

Learning Environments Australasia 2016 Annual Awards



Learning Environments Australasia (formerly CEFPI Australasia) is a professional association whose sole mission is to improve the places where children learn. As an affiliate organisation of the world-wide organisation Association for Learning Environments, members include individuals, educational institutions and corporations throughout South East Asia, Australia

and the South Pacific. The Awards program recognises excellence in learning spaces. It offers members an opportunity to showcase their projects through the online gallery and to share ideas and outcomes. The submission prompts reflection from designers, managers and educators alike that often extends beyond the Awards program, and can directly influence the use and engagement of the learning spaces provided.



Overall winner Caulfield Grammar

Category 1
New construction: entire new school

Winner
Officer Secondary College
ClarkeHopkinsClarke

Project description
Located in a rapidly developing outer suburb in Melbourne's south east, Officer Secondary College is designed to build strong community connections, and provide technology enabled,

differentiated learning environments that support personalised, student-centred learning.

The design features differentiated learning spaces across a double-storey layout to encourage increased collaboration between students and team teaching among staff.

Each of the six learning communities includes a diversity of spaces to support different modes of learning, including large collaborative spaces that can accommodate up to 50 students together with informal, social and creative learning areas.

The design enables teachers to move through

the spaces throughout the day, utilising the areas most suited to the varied learning needs of their students. The learning spaces effectively promote creativity and innovative teaching, and enable collaborative practice and team teaching so that learning is personalised and all students are prepared to become members of the global community.

The College Campus incorporates a Specialty Building, specifically designed for teaching science, art and materials technology, supports diverse programs including those that require



Officer Secondary College, Pictures Rhiannon Slatter



Officer Secondary College



Golden Square Primary School, Pictures Jonathan Wherrett



Golden Square Primary School

a combination of activities, allowing students to transition between theoretical and practical activities during a single teaching session.

The College also features a central Administration and Multipurpose Community Hub, which houses administration offices, a dedicated resource centre, and a range of multipurpose areas which are shared with the Specialist School adjacent and the local community.

Jury citation

Exceptional master planning of the Officer Secondary College supports the approach of strong community connections through display of multiple entries and articulated forms generating a series of 'connected communities'. General, specialist, and community based



Golden Square Primary School

program elements have been carefully sited, and the importance of in-between spaces has been fully considered. The crisp, vibrant, and confident exterior and spatial dexterity of the interior welcomes wider community utilisation,

increasing the social sustainability of this overall vision. The materials palette balances the need for robustness with a sense of fun through playful use of materials and collaborative settings.

**Commendation
Golden Square Primary School
K2LD Architects**

Jury citation

This project exemplifies the amalgamation of two local primary school communities to form one connected community. The idea of a playful, fun, and exploratory tree-house is evident in the planning and built outcome, and this serves as a strong metaphor for this merged community that was previously dispersed on Laurel and Maple Streets.



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Montagne Centre, Marist College Bendigo



Montagne Centre, Marist College Bendigo



Montagne Centre, Marist College Bendigo, Pictures Bill Conroy



Woodleigh Homesteads, Picture Drew Echberg

Category 2
New construction: major facility

Joint winners
Montagne Centre, Marist College Bendigo
Y2 Architecture
and
Woodleigh Homesteads
Law Architects

Montagne Centre, Marist College Bendigo

Project description

The Montagne Centre for middle years students is the first of a series of new school buildings planned for the green fields site of Marist College, Bendigo. The form of the building and its relationship to the surrounding landscape demonstrate careful consideration of the needs of a new school community, the Marist Hermitage origins and symbolism as well as the challenges and opportunities posed by the site. Comprising two pavilions linked by a central gallery space the building is long and low. It hugs the edge of permanent wetlands created in an area of the site

prone to flooding. On the east side of the Centre two timber decks and a small pier stretch out over the water helping to anchor the building to its setting. This aspect of the school, which is visible from the road, is a concrete expression of the philosophy of boundary-less learning fostered at Marist College.

