

South Melbourne Primary School wins Australasia's top education design awards – LEA



Overall Winner South Melbourne Primary School Architect: Hayball

Amongst a strong field of award-winning projects the South Melbourne Primary School stands out due to its successful integration of educational pedagogies, community infrastructure and architectural design.

Integration with the community was identified as an underpinning foundation of the project in order to allow for the 'Staff and City working together to ensure the village raises a child'. In response to this the architects have challenged the Department of Education's facility design standards to deliver a vertical school that sits within a public plaza and incorporates community facilities as well as an early learning centre. The community rooms, kitchen, café and sports courts are all designed for joint use between the school and the community – extending the use of the facility beyond school hours.

The three levels of learning neighbourhoods are exemplars of responsive, flexible settings for contemporary teaching. These neighbourhoods are threaded together with generous vertical circulation spaces that are activated and utilised

as part of the learning environment. Care is also taken to integrate outdoor learning areas and vertical play spaces that connect directly into the learning neighbourhoods.

The outcome is a rich and rewarding spatial experience for the whole South Melbourne community.

Category 1: New Construction / Entire New Educational Facility

This category applies to construction of a new school or educational institution on a new site

Winner: South Melbourne Primary School

Architect: Hayball

This project is an example of what can be achieved with the successful integration of educational pedagogies, community values and architectural design philosophies. The concepts around integration with the community, which were identified as a key design driver during the briefing stages of the project, are commendable; with the underpinning foundation of the design to allow for the 'Staff and City working together to ensure the village raises a child'. The project appears to achieve this goal by providing a community hub which utilises a shared-use model between school and



community facilities. Vertical schools are not a new concept; however, their typology often leads to issues with way-finding and vertical circulation. The vertical circulation within the building is treated in such a way that it forms part of the learning experience and journey; showing how architectural design can integrate with learning. The project also addresses zoning of learning spaces effectively across all levels to alleviate way-finding concerns. The design also responds to the restrictive site by providing external connections throughout each level with vertical play, and by providing outdoor spaces designed for multi-purpose use.

Category 1 Commendation Braemar College Stage 1 Architect: Hayball

This project shows a strong collaboration between architectural design principles and educational pedagogy. The design shows a unique reflection of site constraints and understanding of the College's pedagogical values, including teacher and student use of direct and passive learning spaces. The challenge with the Middle School age group is how to celebrate education while also instigating different levels of social interaction. This design of this project effectively creates a sense of ownership for the Middle School age group, while also providing integration across age groups. The design appears to treat 'flexibility' not in the form of providing a large empty room for adaptability,



Photographers: Brett Boardman, Alexander Mayes

Category 2: New Construction / New Individual Facility Over \$8 Million

This category applies to a new building or new buildings in an existing school or campus.

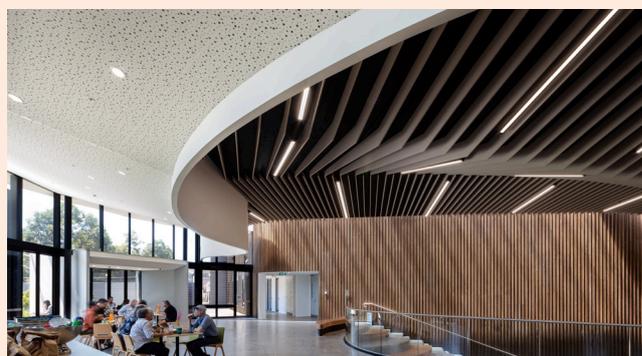
Winner: Taronga Institute

Architect: NBR Architecture

The Taronga Institute of Science and Learning is a unique work of architecture that successfully weaves together extremely diverse requirements into a wholistic user experience. A very thorough and detailed planning process was completed to formulate a complex brief with many different requirements running in parallel.

The built outcome demonstrates how a challenging design brief has been successfully synthesised to deliver a unique education facility with many varying purposes and interests across a range of education levels from primary to tertiary. The provision of engaging learning environments for such a range of ages and skill levels is commendable.

