



Western Autistic School, Laverton Victoria  
Hede Architects

## CEFPI awards excellence in educational design

**T**wo juries were needed this year to assess more than 90 entries in the four categories of the 2011 Educational Facilities Awards. Members of the jury panels were educators, architects and project managers. Now in its third year, the awards have become a highlight of the Australasian regional annual conference of the Council of Education Facility Planners International (CEFPI), held in July at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Now in its 12th year of operation, the Australasian region of CEFPI has grown to over 400 members. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in improving the educational environment for students. Architects, engineers, educators, furniture manufacturers, project managers, facility managers are all represented in the membership.

“Our growth represents increasing interest by the educational community in the affect of the physical environment upon student learning,” said Janet Mattiske, Awards Committee Chair.

“The awards program is a vital part of the conference for members to appreciate what is being designed and built right across the



country and indeed, in Singapore and New Zealand as well. This cross-fertilisation of ideas is enriching for our profession.”

Winners in each category are supported by the Australasian Region to enter the International Awards Program which will be



*Kororoit Creek Primary School, Burnside Heights Victoria  
Architects: Hayball & Gray Puksand Architects in Association*



run in conjunction with the CEFPI International Conference Nashville, Tennessee in September.

“From previous international conferences and discussions with our international members, it is clear that our Australian Schools stand out in the international arena for innovative design,” Mattiske said.

## 2011 AWARDS CATEGORIES

### *New construction: entire new school*

#### *Selection criteria*

The jury was keen that the winner in this category would add new knowledge to the community, to educators and to architects. We looked for evidence of the links between researching and educating the community on the impact of the built learning environment on learning. Above all we wanted to be sure that the mission of the process was to create a built learning environment that added value to the experiences of learners, whoever they may be.

#### *Winner*

*Western Autistic School  
Laverton Victoria  
Hede Architects*

#### *Jury’s comments*

The extensive briefing process and attention to detail set this project apart from others and was the unanimous choice of jury members.

The detailed consultation process and research undertaken involving teachers, parents and community members led to a strong nexus being evident between the briefing, the building and the site solution. The design is centred on the people using the building, their experiences and those working with them. In other words, Hede Architects were very good listeners.

The result is a well researched and designed purpose-built facility which responds to the needs of autistic students and is also used a

teacher training facility for the Western Region of Victoria.

The use of internal wall shapes to guide and assist students, colour to distinguish student groupings and different learning spaces within the class pods, internal courtyards and controlled external learning areas and the connectivity between the various learning pods support the educational objectives of programs designed to meet the specific and special needs of students.

The planning and associated design outcome has also incorporated a range of ESD features including natural lighting and ventilation, energy saving through the use of solar panels and night purging and water harvesting.

The feedback from staff, related to the impact of the design on teaching and learning is, “it’s wonderful and it works”.

We commend Hede Architects on their award winning design.

#### *Designer statement*

This school for 144 students and 160 staff features pods containing three age groups up to approximately nine years old, giving students a transition through the school with changing aspects for each learning pod. Students are educated with the aim of going to a standard setting after nine.

Another pod, ‘Wattle’, caters for students who may not have coped with standard settings and can return to WAS for further assessment and training.

Each of the learning spaces in the pods offers a smaller space for calming, withdrawal or a more concentrated learning time. The pods are self-contained with kitchenettes, toilets, withdrawal and storage space enabling the students to develop independence in a range of life skills without unnecessary movement between areas thereby maximising learning time. The transitional pod prepares students for

movement to mainstream settings and therefore has amenities blocks outside the learning areas to more closely resemble that of a mainstream school.

The learning spaces within the pods create irregular shapes which enable students within the group of up to eight working with different focus points and thereby reducing distractions and enabling teachers to progress students differently. Central areas that serve the pods comprise music, art, therapy and social work area. These spaces are located for direct access off the pod entry passage.