Jury citation

The Montagne Centre for middle years students at Marist College, Bendigo embodies the design team's careful consideration of the needs of a new school community, the school's Marist Hermitage and symbolism, as well as the challenges and opportunities posed by the site.

The key pedagogical driver for The Montagne Centre design was the removal of physical barriers to learning experience in order to promote learning activity anywhere and everywhere. This is reflected in the variety of spaces and settings designed to support various modes of learning and student interaction, including food preparation, art and science investigations, private study and small group discussion.

Woodleigh Homesteads

Project description

The process of 'Re-imagining' the Woodleigh School learning environments, required a deep understanding of 'The Woodleigh Way'; the values and philosophy underpinning the school's origins. Opened in the 1970s, on a 20-hectare recently classified 'Land for Wildlife' bush property on the Mornington Peninsula, it is an Independent progressive school with an emphasis on independent thought.

Homesteads form the core of student life and underpin their unique model of teaching and learning – each building, a learning home for 70 plus students across Years 7–10. The time for new Homesteads had arrived. A lengthy process of stakeholder engagement, and brief analysis was undertaken to ensure the spaces embody and foster Woodleigh values in their built form.

Jury citation

This is an outstanding project chiefly because the design team's deep understanding of the school's educational philosophy is manifest in every aspect



Ivanhoe Senior Years Centre



Ivanhoe Senior Years Centre



Ivanhoe Senior Years Centre, Pictures John Gollings



Guildford Grammar School Preparatory School Development, Pictures Douglas Mark Black

of the Woodleigh Homesteads' design. Each Homestead is a home base for a community of Year 7 to 10 students, as well as a learning environment for the whole school. This means that the spaces are required to support a wide variety of social relationships and learning activities. They must also provide opportunities for the development of new learning and teaching practices, as well as fostering collaboration, belonging and ownership. The hearth at the centre of each Homestead is the social heart of the building that connects the adjacent learning spaces. Sliding walls and partitioning curtains can be used to further shape the interior spaces. Purpose designed furniture that supports different working heights and modes of learning can be easily reconfigured to create a variety of learning settings for connected, collaborative, varied, personalised and environmentally-focused learning.

Woolleigh's commitment to environmental education is embedded in the environmental function of the buildings, which is made visible and available to students to learn about and operate. Rain chains, for example, are used instead of downpipes to carry water from the folded iron spouts onto rocky outcrops below, which in turn direct it into overland swales planted with indigenous and native flora.

The relationships of the Homesteads to the site, the bush landscape and one another are all beautifully considered. These buildings of rammed earth, spotted gum, recycled ironbark, exposed concrete and glass appear to have grown out of the landscape such is their material sensitivity to the 'Land for Wildlife' classified site. They also have an embodied lightness accentuated by rooflines that suggest a bird in mid-flight held aloft by exposed roof beams and posts that communicate the structure of the buildings to their occupants. Careful consideration has been given to the transitional spaces around the buildings and the opportunities they present for informal learning. Undercover outdoor settings, rammed earth sitting walls and rocky ledges all create spaces for students to study, relax and make themselves at home.



Guildford Grammar School Preparatory School Development



Guildford Grammar School Preparatory School Development

Four commendations

Ivanhoe Senior Years Centre McBride Charles Ryan

Jury citation

The perimeter circular form is a curious starting point, but its irregular internal planning contrasts and avoids the radial influences related to the circle. The angular geometric overlay creates a series of varying interesting spaces mixed with break out areas. Classrooms are modelled on tertiary settings with flexible and collaborative spaces – supporting the 'planned' modes of learning – intensifying the activities of making, understanding and displaying. The central circulation provides a high degree of visual transparency within the complex, this allows passive supervision and encourages students to have greater independence in learning. Staff

areas 'peppered' throughout provide a collegial atmosphere and contribute to students 'feeling grown up' this is assisting to change the dynamic in student/teacher relationships!

