

# Timber a Must for New Turtle Centre

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The ancient life cycle of majestic sea turtles is one of global significance. The largest concentration of marine turtles on the eastern Australian mainland choose Mon Repos as their nesting place.

Mon Repos, meaning ‘my rest’ in French, is a conservation park near Bundaberg, Queensland where passionate rangers and scientists manage conservation and research programs to enhance the success of nesting before hatchlings make their perilous journey to the sea some months later.

Mon Repos famous turtle encounters are a connection with nature like no other. That’s why the construction of the new Mon Repos Turtle Centre meets the same brief; connected to nature.

The new Centre’s award winning Architect, Richard Kirk said the whole brief for this Centre is focused on sustainability and environment,

“Firstly, the location is behind established sand dunes which provide a natural shield between the building and the hatchlings to conceal the possible spill of the buildings light.

“The entire glue laminated timber structure is locally grown, certified Spotted Gum, not only meeting exceptional sustainability credentials, but from a practical perspective, allows large spans with no internal structural walls.

“This means the interior can be readily, seasonally reconfigured to meet the educational and conservation needs of the centre and its year-round visitors.

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“Construction times and site disruption are shorter with the timber manufactured to +/-2mm tolerance, ensuring the GLT structure can be manufactured off-site and assembled rapidly as a kit of parts.” Mr Kirk said.

Kirk Architects are known for their innovative use of GLT such as the façade mullions and GHD Auditorium structure at the University of Queensland’s flagship Advanced Engineering Building.

The Mon Repos structure itself is known as a ‘diagrid’ which presents an innovative resistance against cyclonic conditions. It is believed to be the largest diagrid in Australia.

The significance of using Spotted Gum goes far beyond the environmental credentials and support for the local economy. This particular timber was specified for its durability, strength, density and appearance to suit the corrosive, coastal environment.



Hyne Timber’s Glue Laminated Timber Business Development Manager – Commercial, Rob Mansell, said this project represents a perfect case study in support of early contractor involvement,

“Innovative and unique designs using timber need the design team to come together with the timber manufacturers from the start as was the case with Mon Repos.

“The Architects presented us with their vision, at which point we can provide practical and logistical advice for the best way to achieve that vision, ensuring the timber is designed for manufacture and ease of construction.

“It is important to apply capability to the design from the very beginning. This ensures delivery of the most cost efficient solution for our client, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

“Using timber, when detailed well such as the Mon Repos project, means we can also meet the minimum 50 year design life requirement.” Mr Mansell said.

Using prefabricated timber means installation is clean and quick, managed by just three construction workers on site, one operating the crane and two fastening the connections into position.



All the timber beams were manufactured by Hyne Timber at their GLT Plant in Maryborough, a site which is currently undergoing significant expansion with the support of the Queensland Government Jobs and Regional Growth Fund.

The expansion will dramatically increase the availability of GLT for the construction industry.

In addition to the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the new Mon Repos Turtle Centre design and construction stakeholders are as follows:

Architects: Kirk

GLT Manufacturer and Advisor: Hyne Timber

Structural and Civil Engineers: Arup

Mechanical, Electrical and Hydraulic Engineers: Arup

Environmental Engineers: Arup

Landscape Architect: TCL

Geotech: Tectonic

Certifier: Certis

Interpretive consultant: Focus Production

Building Contractor: Murchies Constructions

Quantity Surveyors: QQS

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Image 1: Richard Kirk, John Hesse and Robert Mansell on site

Image 2: Katie Fowden and Dr Andrew Magub admiring the Spotted Gum

Image 3: Connections coming together

Image 4: Connection detail