Having several years experience in designing community buildings, Hede Architects were acutely aware of the importance of a thorough consultation process in order for the building to succeed in its aims. This building demonstrates a new approach to children’s learning areas where eight class spaces are grouped with shared access between each pair of learning spaces to a small kitchenette where life practices are used as a learning mechanism.

#### *Commendations*

*Kororoit Creek Primary School  
Burnside Heights Victoria  
Hayball & Gray Puksand Architects  
in Association*

#### *Jury’s comments*

This project was part of the Victorian PPP for the development of 11 new schools where the architects involved have developed a series of designs which embrace and reinforces Victorian contemporary teaching and learning practices.

The utilisation of educational experts and practitioners to workshop, review and comment on the spatial relationships, design proposals and practicality of the intended facilities throughout the planning phase has ensured that



*Adelaide West Specialist Education Centre, Taperoo South Australia  
Architects: Thomson Rossi/Perumal Pedavoli*

the finished buildings are innovative, creative and will meet the educational requirements of teachers and students.

In the case of Kororoit Primary School, strong connections with the Local Government Authority, leading to the inclusion of kindergarten and community swimming pool facilities, have enhanced the underlying theme of developing new school facilities based on a model of a small town servicing new developing areas of Melbourne.

**Adelaide West Specialist Education Centre, Taperoo South Australia**  
*Award presented to the Facility Planners, South Australian Department of Education and Childrens' Services.  
Thomson Rossi/Perumal Pedavoli*

#### **Jury's comments**

This new special school was developed for students with physical disabilities, sensory impairment, intellectual disability and some students that are non-verbal as part of a PPP development in Adelaide within the grounds of an existing R-12 school.

An extensive planning process involving parents and staff on the determination of the site location and further consultation during the post bid phase of the PPP process involved workshops

and design reviews. The physical environment is planned to expand the students' world and allow therapy activities to be undertaken in adjacent teaching and learning spaces, in addition to breaking down perceptions of an institution for people with disabilities.

With a strong nexus between the brief and design solution the final design provides a variety of learning and play spaces, both outdoor and indoor incorporating sensory gardens, bicycle pathways, classrooms and specialist areas filled with natural light and colour to promote independent learning through a series of stimulating learning environments.

**John Monash Science School, Monash University Clayton Campus, Victoria**  
*Taylor Oppenheim Architects*

#### **Jury's comments**

The John Monash Science School has been established within the Clayton Campus of Monash University as a partnership arrangement based on shared facilities for Year 10-12 students. The facility is intended as a centre of innovative, research based teaching and learning in science, mathematics, and technology and teacher development.

The design solution was based on an education brief developed through lengthy



consultation with teachers, university staff and students from surrounding schools. The physical environment is very different from traditional learning environments comprising open commons neighbourhoods and a central atrium running the full length of the building. This provides a variety of adaptable learning spaces to cater for different teaching methodologies supported by leading edge technology.

The building incorporates an energy saving building management system for controlling lighting, ventilation, heating and cooling, rainwater harvesting, double glazing and sun shading devices to reduce heat and glare and landscaping which requires no irrigation.

The end result is a well executed building providing students and teachers with a stimulating learning environment.

**New construction:  
major facility**

#### **Selection criteria**

The jury looked for entries that described transformative projects that resulted in existing schools being seen and used in new ways that fostered effective 21st century learning

#### **Winner**

**Pymble Ladies College Senior Centre,  
Kate Mason Building,  
Pymble NSW**  
*Pmdl Architecture and Design*

#### **Jury's comments**

In assessing this submission the judges unanimously agreed that the Kate Mason Building represented the culmination of a collective and rigorous planning process between the school and the appointed architects together with a design solution which fully reflected the experiences for each group and the



*John Monash Science School, Monash University Clayton Campus, Victoria  
Architects: Taylor Oppenheim Architects*



*Pymble Ladies College Senior Centre, Kate Mason Building, Pymble NSW  
Architects: Pmdl Architecture and Design*



school/community requirements.

