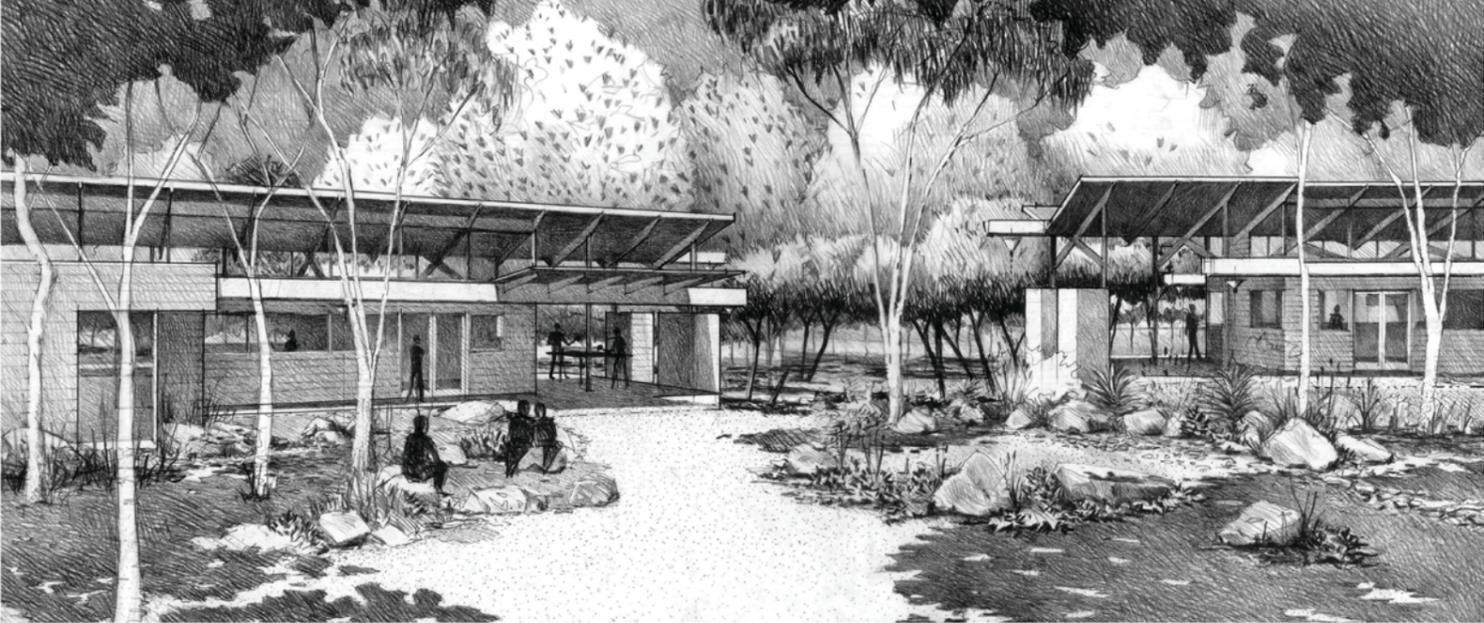




**P R O J E C T   D O S S I E R**  
JAMES D. MACCONNELL AWARDS

**W O O D L E I G H**  
S C H O O L



# P R O J E C T W O R K S

The Woodleigh Homesteads play an integral part in the progressive and unique teaching styles of the Woodleigh School as a whole. The project consists of redeveloping the 6 Homesteads each consisting of four groups of between 16 – 18 students from Years 7-10. The buildings are each a single storey structure

built on a \$5.4 million budget in Langwarrin South. The idea of the homestead is the notion a space that feelings like a 'home'. Like home, the homestead is responsible for the nurturing and growth of each of its members, providing both direct learning spaces and areas to socialise, play and reflect.

## E X E C U T I V E S U M M A R Y

The Woodleigh School in Langwarrin South is a school of independent thought with an emphasis on providing a progressive curriculum within a sustainable natural environment. The project provided three new redeveloped Homesteads that could continue to enabled the rich and unique teaching styles at Woodleigh school.

