed removing fences and inserting lightweight, ephemeral structures to make using the grounds a more open experience.

Victoria University student Nick Denton's ambitious project combined his interests in architecture and astronomy in a scheme for a series of observatories along a latitude line in Wellington. "Celestial, topographical and cultural mappings overlapped in an extensive investigation of site," the jury said.

Another Victoria University student, Rachel Murray, produced a scheme to rehabilitate a wetland on the Kapiti Coast. "A lagoon becomes a new town centre in a project that brings to attention the fragile state, and potential uses, of the country's low lying wetlands," the jury said.

The final entry into the Student Design Awards was that submitted by Victoria University's David Walsh. His project posited an imaginative re-use of soon-to-be-derelict industrial sites in Taranaki. Walsh suggested transforming a defunct oil and gas production facility into a small geo-thermal power station accompanied by a teaching institution.

Finalists in the 2015 NZIA Cadimage Group Student Design Awards

University of Auckland:

Tessa Forde - Highly Commended
(Tessa attended Northcote College, Auckland)

Chirag Jindal
(Chirag attended Lynfield College, Auckland)

Robert Pak
(Robert attended Rotorua Boys High School)

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Kate Turner
(Kate attended Westlake Girls High School, Auckland)

Unitec:
Hannah Broatch - Highly Commended
(Hannah attended Western Springs College, Auckland)

John Belford Lelaulu
(John attended De La Salle College, Auckland)

Kiri McKenna
(Kiri attended Taikura Rudolf Steiner School, Hastings)

Don Pengpala
(Don attended Pukekohe High School, Auckland)

Victoria University of Wellington:
Nick Denton
(Nicholas attended Wellington College)

James Durcan - Winner
(James attended Roncalli College, Timaru)

Rachel Murray
(Rachel attended Onslow College, Wellington)

David Walsh
(David attended Stratford High School, Taranaki)

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