The genesis came from a strategic review process which resulted in a restructure of the secondary school into three schools. This was in response to both the large size of the school and the need to differentiate the pedagogy and learning

This process involved researching exemplary

learning environments from around the world, visiting schools throughout Australia that utilise different learning space configurations.

Sustainability options were explored by the wider teaching staff and community who expressed their views on teaching and learning for the future.

A separate identity as a freestanding building

and entity also reaffirms the intent to create schools within a school.

The end result is a testimony to the thorough briefing and planning processes. The school now has a facility incorporating the latest technologies to support the educational programs and enhance teacher professional development in ICT across the school. A range



*St Kevin's Primary School New Learning Centre, Hampton Park Victoria  
Architects: Baldasso Cortese Architects*



*St Brigid's School Multi-purpose Learning Centre, Kilburn South Australia  
Architects: Brown Falconer Architects*

of ESD initiatives enable the building to achieve energy performance levels more than 80% in excess of the Building Code requirements.

The use of colour and furniture to accentuate the spatial relationships which support the collaborative partnership between students and staff has created a building which both parties have embraced. The learning environments provide optimal flexibility for learning engagement.

The contemporary architecture is sympathetic in materials and details to traditional building stock.

Students show great respect for the building and are leading and embracing more collaborative and diverse learning approaches.

Congratulations to Pmdl on achieving such an effective solution as an outcome of a thorough briefing process.



### **Designer statement**

The new Senior Learning Centre has been designed to create an open learning environment that encourages students to gain independence as they transit beyond their final years of high school. It features flexible and transparent learning spaces integrated with seminar rooms and common areas, a 260-seat lecture theatre and circular conference room, encouraging individual and collective learning activities.

The design grew directly out of the briefing process. Discrete learning spaces are interconnected and highly visible, and open to a shared common space which forms the hub of the building. The provision of a range of learning settings, including timetabled, non-timetabled and bookable spaces, creates a range of options not previously available in a campus comprising mainly traditional facilities.

Connection to the College Library, via a bridge, extends the reach of the centre and adds to the range of learning settings available to the girls.

### **Commendations**

*St Kevin's Primary School New Learning Centre  
Hampton Park Victoria  
Baldasso Cortese Architects*

### **Jury's comments**

The wider school community is seen as an integral part of the school and this is exemplified by the planning processes incorporated in the development of the new learning centre for Year 4 students funded through the BER.

The representative planning committee working with the architects provided detailed input from and feed back to their respective groups regarding proposed pedagogy, associated staff training, facility relationships and community usage. As a consequence the facilities incorporate a community meeting room and performances/rehearsal/instructional space which can operate separately to the learning areas.

Good levels of natural ventilation and light flood the deep internal footprint as the new learning centre incorporates ESD components related to energy savings, water harvesting, sun shading, natural lighting and ventilation and the use of movable walls.

Strong dynamic external forms create the



*St Augustine's Catholic Primary School Multipurpose Hall, Frankston South Victoria*

the use of extensive glazing to create the effect of bringing the outdoor woodland areas inside.

The facility incorporates high levels of environmental sustainability and new technical innovations incorporating tinted double glazing, insulated walls and ceiling panels, heat purging fans and water harvesting. Costing less than \$2.0 million the facility meets the educational requirements of the school and represents great value to all parties.

image of an exciting physical environment and have exceeded the expectations of the school community and reinvigorated staff to examine and adopt contemporary learning approaches.

**St Brigid's School Multi-purpose Learning Centre  
Kilburn South Australia  
Brown Falconer Architects**

**Jury's comments**

This project involved the staff and community, through the use of staff meetings, planning group forums, public meetings, interstate visits and research into recently completed facilities to define the brief for a new multipurpose learning centre. Student input through class exercises related to the development of their dream classroom and multipurpose facility. In planning for the provision of new, adaptable, and connected learning areas for class and shared use the diverse learning needs of the school and community were at the forefront of discussions.

