

# Careful planning transforms Christ the King Primary School

*Bill Minnis*





*Exterior lighting adds to the atmosphere of evening events at the multi-purpose hall*

**W**hen Miro Martin was appointed in 2006 as principal of Christ the King Primary School in Deception Bay, Brisbane, all of the classrooms were relocatables. The oldest had been delivered when the first 23 students were enrolled in 1979, with extra units arriving one by one as the number of students enrolled increased.

Shortly after Martin arrived, work commenced on a three-stage master plan to build, over three years, 11 permanent classrooms, a library, a tuck shop, and to refurbish the existing small resource centre to house the school's administration.

Working with Bernard Rush, director of Macksey Rush Architects, the plan was developed and refined over the following 24 months. Work on Stage 1 commenced in February 2008, after \$2 million in state and federal funding was approved. This comprised six classrooms. Stage 2 saw another four classrooms, a preps room and the tuckshop completed last year. Simultaneously, \$150,000 received from the National School Pride program was used to construct shaded outdoor learning areas.

Work on the library as Stage 3 was ready to start when the BER program was announced. Catholic Education Brisbane was quick to apply on behalf of the Deception Bay school, receiving \$2 million to build a multi-purpose hall.

On top of the \$4 million plus received, Christ the King Primary was nominated as one of 10 Queensland schools located in economically deprived areas to share in funding aimed at improving literacy levels under the National Partnerships program. The school was allocated \$500,000, to be spent over four years, on buildings, equipment and specialist teachers; the first tranche was received in July this year.

## Miro Martin – “My best five years”



**M**iro Martin graduated from The University of Western Sydney in 1979. He has been a school principal for 17 years within the Catholic Education system.

Before moving to Deception Bay, he was principal for three and a half years of St Joseph's Primary School Murgon, near Kingaroy, Queensland. His career includes three years teaching at an Aboriginal school in Bowraville NSW and seven years in New Zealand.

His wife Alana Osborn is head of primary at St Eugene College – Burpengary, the next suburb to the north of Deception Bay.

He is a regular contributor to *Education Today*, writing on the day-to-day challenges of running a primary school located in an area that, historically, has had more than its fair share of struggling families.

He says that his five years at Christ the King Primary have been the most satisfying of his 32-year teaching career.

## buildings and grounds



*The library exterior*

“Everything on Miro’s wish list has been granted,” Martin jokes. “It’s been non-stop building since the start of 2008.”

The school sits within the grounds of Christ the King Church on Thompson Street, about 200 metres from the Deception Bay shoreline. The multi-purpose hall is beside the church, on the north side. Access to the school is via a u-shaped driveway and car park, providing off-street pick ups and drop offs.

The classrooms are in two groups, six on the northern boundary and five behind the resource centre in the centre of the site. Eucalypts and native plantings provide shade for outdoor areas, buildings and walkways.

Behind the multi-purpose hall, a small building previously used to house the school’s administration has been returned to the parish. The principal’s office and administration are now housed in the original resources centre, which has been refurbished to provide an attractive work environment and a welcoming first point of contact for visitors.

Except for the resources centre, where air conditioning has been installed at the school’s expense and may be switched on for the hottest months of the year, the school is not air conditioned. The single level classrooms and the library have high ceilings that slope up to their respective south walls and are oriented north/south to minimise exposure to afternoon sun and to take advantage of onshore sea breezes.

Splashes of strong colour have been used to contrast with exterior wall finishes, accenting entrances and drawing attention to the buildings’ purpose. The classroom blocks are clad with Colorbond panels in shades of light and dark blue-grey, while a blue column accents the entry to the covered locker area in front of the classrooms. At the library, a vibrant green concrete block wall points the way to the building’s entrance and an arresting oxblood red has been used to define an enclosure that juts from the east wall.



*External walkway affords sheltered access to the multi purpose hall*



*Eucalypts and bush plantings shade buildings, outdoor areas and walkways*



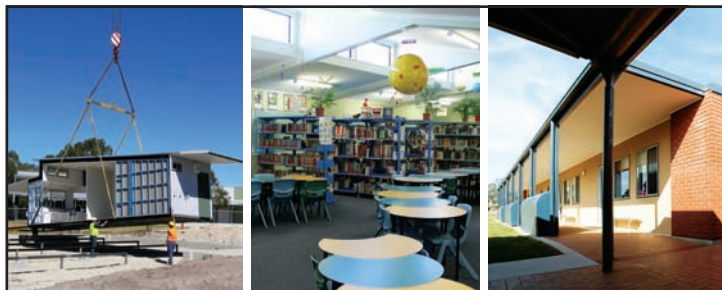


*Clockwise: Interior of the new library, completed in Stage 3 this year; classroom buildings and the multi-purpose hall seats 400 and can be divided by sliding partitions into two areas*

The colour splashes continue at the hall where the toilets and the kitchen are in two cubes, finished in blue and dark grey respectively, built out from the north wall adjacent to the main entrance. Both extend into the lobby area where the colours have been repeated.

The school hall is a study in how much can be achieved by careful use of BER funds. The seated capacity is 400 and the hall can be divided by sliding partitions when two events coincide. 160 mm panels have been used to insulate the roof and there are large ceiling fans and a louvred cross flow ventilation system to keep the internal temperature at a comfortable level when the hall is in use.

The structural ties have been enclosed with spotted gum and a grid of continuous fluorescent lighting installed to add visual interest to what would otherwise be a fairly plain space. Underfoot, timber look vinyl has been used for a low maintenance, hardwearing yet decorative finish.



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