The key to the success of the project was instilled in the sustainable, material and community aspects of the school. By enabling these the outcome has in turn maintained the core ideas and philosophies underpinning the schools origins, 'The Woodleigh Way'.

Sustainability in the project was important, both in the way it was implemented and as an educational tool for the occupants. It is as much the myriad of 'small choices' made through all phases of the design and construction, such as timber tables made with structural beam off cuts, as it is the more obvious technical systems like the walk-through thermal labyrinth that have made these buildings intrinsically sustainable.

The homesteads built form transitions seamlessly between inside and out, using materiality to connect with the natural environment, allowing it to flow throughout the buildings. Locally sourced

rammed earth, CoC (Chain of Custody) spotted gum timber, exposed concrete floors and granite rock allow the bold gestures of the soaring truss roof, solid mass walls and folded iron spouts to sit harmoniously within the landscape. The interior design is a natural translation of the whole, complimenting and extending the architectural expression through fine detailing, textural interplay and an intuitive material palette.

The design and architecture successfully captures the inherit values of the Woodleigh school. However, it is the process of the project, from start to finish, that has capture a sense of community engagement. Workshops with the students and teachers have provided vital information into the planning and design of the buildings, seeking out what the actual occupants desire in their homesteads. The construction of the buildings has even inspired a sense of local community spirit. Involvement from local subcontractors, a VCAL apprentice on site and the school communities engagement with the landscapes creation.

As a whole, the Homestead redevelopment at Woodleigh school aims to test the boundaries of how space can inform our educational experience. The course of the project has in itself provided an insight into the learning process and will continue to provide the Woodleigh school with an invaluable resource for years to come.





*'There is no growth without struggle'*

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The homesteads project at Woodleigh is foremost at the benefit of the students and their furthered education.

Pre-existing challenges to the learning environment:

- > Access to a variety of tools and resources to support teacher and student learning
- > Develop and utilize diverse teaching styles
- > Students to work with a range of peers in physical settings that are conducive to collaboration and self-directed learning.

Pre-existing assets:

- > A desire for 'homeliness'.
- > Teacher lead learning activities within traditional classrooms.
- > Spaces to support independent learning.

Vision for learning:

- > Connected learning
- > Collaborative learning
- > Varied learning
- > Personalised learning
- > Environmental learning

Homesteads form the core of student life and underpin their unique model of Teaching and Learning. A lengthy process of stakeholder engagement and 'brief' analysis was undertaken to ensure the spaces embody and foster Woodleigh values in their built form. As a whole the project has added immense value to the wider school community. The school has been enthusiastic to be involved from design and planning stages right through to the construction. As the school continues to grow and learn in these buildings they can feel a sense of ownership and pride in the design that has been accomplished.



# EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Fundamental to the programmatic working of the homesteads is the school's motto "There is no growth without struggle".

The concurrent workshopping and analysis carried out by The University of Melbourne's LEARN Group research body, ensured the school's pedagogical intent was manifested in the new Homestead's planning and design.

The new homestead design strives to support the curriculum by:

- > Careful internal planning and spatial relationships teamed with sliding walls and partitioning curtains generate contemporary spaces that facilitate connected, collaborative, varied, personalised and environmentally-focused learning.