Extensive research was carried out on the fit out of learning areas and this has resulted in a stimulating physical environment full of light, air, colour and comfortable furniture.

The use of movable walls, break out spaces and a shared community gathering place have

produced teaching and learning spaces which support students to become more independent, flexible and creative in their learning.

**St Augustine's Catholic Primary School Multipurpose Hall  
Frankston South Victoria  
Fred Buono Architects**

**Jury's comments**

The new multipurpose hall was part of the BER program and is designed to provide a wide range of learning environments to accommodate the schools evolving pedagogical requirements as well as the varied community uses. The clear vision of the end users (the school, parish and community) resulted in a highly disciplined briefing and planning process. The building stands alone from other buildings to create a community presence.

Using sliding curved panels to create different spaces for performing arts, lectures, assemblies, dance classes and soft sports, the architect has met the school's requirements.

The adaptability of the space is augmented by retractable tiered seating and the latest high tech fit out with A/V, theatre/ display lighting, control console and retractable projection equipment.

Large doors and covered area on both sides connect the interior with the external environment and expand the hall capacity and

**Renovation or modernisation of school or major facility**

**Selection criteria**

The jury looked for entries that described transformative projects that resulted in existing schools being seen and used in new ways that fostered effective 21st century learning.

**Winner**

**Yackandandah Primary School New Classroom Building  
Yackandandah Victoria  
NOWarchitecture**

**Jury's comments**

This school in a small country town has been reinvented in a way that has challenged the community but ultimately has exceeded the expectations of the students, staff and the community alike.

An innovative approach to heritage, and the challenges this has posed has contributed to community changes in attitude and approach. There is a good integration of passive and active ESD initiatives, that inform the design and the users. The high level of community consultation before and during the design process have led to clear pride and ownership by the school. While most significantly a new build, the connection and response to the existing site, buildings and context is well done and builds on existing relationships.



*Yackandandah Primary School New Classroom Building, Yackandandah, Victoria Architects: NOWarchitecture*

Positive changes in student attitudes and behaviour are already being seen across the school.

#### **Designers' statement**

Nestled in the Victorian Highlands, this project's contemporary form draws inspiration from the surrounding mountains, comfortably positioning the building within this historic gold rush town. The project revitalised the staff room, administration area and community artspace in the heritage school building, and created a new wing of three learning centres, canteen, multipurpose room and learning resource centre.

The new education spaces celebrate the timber structure, achieving spans typically considered the domain of steel to significantly reduce embodied energy. The soft acoustic quality of the learning areas allows spaces to retain their openness while maintaining group focus and individual comfort. Innovative furniture designed and selected by NOWarchitecture allows teachers and students to define their own spaces specific to the chosen activity.

This design considers its environmental benefit and impact. A passive hydrothermal airconditioning system is part of the building's

integrated environmental response, which reduces energy consumption. Avenues of heritage listed trees are seen through and shade the soaring windows which are carefully designed for controlled solar penetration and ventilation. The building itself is a tool for environmental awareness.

#### **Commendations**

**Sacred Heart Catholic School  
Modernisation of Learning Facilities  
Ulverstone Tasmania  
K2LD Architects**

#### **Jury's comments**

This transformative BER project resulted from an accelerated but inclusive consultation process. The process outlined seems truly innovative, including all stakeholders including the students.

Through focusing on what really mattered to the effective functioning of the school, an innovative solution, covering 60% of the school footprint, has been created that has offered the school exceptional value. Significant changes to the built fabric have resulted in a new heart, which is well received by the school.

Classrooms have been transformed with new

connections between learning spaces and also to the outside, literally through using outdoor learning opportunities and virtually through integrated technology.

**St Vincent De Paul Primary School  
Learning Centre and New Learning  
Neighbourhoods,  
Strathmore Victoria  
Law Architects**

#### **Jury's comments**

This innovative BER project has responded well to the design brief, time constraints and budget, and existing conditions. Through the creation of a new heart to an old school it has been transformed.

