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# Kangaroo Valley wedding venue rises from the ashes to win landscape award

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By [Glenn Ellard](#)  
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The Kangaroo Valley Bush Retreat features local endemic species to reduce the demand on limited water supplies. Picture supplied.

## After the Kangaroo Valley Bush Retreat burnt to the ground

during the Black Summer bushfires, architects Edmiston Jones were faced with the task of redesigning and rebuilding the popular wedding venue.

Edmiston Jones director Stuart Scobie said the process took about three years as COVID-19 impacted on work, but the long and detailed process has been rewarded with a major design award.

The project has won the Landscape Architecture Award for Tourism at the annual Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) NSW Awards.



📷 A connecting path at the Kangaroo Valley Bush Retreat is illuminated by bollard lights, creating a spectacular appearance. Picture supplied.

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The award's judges described the project as a "testament to

resilience and renewal".

They said the retreat had been "thoughtfully redeveloped to honour its extraordinary natural setting while enhancing its connection to the landscape".

"The design embraces sustainability, fire resilience, and the retreat's unique character, ensuring its future as a sought after wedding venue destination," the judges said.

"With sensitive integration of built and natural elements, the revitalised retreat reaffirms the enduring beauty of the valley and the spirit of regeneration in the face of adversity."



📷 The sunset deck is a popular gathering place for photographs, offering spectacular views. Picture supplied.

Mr Scobie confirmed the site was a "moonscape" and "down to bare earth and sandstone and burnt trees" after Black Summer.

However the location was "just outstanding" with "amazing views in multiple directions" including what Mr Scobie described as "a natural sandstone cathedral" that was a popular location for weddings.

As the owners and architects set about rebuilding one of the

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state's premier wedding venues, they faced a range of problems including having little topsoil to work with, and a lack of water.

Mr Scobie said that was particular problem when it came to protecting against future fires.



📷 Seen from above, the sunset deck leans out over a sandstone escarpment, with views down to the valley below and across the escarpment. Picture supplied.

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As a result the architects created gardens featuring local endemic species that required little maintenance or watering, along with two dams on the site - one in the centre of the development that operated as a central water feature.

That was all part of "a very site-specific design" that rebuilt the centre from the ground-up to make the most of the natural features, Mr Scobie said.

There was close communication throughout the process with the client, who was "very focused on what they wanted", Mr Scobie said, along with the building and landscape contractors.

They "did a fantastic job in terms of interpreting what we had designed", he said, offering plenty of insights and suggestions.

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■ Despite multiple sightings, the kangaroo remains elusive, hopping through an unfamiliar landscape.

The work "evolved a bit over time" in consultation with the client and contractors, Mr Scobie said.

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