



Press Release
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SOVEREIGN HILLS WINS PRESTIGIOUS PLANNING AND DESIGN AWARDS

The proposed new town at Sovereign Hills / Area 13, west of Port Macquarie on the Mid-North NSW Coast, has won three highly coveted awards at the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA)'s NSW Awards for Excellence, 2008.

The Lewis Land Group's \$1 billion new masterplanned community at Sovereign Hills won the "*Urban Design – Plans and Ideas Award*" and The Port Macquarie-Hastings Council won the "*Urban Planning Achievement Award*" for its work on the overall planning of the 800 hectare urban release area.

The Sovereign Hills project team and Council collectively won the prized "*2008 President's Award*".

The President's Award is presented in recognition of an outstanding project or individual's contribution to planning generally and was selected by PIA (NSW) President Ms Julie Bindon from all the category winners.

According to PIA, Sovereign Hills was selected as being "a stand out example of what planning is about in the holistic sense. It brings together the many complex facets of urban and regional planning for the new millennium."

Sovereign Hills is seen as “a model for best practice that helps raise the bar for all planners” and furthermore that it “sets a fine example of what can be done to protect the environment and manage growth in a responsible manner. Perhaps most significantly, the project as a whole is more excellent than the sum of its parts.”

“A project of this scale and with this degree of resolution can not be achieved without considerable skill, commitment and collaboration from a large number of people. It is representative of what successful planning is all about – it is a team effort, involving the landowners, developer client, the multi-disciplinary consultant team and the planning agencies at the state and local levels.”

Urban Futures Group Pty Ltd nominated Sovereign Hills for the “*Urban Design – Plans and Ideas Award*”, as a joint entry between The Lewis Land Group and Port Macquarie-Hastings Council.

The 400 hectare Sovereign Hills site is located close to the junction of the Pacific and Oxley Highways, nine kilometres west of Port Macquarie.

Once complete, Sovereign Hills will include a range of residential dwelling types providing up to 3,000 homes, a business and technology park, a commercial precinct, a Town Centre providing up to 2,000 jobs, convenience retail, an aged care centre of excellence and educational and recreational facilities to support the new community.

“We are very happy with the result and to be recognised for our constant commitment to excellence in urban planning and design in these critical early stages of the project. The President’s Award in particular is a major coup,” said Mr Robert Yandell, Director of the Lewis Land Group.

Sovereign Hills also won the Concept Design Award at the 2007 Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA)’s NSW Awards for Excellence.

Administrator Dick Persson has commended Council and the Sovereign Hills project team for their cooperative and innovative approach to planning. He said the awards were a fitting recognition for a job well done.

The PIA is the national peak body for planning practice in Australia and the awards acknowledge excellence, innovation and achievement in urban and regional planning.

The PIA "*Urban Design - Plans and Ideas Award*" recognises projects that demonstrate excellence in urban design and make an outstanding contribution to current urban design practice.

Sovereign Hills has many innovative urban planning and design features including a compact and active town centre that will act as the hub of community activity; slow and safe streets; koala sensitive urban design; a 'Sustainability Framework' that acts as a balanced platform for evolving sustainability initiatives as well as water sensitive urban design. The community also features a world class high speed fibre optic network; contemporary and integrated design for an ageing population and a 'workspace ladder' approach to economic development that can facilitate entrepreneurial activity and business growth.

"Being recognised with another prestigious award shows us that Sovereign Hills is already setting new benchmarks in urban planning and design," said Mr Yandell.

"Whilst our aim at Sovereign Hills has been to achieve best practice urban design, we have sought to constantly innovate across disciplines and raise the bar wherever possible", said Grahame Edwards, Director of Urban Futures Group, lead planning and urban design consultant on the project.

Construction work at Sovereign Hills is well underway with the main street almost complete and over 400 specially grown mature trees recently planted on the site. St Joseph's Regional College is almost complete and is due to open in February next year.

Blue chip retailer Woolworths will open a supermarket at Sovereign Hills in 2010 and will anchor the \$25 million convenience retail complex. It committed to the site late in 2007, signing a 20 + 10 + 10 year lease on a 3,800 square metre full-service supermarket with a petrol station and parking for 400 vehicles.

Not-for-profit aged care provider RSL Care also snapped up several sites for \$14 million last year and expects to be nearing completion of the first of its \$100 million developments at Sovereign Hills by the end of 2009.

By 2012, RSL Care will provide a full range of accommodation and care for more than 300 senior citizens at Sovereign Hills.

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