Guildford Grammar School Preparatory School Development Christou Design Group

Jury citation

Guildford Grammar Preparatory School's collection of three new two-storey buildings for Years 1 to 6 students and teachers are designed to promote fun, play and exploration. Each building is structured around a visually transparent and physically permeable central street – the social spine of the building – that provides vertical and horizontal connections between the interior learning spaces as well as places for kinesthetic learning, movement and play.



The Mandeville Centre



The Mandeville Centre



The Mandeville Centre, Pictures Trevor Mein



Uni SA Mt. Gambier Learning Centre, Pictures John Gollings



Uni SA Mt. Gambier Learning Centre



Uni SA Mt. Gambier Learning Centre

These spaces are shared by children of different ages and have become important venues for younger children seeking guidance from older children who in turn are developing valuable skills as leaders. Children working independently in the shared spaces maintain visual contact with their supervising teacher who is working with other groups of children in an adjacent classroom space.

The Mandeville Centre
Architectus Group Pty Ltd

Jury citation

The Mandeville Centre has been designed as a focal point of the school community in function and location with linkages to all school operations. A strong sophisticated, clear architectural concept

and functional pin wheel planning strategy have determined this projects success. The brief asked for a variety of uses including:

- A new academic and common room centre for senior staff, Year 12 library and a Year 12 centre providing a transitional facility between school and university.
- Internally the atrium centre of the pinwheel – the library/common room has become the ‘hub’ of the school – it is described by the principal as light, bright, welcoming, beautiful, warm, elegant and academic.

Uni SA Mt Gambier Learning Centre
Russell Yelland Architects

Jury citation

This project is much more than a learning

centre. It needs to cater for a complex range of stakeholders that included both regional and visiting metropolitan staff utilizing workspaces and teaching facilities.

A north/south plan orientation has the central ‘piazza’ forming a linear spine linked to a variety of spaces and uses with flexibility a major ingredient – to allow for future as yet undetermined uses. The specialist learning spaces include a hospital ward, simulation laboratories and collaborative learning spaces. The inverted roof / ceiling provides an abundance of natural light and high ceilings – this has had a significant contribution to the success of the piazza.

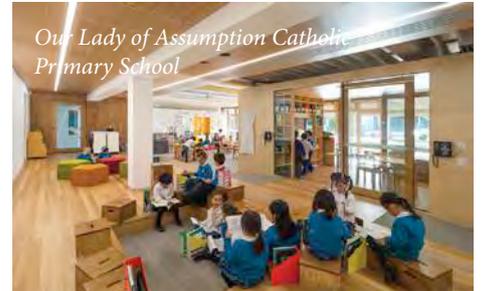
The introduction of local materials – stone and timber in key locations in the design, has reinforced the connection with the local community.



Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Primary School, Pictures John Gollings



Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Primary School



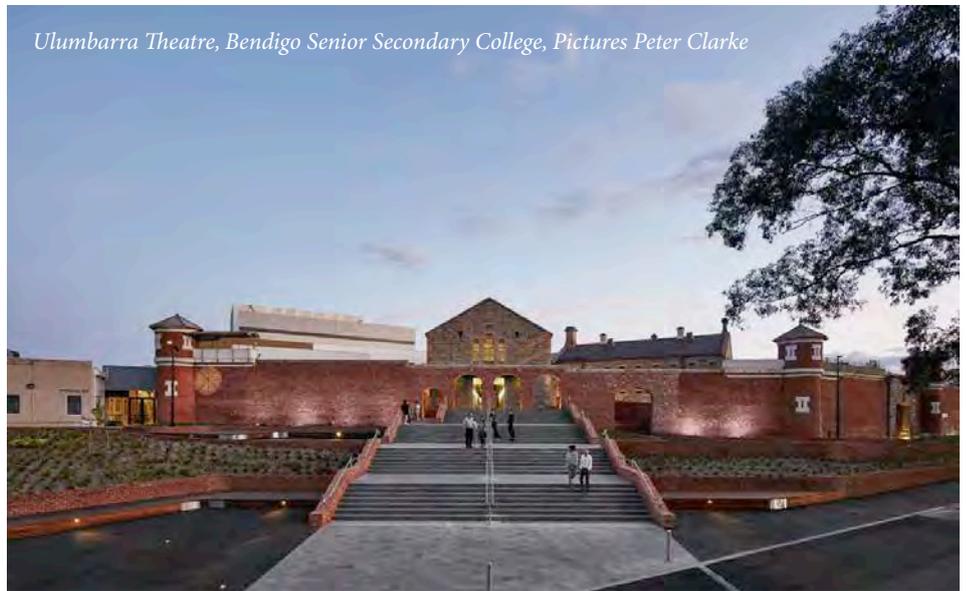
Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Primary School



Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo Senior Secondary College



Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo Senior Secondary College



Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo Senior Secondary College, Pictures Peter Clarke

**Category 3
Renovations / modernisations over \$2m**

Joint winners
Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Primary School
BVN Architecture.
and
Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo Senior Secondary College
Y2 Architecture

Our Lady of Assumption Catholic Primary School

Project description

This is stage one of a new primary school that reuses a 1970 three-storey former Telstra training centre. The challenges were to turn this unattractive soulless concrete building into an inspirational educational space. BVN were engaged to develop a master plan.

The project began prior to the appointment of a school principal, initial briefings to clarify the school's vision was developed in collaboration with members of Sydney Catholic Schools.

The resultant visioning documents provided foundations which the principal built upon.

The overarching design evolved from the visioning workshops and is based on these principles:

- Create a diversity of learning settings recognising diverse learning needs;
- Provide a high level of transparency showcasing learning;
- Provide a variety of differently scaled spaces to suit young learners; and
- Use materials that stimulate curiosity and create a warm and natural atmosphere.

Jury citation

The heart of this project is a clearly articulated theory of student-centred learning, sensitively translated and imbued throughout with a strong design ethic. This results in an educational complex of an exceptionally high standard, which invites all who enter to learn on multiple levels.

This is an elegant and playful re-imagining of school on many levels that started with the repurposing of a commercial services building into a place of learning that honours diverse

ways of coming to know. Its innovative spatial planning explores the simplicity of flexibility, in a manner that does not assert the requirement for flexibility, in ways that unwittingly create complexity.

Ulumbarra Theatre, Bendigo Senior Secondary College

Project description

Built in 1861 the Sandhurst Gaol stands as part of a government precinct overlooking its city. Bendigo Senior Secondary College surrounds the Gaol, hosting around 1800 Year 11 and 12 students on a tight campus block. In 2006 the gaol complex was transferred to the College, beginning a period of consultation with the College and community on the adaptation of this heritage listed facility into a Performing Arts Precinct.

Jury citation

This project provides the broader architectural and educational design communities with a courageous and visionary example of collaboration between the College, Capitol



the formal teaching and library spaces and the larger campus. This zone of transition becomes the 'main street' of the building, which has been shaped and furnished to facilitate a variety of learning assemblages and facilitate circulation.

The articulation, scale and materiality of the façade, while contemporary, are sympathetic to the heritage context. Overtime the weathering of timbers and the growth of vegetation will further soften this relationship and embed the project in the site.

With a clear focus on the need to balance competing learning needs - collaboration and reflection - in common spaces. This project provides an excellent example of how the careful shaping of the built environment can facilitate the transition from teacher to student centred learning in well established learning communities.

Charles Sturt University Engineering Building

Theatre, and government. This outstanding facility offers the students of Bendigo Senior Secondary an awe inspiring space in which to learn to become successful members of an established performing arts community.