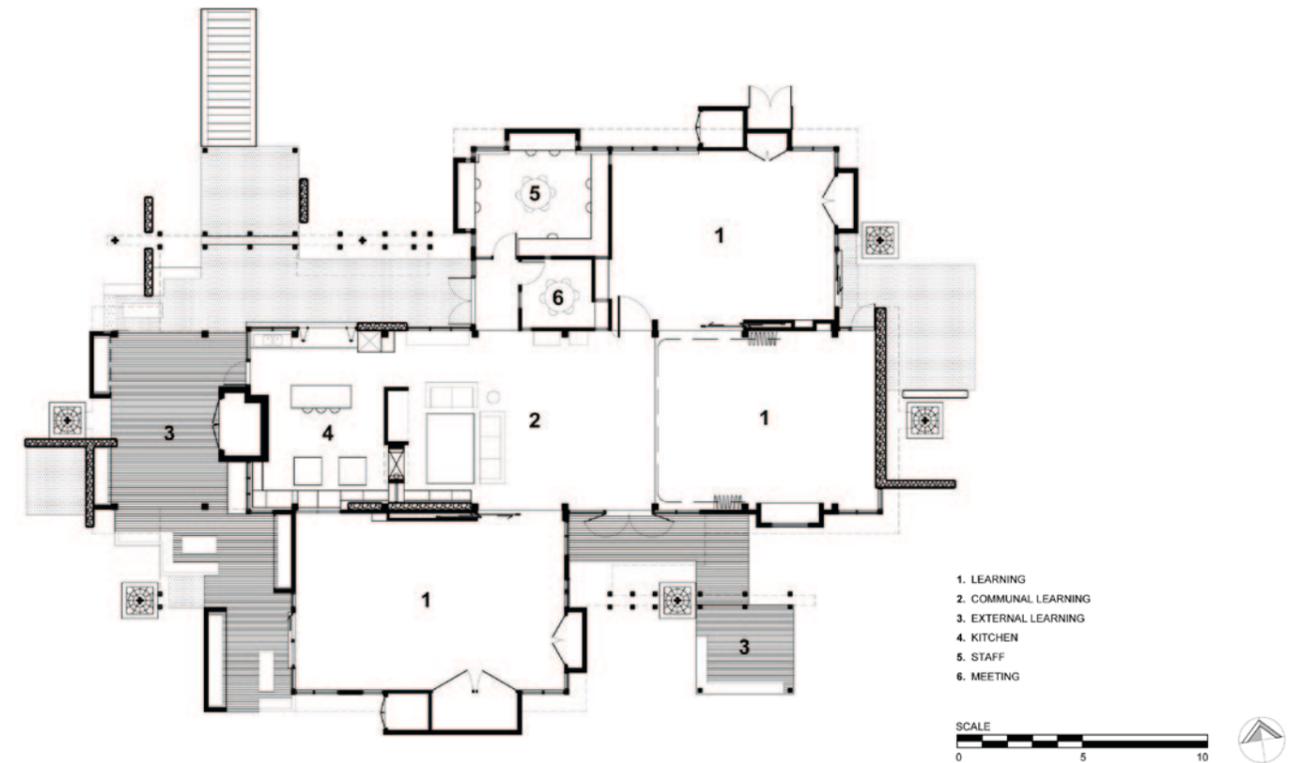
- > The spaces are required to perform in many guises, challenging old and new teaching and learning approaches, whilst simultaneously instilling a collegial sense of belonging and ownership.