A highly sustainable building with a 6-star Green Star rating, the building demonstrates sustainability through many aspects including a passively ventilated central foyer, the



heart of the building from which all other functions appear to radiate.

Flexibility is provided for, particularly with the immersive classrooms which have been designed with the ability to be completely stripped out and transformed into different animal habitats, the first of their type in the Southern Hemisphere

The building lends itself to creating a new typology where science and learning exist together and are on display to inspire and educate all who encounter it.



Freemans Bay School

Simon Devitt Photographer

Overall, the strength of this project appears to have come from the briefing process, which shows a strong collaboration between the architect, the College and other stakeholders; and the success of the project reflects this.

Category 2 Commendation

Freemans Bay School

Redevelopment Australasia

Architect: RTA Studio

Freemans Bay School is an inspiring example of the alchemy that can occur when a passionate team collaborates to create a new learning environment. The depth of research and preparation that has gone into this project (particularly years of research on Principal, Sandra Jenkin's behalf) is evident in the built outcome.

Extensive user-group consultation, inclusive of the student cohort is highly commendable. A clear outline of the schools' desired pedagogical approach is articulated through an extensive brief development process.

It is evident that the desired outcome of a highly progressive

but by understanding the needs of the College and designed to both accommodate and instigate their learning values. The zoning within this project appears to be successful and creates a variety of different learning spaces for different learning types, while also providing integration between indoor and outdoor learning.

Cathedral Grammar Junior School, Christchurch



Photographer: Patrick Reynolds

learning environment is delivered through the large variety of learning spaces that cater for diverse learner needs. The spatial planning is successful as it allows the spaces to be transformed for a particular activity or group at any given time throughout the day.

One delightful element of the design is the collaboration with the students for colours and facade patterning which allows community ownership and engagement with their school. It is clear the original goal of 'design elements to support education that is learner centred, flexible, innovative and appropriate for the twenty first century' has been achieved.

Category 3: New Construction / New Individual Facility(ies) Under \$8 Million

This category applies to a new building or new buildings in an existing school or campus

Winner: Cathedral Grammar Junior School, Christchurch, New Zealand

Architect: Andrew Barrie Lab + Tezuka Architects

Cathedral Grammar Junior School is an outstanding building. Great effort went into the design process and the outcome is a beautiful, coherent building and an environment that supports collaborative teaching practice and students' well-being and sense of community.

The project idea was to create a garden school designed as if it were a house. This intent is clear in the configuration of three built forms arranged around a courtyard and linked by decks and covered walkways. A stair leads to a large roof deck, with a slide running back down making the building itself an adventure playground.

The spaces are naturally ventilated and have a close connection to the outdoors through generous openings to the decks and courtyard. The interior spaces also have strong visual connection to the lush greenery of the adjacent park. An immaculately detailed and designed modular furniture system enables teachers to create smaller settings within each classroom space.

The extensive use of timber and the exposed comprehensively detailed structure of the building give it material warmth and create opportunities for children to learn about the mechanics of the building. The outcome is a truly beautiful aesthetic with

St Pius X High School – Library, NSW



Alexander McIntyre Photography

multiple layers of education planning for the wellbeing of present and future users.

Category 3 Commendation 1

St Pius X High School Library

Architect: SHAC Architects

The St Pius X High School Library is a beautifully refined piece of architecture, as well as a modern teaching space that acts as a catalyst for educational change within the college towards more collaborative and active learning styles.

While the building fulfils the traditional role of the library, it has also been planned around the evolving teaching practices of the college including collaboration, group work, independent learning and active learning and teaching methods. The simple planning is given depth and complexity through its use of split levels and volume in order to create a variety to spaces and learning experiences. These levels also knit the campus together by creating multiple points of connection across the sloping site including a generous covered entry plaza off the main circulation spine of the college. The large central volume and the tiered seating area create a new social and gathering space for the school.

The simple palette of materials creates a contemporary building with connections to the traditions of the college. The building is finished with clever detailing to create a simple, elegant outcome. The light-filled library space and use of natural, warm materials creates a comfortable and inviting space.

