



## Byron Central Hospital

In 1998, a planning process was undertaken in Mullumbimby and surrounding areas to make recommendations for the future of Mullumbimby Hospital. As part of this process a value management study suggested that replacement of both the Mullumbimby and Byron District Hospitals with a hospital central to both centres was preferable to redevelopment of the facility in Mullumbimby. A joint consultative committee later endorsed this option, with subsequent community consultation showing considerable public support.

After a greenfield site had been selected at Ewingsdale, 5km to the west of Byron Bay, we were engaged by Newton Denny Chapelle to coordinate environmental studies, and facilitate environmental planning approvals for submission with the rezoning application.

### **Statutory Context**

Our assessment was required to: identify the site's ecological values; evaluate bushfire threat; assess the suitability of the master plan with respect to ecological and bushfire constraints; and assess compliance against relevant Commonwealth, State and Local environmental planning legislation. The site's visually prominent position at the gateway to Byron Bay ensured that the application would be subject to significant scrutiny.

### **Challenges and Solutions**

The site's original lowland rainforest (an Endangered Ecological Community under the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* and *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act)) had been almost completely cleared from the site, and only minor amendments to the master plan were required to protect the remnant elements. These amendments also protected the only significant habitat for other locally threatened fauna. Discharge of stormwater to the adjoining waterway required consideration of impacts on the habitat of aquatic species.

### **CLIENT**

NEWTON DENNY CHAPELLE  
(ON BEHALF OF THE NORTH  
COAST AREA HEALTH SERVICE)

### **LOCATION**

BYRON BAY  
NEW SOUTH WALES

The highly cleared nature of the site and surrounding landscape suggested that bushfire management was unlikely to be a significant issue. However, Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006 requires a greater degree of protection for high-dependency facilities such as hospitals than for standard residential development. This had implications for the type and location of landscaping which could be used. We worked with the landscape architect to ensure the development of a bushfire-appropriate design.

### **Outcome**

The hospital has been constructed, and is operational.

**28 South Environmental**

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