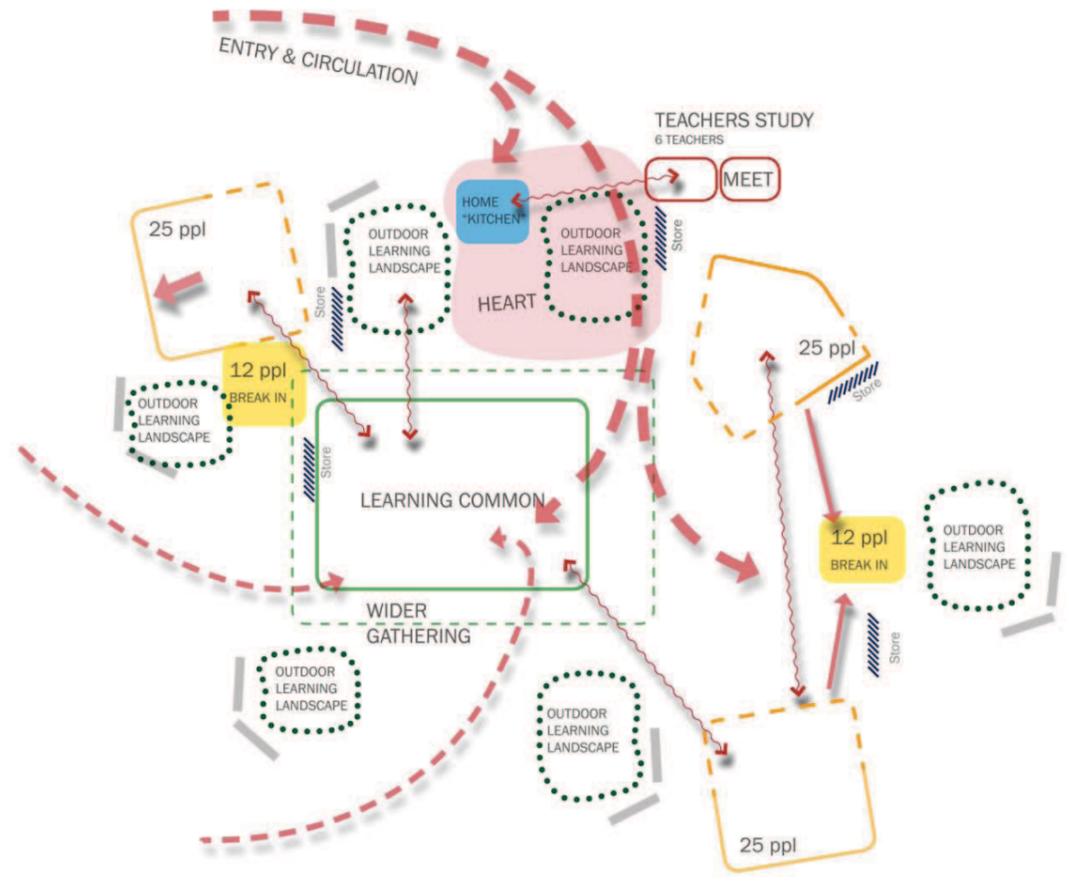
- > The seamless interplay between indoor and outdoor spaces acknowledges that learning happens everywhere and community is enabled when 'edges' and transitional zones are carefully considered.

The environment now has the capacity to support variety of new learning and teaching styles.

- > The programmatic design breaks free from traditional notions of pedagogy.

- > the homestead is responsible for the nurturing and growth of each of its members, providing both direct learning spaces and areas to socialise, play and reflect.





# P H Y S I C A L E N V I R O N M E N T

> Central to homestead life is the notion of feeling at 'home'. Within the walls of the homestead students feel accepted and gain a sense of community within their environment.

> What separates Woodleigh from others of its nature is the homesteads ability to act as a 'home base', instilling in the student a great sense of belonging and ownership of the space.

> The seamless interplay between indoor and outdoor spaces acknowledges that learning happens everywhere and community is enabled when 'edges' and transitional zones are carefully considered. These new dynamic learning spaces progress, embody and foster these values in their built form.

> Moving through the spaces the scene is constantly transforming through strategically located windows and openings. The building's 'edges' play a vital role in social wellbeing.

> In the carefully crafted transitional zones, between being 'in' and 'out', we find places to connect, reflect and be....just like home.

> The careful and strategic placement of the buildings was heavily informed by not only the significant existing vegetation but also the relationships and connections between each other and the landscape.



# PROJECT & PROCESS OUTCOME

“There is no growth without struggle”. The Woodleigh school is motivated by a curriculum and an environment that strives to encourage a variety of learning. Like many schools there are moments of traditional pedagogy, however there is an endeavour to encourage independent learning and growing.

The design of the Woodleigh homesteads demonstrates an environment that can cater to both traditional and new pedagogical standards.

The Homestead redevelopment at Woodleigh school tests the boundaries of space and the way it informs out learning experiences. A sense of community has prevailed throughout the design process, construction phase and will continue to provide an invaluable resource for years to come.