Two commendations

St Catherine's Senior School redevelopment
Croxon Ramsay
and

Charles Sturt University Engineering Building
Thompson Adsett

St Catherine's Senior School redevelopment

Jury citation

The project intervenes to improve the spatial connectivity and social dynamics of the campus, identifying and improving on weaknesses in the functioning of the school community resulting from the pre-existing



arrangement of programme. The additions to the existing buildings are at once instructional and functional. They illustrate a change in educational values, elegantly accommodating changes in practice with reference to the old through the provision of informal transition and breakout spaces.

The judicious re-use of the existing built fabric preserves and celebrates the past, while re-purposing and re-imagining the remainder into a cohesive whole. The new areas provide an active and permeable edge that mediates between

Jury citation

This project cleverly resolves a highly complex brief within a pre-existing built form that presented many challenges. The design process was approached as an engineering challenge - complete with site visits, community engagement, a competition and media coverage - resulting in a built environment that is a clear and consistent articulation of what it means to learn to become an engineer in this context.

This project does more than pay lip service to constructivist theories of learning. At its core is a deep appreciation of the role of the built environment in supporting collaborative, activity-based learning. The site accommodates engineers in the first 18 months of their training, which is followed by four years of field study. As such, it has been designed to maximise opportunities for developing key relationships through shared activity in a variety of professionally inspired spaces that accommodate 'the pitch'; cohort dinners, creating, testing and refining; industry and community engagement; and exhibition spaces.



Junior Learning Centre, St Mary's Myrtleford, Picture Capture Detail Green



The learning Project for Caulfield Grammar School, Picture Dianna Snape

Category 4
Renovations / modernisations under \$2m

Winner
Junior Learning Centre, St Mary's Myrtleford
No.42 Architects

Project description
Following a fire the Junior Learning Centre was developed to fully support the Reggio Emilia learning approach for 50 students and two teachers.



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The Entering space welcomes parents to gather and support their children in selecting appropriate reading. A nook opposite the entry couch allows for a changing presentation and a display cabinet respectfully showcases individual's work.

The Building space enables the students to actively construct their understandings with social interaction. There are smaller spaces connected to this larger space for reading and reflection. The glazed area between the two larger spaces is a couch-in-the-round with the ability to close a sheer curtain to provide some privacy while maintaining supervision.

Jury citation
Within an extremely modest budget No 42 Architects have transformed traditional classrooms at St Mary's Primary School into a vibrant and engaging learning centre.

Planning and consultation were thoroughly executed to meet the school's needs to deliver early years education following the philosophy of Reggio Emilia.

The unfortunate event of a fire at the school enabled the complete 'gutting' of the area previously identified for refurbishment and allowed for a highly functional, environmentally sustainable and contemporary design to emerge.

Category 5
Educational innovation

Winner and Overall Winner
The learning Project for Caulfield Grammar School
Hayball (in association with LEARN, The University of Melbourne)

Project description
The Learning Project evolved from the masterplanning for Caulfield Grammar's three campuses in metropolitan Melbourne, developed by Hayball in 2013. It involves a project being developed at each campus to facilitate a shift towards bespoke facilities for new generation learning.