Category 3 Commendation 2

Kolbe Catholic College – Food Technology Centre, Victoria

Architect: Smith + Tracey Architects

The Kolbe Catholic College Food Technology Centre is commendable for its simple and effective planning. Comprising two food technology laboratories with shared preparation space, a commercial kitchen, cafeteria, two general learning areas, and an edible garden zone the Centre is a built expression of its pedagogical and social functions. Which are to foster social co-operation and collaboration, encourage student engagement, promote authentic learning and enhance career pathways.

A prominent roof form shrouds and shades the building



extending west over an outdoor dining courtyard that links the cafeteria to the college plaza at the heart of the school. Elsewhere, the roof folds into a deep fascia that is cut away in places revealing a white soffit that announces key entry points to the building. Minimal internal circulation is required as most spaces open directly outdoors.

Each laboratory has a practical zone and a theory zone, which function together as an integrated learning environment, or as two discrete spaces separated by an operable wall. A central courtyard brings natural light into the deep building plan and in time green views and retreat. Seamless transitions between theory, practice, service and social spaces emphasise the Centre's significance as a venue for real world learning.

Category 4: Renovation / Modernisation Over \$2 Million

Winner: Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Architect: BVN

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School has used architecture extremely effectively to support a rigorous planning process and an ambitious design brief. The result is a de-institutionalised and playful learning environment which perpetuates connectivity and current pedagogical strategies – a proud addition and amenity for the school

Playful colours, natural materials and inviting 'nooks' blur the boundaries between learning and play while facilitating seamless transition between spaces. The end result highlights the high level of planning and attention to the guiding design principles. The architects' ability to integrate a sense of openness and accessibility throughout the multi-story building, whilst ensuring no compromise on the functional brief is inspiring.

In addition to an impressive list of ecologically smart initiatives, this school provides 'state of the art' education facilities with outstanding flexibility and opportunity for various multi-modal spaces.

With an engaging narrative which resonated with the school community right from the project initiation; a clever combination of natural materials and integrated gaiety brings the concept to life.

Overall, this building implements and symbolizes the 21st century definition of a 'primary school' in a brilliant and exemplary way.

Category 4 Commendation

LCI Melbourne

Architect: Gray Puksand

This project demonstrates what a respectful refurbishment of an existing building can look like, taking full advantage of the character of the building as it shapes it into an inspiring centre for creative learning.

The design uses the existing building's volume to create visual connections across all spaces and levels. The central gathering and gallery space ties the school together with cross-pollination potential. Individual programs utilise functional studio spaces that support hands-on learning while also providing access to collaborative, informal breakout and display areas.

LCI Melbourne gives an honourable 'nod to the past' in acknowledging the previous function of the building and highlighting the 'bare bones' architecture of the building fabric. This process has led to a unique aesthetic that allows the new functions of the building to intertwine and spread throughout the structure while remaining sympathetic to the building form. The interiors are calm and inspiring, perpetuating sense of pride and engagement.

The design suits the unique creative requirements of this type of facility and creates opportunities for the school to connect with others within the industry, which is an essential part of learning. The re-use of the existing warehouse is innovative, sustainable functional and beautiful, creating additional educational opportunities and visibility within an urban setting.

Category 4 Commendation

Mildred Manning Science Centre, Wesley College

Architect: Taylor Robinson Chaney Broderick

The Mildred Manning Science Centre project is an ambassador for excellence in educational science spaces. It utilised a through, research-driven process that considered the question of what a cutting edge science education facility could be. It moves away from the standard clinical 'white spaces' that science is known



for to a creative centre that aligns traditional teaching model of science with STEM and its modern, adaptive and visually stimulating teaching principles.

A rigorous planning process with the school community and international experts, kept science learning at the heart of understanding the building. The architects continue to build on the extensive R&D already undertaken by the school and merged the client ambition with realistic outcomes for the project site and budget.

The resulting design responds to its scientific needs in a future-focused community spirit, showcasing the opportunities learning can provide for the next wave of students. The project is the physical embodiment of a learning laboratory, with the ability to integrate 'live' experiments that perpetuate passive learning and student engagement in science and education.

