

# Inverleigh Primary School

Architect:  
**NOW Architecture**

Project Address:  
**High Street,  
Inverleigh VIC 3321**

Project Cost:  
**\$0.9 m**

Occupation Date:  
**Dec 2008**

Capacity:  
**150**

Year Levels:  
**P - 6**

This project delivers “three birds with one stone”; Flexible facilities, Community inclusiveness and Environmental sustainability. It completes the School’s Masterplan which pioneered environmental and pedagogical philosophy when it was developed in 1996. It unites two existing buildings; the heritage 1865 bluestone schoolhouse, and the RAIA Award winning 4-GPC building completed in 2000, also by NOWarchitecture.

A key design challenge concerned the floor level of the heritage schoolhouse, which is 600mm below the flood level of the adjacent Leigh River. The site was landscaped with a ramped path to the school entrance to achieve both attractive universal access to the elevated floor levels in the new buildings. A platform lift was installed to provide disability access and flood evacuation of the schoolhouse contents. The design solution was achieved through extensive consultation with School Council, Teachers and Parents. The entire design then underwent a rigorous process with a Government selected heritage advisor, ensuring that the best possible outcome for the heritage schoolhouse while also delivering spaces which supported the School’s modern Pedagogy. The project was delivered within budget.

The project delivers a new Administration building, Multi-Purpose heart and through refurbishment of the 1865 schoolhouse, a Library/Resource/Performance Centre. The school’s Travel allocation was consolidated to create the Multi-Purpose heart for Art, Music and PMP - activities for which the school had no scheduled entitlement. This space has expanded the school’s ability to deliver a broad curriculum responsive to a pedagogy of interconnected learning experiences, and is also used after hours for community activities, meetings and as a foyer/break out space when performances are held in the heritage schoolhouse.

The Administration building can be staffed by a single person at Reception in various configurations, including secure privacy when required,

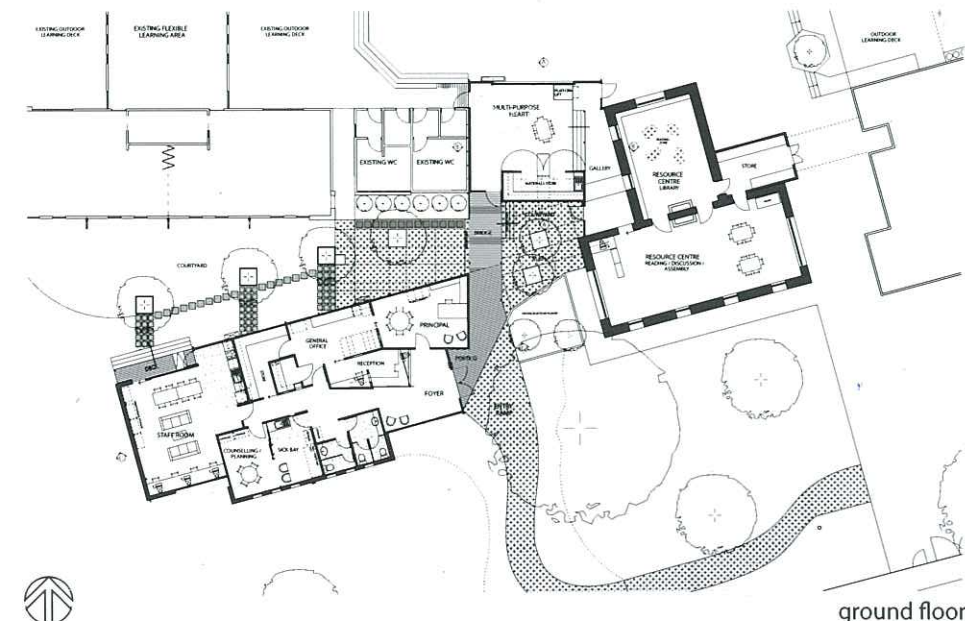
while maintaining observance of the school Entry. An operable wall in the Sick Bay allows this space to be used for multiple tasks and concurrent events (treating injuries, visiting therapists/counsellors, etc) while maintaining privacy and confidentiality. With the wall retracted, a larger space is created for student immunization programmes, staff planning meetings, etc.

All the new spaces utilise the full volume of the structure, providing cathedral ceilings and extensive glazing. This sense of openness and generosity creates light and airy spaces which maximise the comfort and creativity of students and staff.

Without inclusion within School facilitation and refurbishment, the heritage schoolhouse would have fallen into disrepair, become a liability and been lost to the proud history of this pastoral township. The school now utilises the schoolhouse as part of an complex of education buildings which are also easily adaptable for fetes, festivals and sporting events, contributing to the cultural and social life of the town beyond the school. The staff room, for example, can function as an afternoon-tea room during a school fete, being well linked to WCs, and a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces which come alive with stalls, games and activities.

Environmental Sustainability : Effective ESD features are integral to this design. All buildings are oriented to induce natural north-south cross ventilation and even natural daylighting. Walls and roofs are insulated to R3.5 and R4.0 respectively. Windows are low-e glazed and shaded appropriately to reduce solar gain in summer and provide solar penetration in winter. The plywood cladding is manufactured from plantation timber.

The bluestone walls are locally sourced, have high thermal mass to reduce summer heat gain, insulate against heat loss in winter and lower the embodied energy of the building by providing an internal wall surface which will never require additional finishes or maintenance.



The under floor water tanks store 31,000 litres of rain water to supply staff and student WCs, and provide significant thermal mass which creates temperature ‘lag’, stabilising internal temperatures. This dramatically reduces the school’s energy requirements for heating and airconditioning throughout the year. As a result, operation costs are significantly reduced.

With long term vision, the School and Architects have created a flexible learning facility responsive to the current pedagogy, the community and the environment.