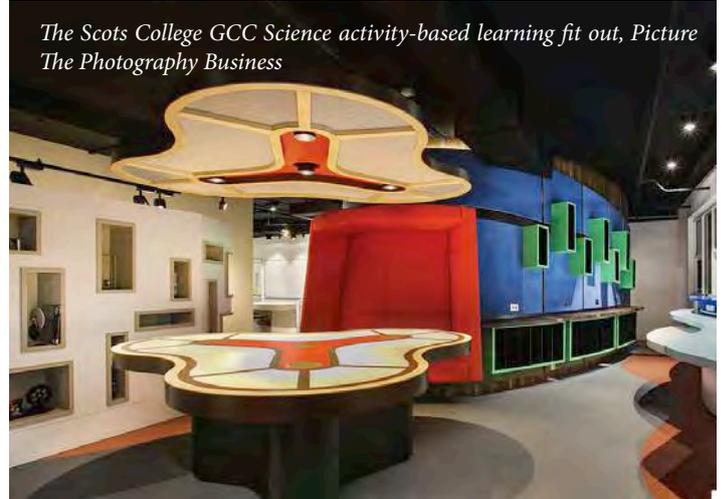
A prefabricated building designed for purposeful and differentiated learning has been introduced to each campus, with 33 exceptional features. Each feature is pivotal to providing an engaging learning experience for students spanning the ages of 5-18 years, and the clear purpose of each offers teaching staff significant choice in how lessons are delivered.

Jury citation
Caulfield Grammar School's Learning Project is a bold initiative that demonstrates the interplay between action that is knowledgeable and knowledge that is actionable. This collaboration between educators,

The Gipson Commons, St Michael's Grammar School, Picture Ian Davidson



The Scots College GCC Science activity-based learning fit out, Picture The Photography Business



architects and researchers is an important first step in setting new standards for the design of truly innovative learning environments.

The project consists of a series of similar installations deployed across three campuses to test a wide variety of spatial arrangements, designed to catalyse innovation in teaching and learning practice

Three commendations

The Gipson Commons, St Michael's Grammar School
Architectus Group Pty Ltd

and

The Scots College GCC Science activity-based learning fit out
JCA Architects Pty Ltd.

and

Woodleigh School Homestead redevelopment
Law Architects

The Gipson Commons, St Michael's Grammar School

Jury citation

The Gipson Commons is described by its inhabitants, 'not as a single building but as a neighbourhood of purposeful spaces.' This project is a fresh architectural resolution of the need for a variety of shared learning spaces within a larger coherent whole. It presents a blended array of quality informal and formal teaching spaces designed to reveal work in progress in a way that invites shared endeavour.

Using innovative 3D planning the design provides a sensitive and supportive spatial hierarchy for the entire school in a tight three-story complex, a high level of natural and artificial lighting, and external connection through views that preserve sweeping vistas of the wider community at work and play. The interior creates an inviting but professional atmosphere that celebrates the shared process of knowledge creation, using a well-crafted and refined materials palette that evokes calm.

Woodleigh School Homestead redevelopment, Picture Drew Echberg



This project achieves visual connection through transparency and a graded vertical transition from open communal areas to enclosed activity based spaces, without compromising acoustic integrity. As such, it provides a refined solution to the challenges presented by the competing demands of collaboration and reflection in shared learning environments.

The Scots College GCC Science activity-based learning fit out

Jury citation

Designed to raise the profile of science within the school and facilitate a pedagogical shift in teaching practice, The GCC science activity-based learning fit out, provides a series of spaces inviting students to become active participants in scientific enquiry.

By optimising each part of the whole for a specific learning mode, the space has the potential to accommodate several student cohorts undertaking different activities

simultaneously, in an area that had previously housed two conventional science classrooms and an adjoining lab.

Woodleigh School Homestead redevelopment

Jury citation

This is an outstanding project chiefly because the design team's deep understanding of the school's educational philosophy is manifest in every aspect of the Woodleigh Homesteads' design. Each Homestead is a home base for a community of Year 7 to 10 students, as well as a learning environment for the whole school. This means that the spaces are required to support a wide variety of social relationships and learning activities. They must also provide opportunities for the development of new learning and teaching practices, as well as fostering collaboration, belonging and ownership.

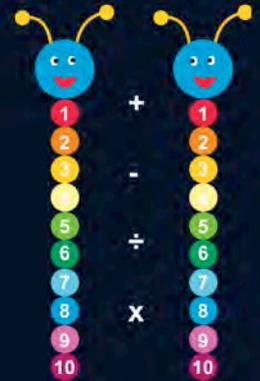
The hearth at the centre of each Homestead is the social heart of the building that connects the adjacent learning spaces.