It is an innovative re-use of an existing science block that has thoroughly benefited from its research-driven approach and is a benchmark project for successful early briefing and stakeholder engagement.

Category 5: Renovation / Modernisation Under \$2 Million

Winner: Domremy College, Solais Sandpit

Architect: Hayball

The Solais Sandpit is a very clever example of the reuse of a standard school classroom block into a transformative multi-modal learning space. The rigorous planning process involved, collaborating with an education consultant, staff and students, has led to an inspired use of existing space for contemporary modes of learning. The jury particularly liked the prototyping nature of the new space – to lead the development of other existing and new spaces on campus and to understand the variable nature of functional space – not just for students but also for staff.

Each of the six different spaces performs a unique learning function, whereby learning is purposeful and considered within its learning environment. Enabling different modes of learning in distinct learning zones creates student and staff agency and encourages more users to think about the link between what they are learning and the place they are learning in. The innovative



reuse of an existing building to create so many different spaces within a tight budget is to be commended. The use of the building as a catalyst for whole school change is a promising example of the possibilities of existing infrastructure to adapt to new contemporary modes of learning.

Category 6: An Innovative Education Initiative Designed to showcase significant contributions to learning environments by schools, educators, students, designers, community organisations etc

Winner: Domremy College, Solais Sandpit

Architect: Hayball

Domremy College, Solais Sandpit Learning Common highlights the success of an innovative learning environment with thorough planning and, in turn, great execution.

This project provides a flexible learning space that acts as a 'change agent', encouraging staff to reflect on and scaffold innovative pedagogical practices. A space that transforms the concept of 'classroom' to an 'environment for learning' where authentic collaborative and creative interactions are valued.

Students can engage in different ways in this flexible and non-limiting learning space – working individually, in pairs, in small and large collaborative groups to generate ideas, can find solutions and explore possibilities.

Writable internal walls and furniture together with digital



Domremy College, Solais Sandpit



Photographer Hayball

screens ensures that students' thinking and learning is visible and feedback from teachers is timely and relevant.

This environment stimulates the shift in emphasis from teacher-directed to more collaborative, co designed, student-led, inquiry based learning.

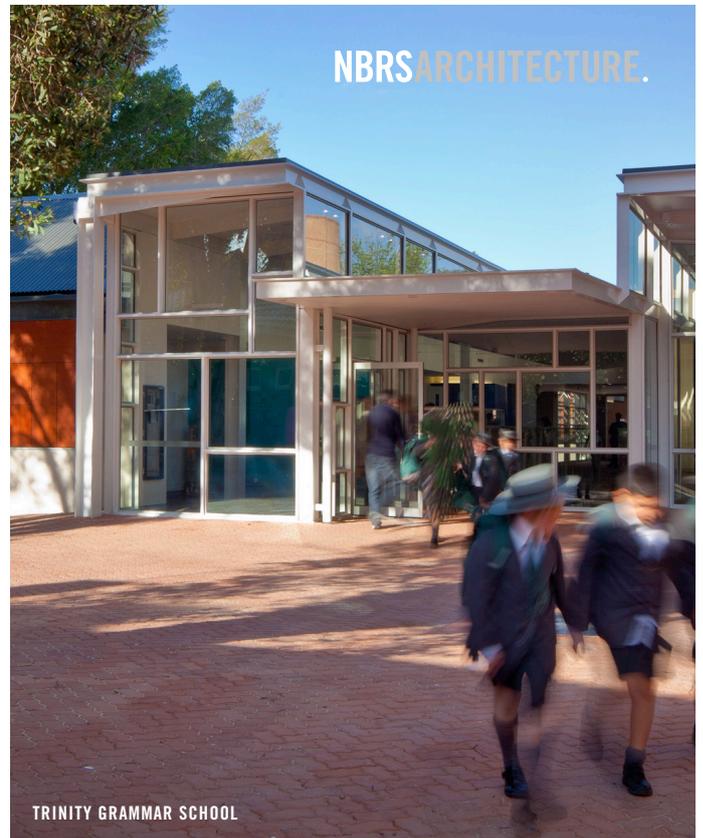
The Solais Sandpit offers a diversity of purposeful learning settings supporting a range of pedagogies from direct instruction to more collaborative and independent learning activities.

