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CASE STUDY



**A new model of learning at Monash University's Learning
& Teaching Building**
Melbourne, Australia

Designed by John Wardle Architects, Monash University's new Learning and Teaching Building (LTB) accommodates the Faculty of Education and provides over 60 new learning and teaching spaces to all Monash University students and staff.

Made up of just four levels, the 28,000sqm building is divided into different zones that break-up each of the floors, giving a sense of enclosure whilst being within a much larger floorplate. We spoke with Amanda Moore, Associate at John Wardle Architects to who gave us some interesting insights about the project. "We wanted to make a big building feel intimate and easy to navigate. The LTB has clusters of spaces at each corner of the floors to provide intimacy and the feeling of being within a smaller space" says Moore.

For the new LTB, Monash University and John Wardle Architects partnered with Schiavello - leveraging local manufacturing capability - to produce customised solutions that would break the mould and deliver a space that enriches a new teaching and learning experience.

A space that empowers students to take control of their learning experience

Creating a collaborative space that put students in charge of their learning experience was at the forefront of the design for the new building at Monash University's Clayton Campus. Moving away from the traditional model of on-campus learning, a goal of the LTB was to provide as many on-campus interactive and collaborative learning spaces as possible. "Giving students [a sense of] agency and the opportunity to take control of their learning was a key focus of the project" says Moore. In this new model of teaching and learning, there is greater interaction between students and teachers.



Schiavello custom seating

Shifting to a non-traditional approach to education meant that the LTB would not be designed as a traditional education space. Rather, inspiration was taken from commercial workplaces and the diversity of spaces offered in the modern working environment. The team at John Wardle Architects sought to create a "Sticky building" - a building that is always occupied; a space where students want to spend their time" explains Moore. Thus, the LTB provides students and staff with a variety of different spaces and empowers them to choose the space that is going to support how they want to learn at any given time.



Schiavello Marina Fold Table

A variety of spaces & products to support different ways of learning

To truly deliver a 'Sticky building' the LTB includes spaces and products for the different ways of learning, working and interacting. Schiavello's Krossi sit-stand system was customised to include a writable work surface that encourages group interaction and problem-solving. The electric, height-adjustable table can support both formal and informal learning as well as serve as a sitting or standing height workstation for individual or group working tasks.

The Marina table, by Schiavello, is used throughout the building. A variety of different shapes and sizes were produced to create tables that would suit the various different spaces within the LTB. On castors, the Marina fold table offers even greater flexibility, with students and teachers able to adapt and reconfigure spaces to meet their changing needs.

To balance out the collaborative spaces, the Schiavello Focus Booth provides places of quiet within a bustling learning environment. “It was important that we provided spaces for all work modes within the building” Moore explains. Catering to both independent and group working was an important component to ensuring that the LTB was a space where students could work and interact before, during and after their classes.



Schiavello Focus Booth

Bespoke seating provides ergonomic comfort for short & long-term use

It was important that all spaces within the LTB were comfortable enough for students to use for extended periods of time. As most informal and casual seating is not intended for long-term use, there was a need for customised seating options that were informal but still provided a level of ergonomic comfort. In partnership with Monash University and John Wardle Architects, Schiavello designed and manufactured bespoke seating especially for the project. The custom pieces with specific angles of recline, firmness and comfort, were incorporated throughout the space to support both short-term and long-term use.

Through customisation, the informal seating throughout the building can be used by students for socialising and interacting as well as studying and working independently.

New classroom lecterns changing how students & teachers interact

The strength of Schiavello’s customisation capability was demonstrated again in this project with the design and manufacturing of a bespoke lectern for the large learning and teaching spaces.

A key design decision for these spaces was to remove the traditional lectern typically seen at the front of a lecture hall or classroom. Instead, the designers wanted to include interactive touchdown points that would promote changes in the way that teachers and students connect and interact within the learning environment.

To deliver this vision, Schiavello manufactured round, magnetic lectern tables with integrated power and AV capability. Moving even further away from the traditional classroom model, these touchdown points were immersed within the learning spaces – rather than being positioned at the front of the room. Drawing the teacher into the space amongst the students and keep them moving through the room, “the teacher becomes less of an information provider, or lecturer, and takes on the role of a facilitator or mentor” explains Moore.



Bespoke Lectern

Customised Ultimet System panels create secure, private spaces for academics

Right from the beginning of the project, Schiavello worked in close collaboration with John Wardle Architects and Monash University to create a back-of-house, office solution that was aligned with the innovative learning and teaching spaces in the LTB. The intent for the staff area was to “transition from the traditional, academic workplace model to something where academics can still have secure, private spaces, but are not fully enclosed” says Moore.

Through customisation, prototyping and testing Schiavello’s Ultimet System provided a completely demountable, reconfigurable solution that could offer greater long-term flexibility for Monash University. Value-engineering ensured that the private offices were manufactured and installed within budget, whilst still meeting the designer’s specified, high-end finishes of perforated veneer panels, aluminium frames and glazed glass doors and panels. Internal acoustic panels assist with sound absorption and provide academics with a level of acoustic comfort.

Chosen for its quality and durability, Schiavello’s Krossi electric, height adjustable workstations are included throughout the academic workplace, with Cache storage, providing consistency across the Clayton Campus.

In sharing what aspect of the project she is most proud of, Amanda Moore, of John Wardle Architects, expressed that she is pleased with the overall success of the building and how students are using and occupying the spaces within the LTB. “We aspired for the building to be loved by students and we believe that we were able to successfully achieve this”.



Custom Ultimet System panels

Interior design by John Wardle
Photography by Eugene Hyland