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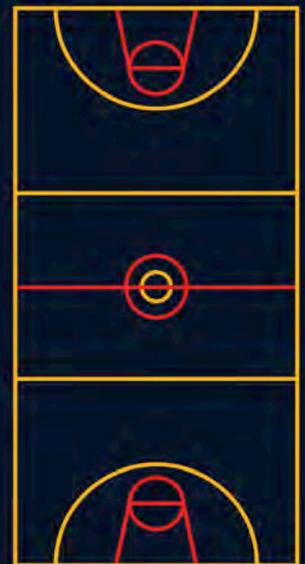
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Earth Sciences Garden, Pictures Michael Wright



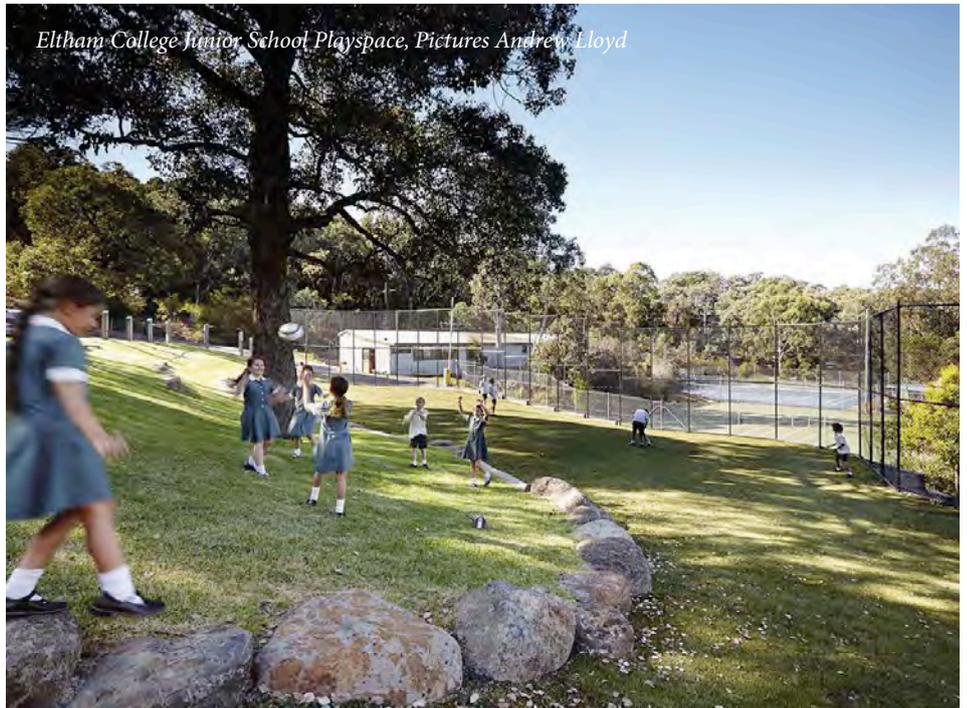
Earth Sciences Garden



Earth Sciences Garden



Eltham College Junior School Playspace



Eltham College Junior School Playspace, Pictures Andrew Lloyd

Category 6
Educational landscape /
outdoor learning area

Winner
Earth Sciences Garden
Rush Wright Associates Pty Ltd

Project description

Monash University's Earth Sciences Garden was created to showcase key features of the geology and geomorphology of Victoria and to establish an outdoor teaching laboratory for the study of Earth Sciences. The garden integrates rigorous geological science with landscape architecture and art making in a unique, hyper-real, semi-natural scene.