A significant highlight to this submission is that this prototype has been thoroughly tested, with multiple evaluation formats and findings now informing the next stage of capital works at Domremy. The post occupancy evaluation was an excellent indication of the success of the space – a clear representation of the project being used as intended.

Category 7: Landscaping/Outdoor Learning Area.
Designed to showcase outdoor learning environments targeted to improving educational outcomes
Winner: None

Category 7 Commendation
Alberton 'The Nest' Primary School
Architect: JPE Design Studio

The outdoor learning spaces at the Alberton Primary School offers a child-led play environment that embraces nature play,



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Category 7 Commendation

Ivanhoe East Primary School

Architect: Jeavons Landscape Architects

The Ivanhoe East Primary School landscape project is a great example of the power of consultation. The design team worked in collaboration with stakeholders, end users and contractors to create opportunities to solve infrastructure issues including structural engineering, drainage and erosion problems. This approach unlocked creative and engaging solutions for outdoor learning and play.

This submission provided evidence of a rigorous consultation process to understand the brief, the outdoor environment the stakeholders desired as well as the site specific conditions and constraints. The design process was informed by an in depth enquiry with students, including observation of play, the use of outdoor spaces and the types of learning and play opportunities most valued by students.

The link between the design outcome and the educational brief was clearly articulated. All outdoor learning, recreation and play zones were carefully considered to provide multiple opportunities to support school pedagogy and play through both spontaneous and directed activity.

The capacity for zones to be multi-faceted to support both learning and play, provides inherent flexibility for the use of the outdoor areas. The design responds to the location and incorporates skilful arrangement to overcome the site's constraints. Access and inclusion have been carefully considered with steps and wheelchair accessible ramp between different learning areas and levels.

The re-design of the rock embankment was the result of applying a child-focused, play based, natural and more sustainable approach to outdoor learning environments rather than simply addressing technical issues of structural engineering and drainage. The outdoor learning environment reflects the school's student-centred approach to learning and makes a powerful statement about the importance of play, discovery and connection between learning and our environment.

risk-taking challenges and loose parts play focusing on problem solving. Embracing the Reggio Emilia pedagogy where the environment becomes the third educator, the designers have interwoven additional sustainability resources including a rain garden.

The project team has demonstrated significant engagement and collaboration with the client stakeholders and most importantly the end user. This consultation focused approach included multiple meetings and on-site discussions, particularly with the students.

The jury was particularly impressed by the incorporation of sustainability initiatives that encourage educational learning including showcasing the landscapes of South Australia, the strong commitment to using chemical free natural materials (timber is untreated), and the demonstration of the lifecycle of water through stormwater collection from the adjacent car park.

The flexible play elements allow for imaginative play and the ability to express creativity which is an under-valued child developmental need. The commitment to inclusive design with wheelchair and ambulant access is commendable.

The jury applaud the collaboration between designer and the school in fulfilling the need for risky play which also provides challenging and inspiring play spaces. The incorporation of a risk benefit analysis prepared by the project team was fundamental in achieving this exciting school playground and contributing to a risk aware future society.

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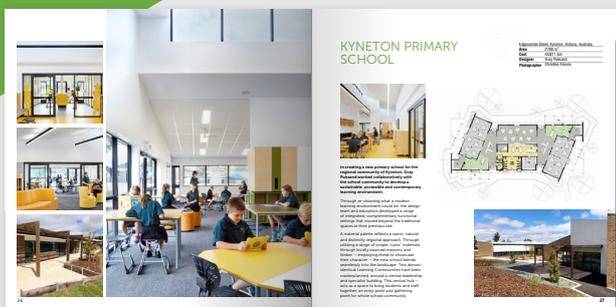
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