

Illuminating Byron's arts scene

By JANET GRIST

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A GROUP of business owners at Byron Bay's best-kept secret - the Arts and Industry Estate - have joined forces to put its 300 businesses on the map.

A recent gathering of more than 30 of the business people came up with a number of creative ideas to attract many more visitors to the unique precinct, which includes businesses selling three-dimensional glass sculptures, homewares, clothes, crystals, plumbing supplies and even a motorbike repair shop.

Spokeswoman Samaya Zakay said every day in and around Byron Bay the question being asked was: "Where have all the artists gone?"

The answer: "Snuggled into Byron Bay's Arts and Industry Estate, where an arts renaissance is taking place."

Ms Zakay said the first priority was to improve signage to the estate so both locals and visitors realised its existence and diversity.

"At the BP service station there is no sign," Ms Zakay said.

"The next entrance to the estate is tucked away and the sign is shocking. It's falling apart and really shabby. And the sign on Ewingsdale Road is pretty much invisible. I had to look to find it."

This glass artist moved from her



BOOST AWARENESS: Samaya and Asaf Zakay, of Zakay Glass, want to raise the profile of Byron Bay's arts precinct.

Picture: DAVID NIELSEN

home-based business to the estate nine months ago and now has a beautiful shopfront next to her studio.

Ms Zakay said the estate was so full of potential it was ready to 'explode'.

To help attract more visitors, business owners are looking at the possibility of a shuttle service between the estate and the town.

"We're also looking at promoting the estate through gallery tours," Ms Zakay said.

"There are many businesses which include a shopfront and studio, and visitors would really enjoy walking through the many artistic businesses with the help of a well-designed map."

If you're not keen on walking,

there is a Byron Bay company that hires motorised cycles and a cycle tour of the precinct would provide visitors with an alternative to visiting the beach.

"There are more than 60 different art businesses here and tourists would really enjoy them," Ms Zakay said.

A steering committee had been set up with people taking responsibility for different aspects of the precinct, such as art-related businesses and retail outlets.

Ms Zakay was encouraged by the way motivated business owners had come together to spread the message about the estate, its vibrancy and diversity.

"We only moved in here nine months ago to step up our gallery. A lot of people who have lived here for 20 years or more know about us, but it seems many don't."

Ms Zakay said business owners wanted to make the precinct as attractive and customer-friendly as possible and a lot of effort would be gone into beautifying the locale.

"We really want to encourage everyone to be very vigilant about how their shopfront and surrounds look, making sure any rubbish is cleared promptly and keeping gardens neat and bright," she said.

"It's not like there's a great deal to do, but it will all make a difference."