The garden establishes a new global precedent for the teaching of earth sciences. A collection of rocks is arranged around tracings of the shapes and forms of Victoria's geological and geographical features. These include the rocky Gippsland and Otway coasts, the western volcanic plains, and the sandy dune fields of the Wimmera Mallee region. The artificial landforms drain towards the central cracking clay pan, which holds water for short periods after rain. Feature rocks, stone pavements, gravels, mulches and plantings all echo the environments of specific regions of Victoria. Forms and shapes collide, creating difference and

roughness at boundaries and edges. The effect is more 'national park' than curated display garden. The 20 different types of rock, each representative of different formations and geological age, are specifically arranged so that students may map and understand the fundamental geological and geomorphological processes that have and continue to operate in Victoria. The angle, orientation, and specific placement of approximately 500 rock specimens tell a technical story about local geology, while the larger arrangements create a very diverse series of landscape spaces traced from regional geomorphology. Mapping the stones gives students hands-on insights, and experience of working in the field. Plantings reflect the unique flora of each region on display. These demonstrate the vital

biological links between the characteristics of each regional rock type, and the many ecological niches created by diverse geological processes over time. Students from a diverse range of disciplines can analyse the botanical qualities of the plants and the unique ecosystems, specific to each region. They can form an understanding of how closely intertwined the geology and environmental conditions, of a region, are to the flora and fauna that then evolve to colonise each specific habitat.

Jury citation

The Earth Sciences Garden delivers much more than an outdoor teaching laboratory. The jury unanimously agreed this is a stand-out and exemplary model addressing all the criteria of its category.



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It is described as “a new form of ‘system garden’– a place of knowledge, a physical library for teaching and research.”

The intent is to showcase key features of the geology and geomorphology of Victoria enabling students to study the dramatic variety of Victorian ecosystems in one central landscape. However, careful consultation and research, along with a desire to provide much more is evident in the garden. The ‘natural’ features which are specifically selected and created, including hand crafted elements, tell a story of the past but also look into the future.

The garden has established a new precedent for the teaching of earth sciences, showing that scientific knowledge can be embedded in outdoor learning. With creativity and imagination it has successfully melded art and landscape architecture to provide a beautiful space for the wider community including students, staff and neighbouring residents.

The amount of detailed consultation and planning required to meet the University’s expectations for the space as a learning tool , ensure authenticity, yet provide more than a ‘curated garden display’ is commended and evident in the “truly accessible form of education, and a ‘constructed ecology’ par excellence.”

Two commendations

Eltham College Junior School Playspace

Jeavons Landscape Architects

and

Woodleigh Homesteads

Law Architects

Eltham College Junior School Playspace

Jury citation

Eltham College sits in a picturesque, hilly, semi-rural setting in the outskirts of Melbourne. Learning and play opportunities were restricted due to poor connections between levels and indoor spaces, including the new Performing Arts Building. The College is committed to capturing the College values, experiential learning, creativity, innovative programs, learning beyond four walls, community, physical and social well-being and student voice.

The natural environment with its existing gums, has been well considered with ‘Nature Play’ located adjacent to Junior Learning. Materials selected through the play space enhance the natural landscape with the selection of natural and rustic elements including amphitheatre boulders, a carved log trough and large granite ‘standing stones’.

The changes made to the school and its operation, are immense providing flexibility and room for imagination and creativity. The project is commended for its execution and exceeding the Colleges’ expectations.

Woodleigh Homesteads

Jury citation

The Woodleigh School Homestead redevelopment is a response to the commitment to the natural environment. The school is unique, set on 20 acres, residing on the Mornington Peninsula. It is an independent progressive school with an emphasis on independent thought. A core aspect of the Homestead redevelopment is that they nestle into the bush landscape and contribute to the learning and connecting to ‘Place’. The outdoor learning spaces are an extension of the interiors providing flexibility and choice to suit the students’ needs. “The building’s ‘edges’ play a vital role in well-being. It is in these carefully crafted transitional zones, between being ‘in’ and ‘out’, we find places to connect, reflect and be “...just like home”

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