The project exemplifies creative use of space within an existing fabric and strong use of connections and levels to define zones within the new spaces created. The educational environment has been enhanced not only through use of colour and selection of materials, but also through the scale and diversity of spaces provided. Significant re-use of existing fabric, combined with the approach to daylighting and ventilation have fulfilled the ESD objectives of this project.



*Sacred Heart Catholic School Modernisation of Learning Facilities, Ulverstone Tasmania Architects: K2LD Architects*

## An education initiative, a design solution for an innovative program

### Selection criteria

The jury looked for entries that advanced the knowledge and practice of educators and designers alike in developing and responding to learning environments, and demonstrated successful ideas and approaches that had the potential to be applied to many other situations and circumstances.

### Winner

*St Michael's Grammar School, Allan Pizzey Building  
Melbourne Victoria  
Architectus Melbourne*

### Designer statement

The design of the new building is based on the 'Reggio Emilio' educational philosophy which describes the environment as 'the third teacher'. The new junior school caters for four-year-olds in kindergarten through to Year 4 students. The building's scale, form and finish responds to children in these age groups by creating varied environments using space, light, volume, enclosure, and tactile experience.

Rather than the traditional model of cellular classrooms off a corridor, the learning spaces here flow into one another and offer multiple possibilities of configuration and use.

Underpinning the design approach is a thorough commitment to achieving an environmentally sustainable facility. The learning spaces are naturally ventilated, have good levels of natural light, and use low emission materials and finishes to ensure good air quality. Passive shading devices are used to limit solar heat gain in the warmer months. An insulated concrete wall panel system is utilised to provide thermal mass within the building during the winter and insulate against hot summer weather, while also providing a good acoustic barrier with respect to adjoining properties.

### Commendation

*2025 The Learning Continuum,  
ENVISION Student Partnership  
Program*

*Milsons Point NSW  
NBRS & Partners Pty Ltd*

### Jury's comments

This innovative learning and information sharing project is a true meeting of education and architecture. It has given young designers an

opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of 21st century learning, not only considering the learners and the spaces, but also encouraging architecture students to explore and develop ideas.

Congratulations to NBRS in investing in young designers in this way.

### Statement

The Classroom of 2025 project is a comprehensive exploration of the rapidly evolving trends in pedagogy and technology in education. The ENVISION students' research identifies the contemporary issues and evolving trends in school environments and defines the elements of flexible and adaptable classroom design. The final phase of the project will be to propose a range of progressive design solutions that support emerging learning models fit for 21st century which will be published so we all can experience the shape of the classroom of the future.

As an innovative approach in fostering student development, the NBRS+PARTNERS ENVISION Program involves three university students in the dynamic life of an architectural firm, providing insights into multiple stages of architectural design projects.

"Just as our education research advocates learning by doing, the experiences we have had



St Vincent De Paul Primary School Learning Centre and New Learning Neighbourhoods, Strathmore Victoria Architects: Law Architects



St Michael's Grammar School, Allan Pizzey Building, Melbourne Victoria Architects: Architectus Melbourne



Architecture students Stephanie Brancatisano, left, Tiffany Liew and Diana Labutis

being immersed in a vibrant office environment are so valuable.” *Daina Labutis – Student of Architecture, University of New South Wales.*

The ENVISION Student Program is one of many creative partnerships that NBRSPARTNERS has realised. In upholding the architecture firm’s vision to create life-changing environments, the student partnership reinforces the importance of multiple perspectives and collaboration in the design process.

“The collaborative attitude of NBRSPARTNERS in sustaining creative partnerships is an aspiration for us in the future.” *Stephanie Brancatisano – Student of Architecture, University of Sydney NSW.*

NBRSPARTNERS is a people focused practice that strives to enrich people’s lives. By developing creative design partnerships their portfolio of public buildings universities, schools, churches and residences exhibit an understanding of those concerns from the perspective of the people whose lives will be affected by it. Above all the firm seeks to design environments that will have positive life changing effect on people. **ET**

