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The considered and layered approach to this project, which perfectly marries a beautiful and dynamic aesthetic with sustainable merits of extraordinary scope, pushes the boundaries of built environment to exist as an active and inspiring learning tool. Part wonder, part utility, the Melbourne School of Design for the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning engages with students as a functional place of learning, while posing extraordinary architectural conundrums for the students to consider. Moreover, nothing has been compromised to achieve these outcomes. Rather, solutions are knit of the project's needs and a sustainable ethos that includes education as inherent to the future.

Designed as rigorously for the teachers as the students, the layout and flow facilitate a flexible teaching and learning environment for teachers, students, researchers and academics. Moreover, the considered use of materials and transparent overlapping of planning and spatial relationships effectively demonstrate the how of the structure as a teaching tool specific to the School. Indeed, one of the main briefing requirements was the concept whereby the building itself becomes an educational tool for the occupants, to provide a catalyst for learning. This tenet has been welcomed into the interior in both subtle and overt ways. In its flexibility, the design of the building facilitates collaborative interdisciplinary participation and the critical exploration of challenging built issues, and allows for a multitude of formal and creative activities.

The transparency of the building supports the vision of a living learning building. Carefully exposed materials and structures allow the user insight into the construction processes. Features include the woven stainless steel mesh balustrade and open top gallery, allowing for further transparency between floors and across different spaces, while forgoing

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prosaics in favour of refined transparency, integration and ventilation. Innovation is key in a building this dynamic and parametric design was used to model floors and ceilings. The result is the ground floor arcade that uses five different sized precast concrete pavers, with five correspondingly different aggregate mixes to create a subtle field pattern reflecting traffic flow densities. Basement lobby and auditorium lighting layouts provide linear downlighting clustered according to need.

Embedded in the design choices is a commitment to sustainability. Awarded a six-Star Green Star Design – Education Design v1 rating by the Green Building Council of Australia, it is the first education facility to be awarded the maximum 10 Green Star innovation credits.

Initiatives include a 750,000-litre precinct wide rainwater tank, which supplies grey water throughout the building and treated water for use in the cooling towers, buildings and precinct. Design strategies are responsive to Melbourne's climate utilising diurnal variation, natural ventilation, thermal mass, daylight and optimal sun shading to create a learning environment attuned to its climatic context. Building services have been designed with reference to best practice, including life cycle costing analysis. Renewable building materials have been used in lieu of steel, contributing to a reduction of the embodied energy. And, as important as these elements are, it is the execution that binds the whole to present an exceedingly handsome environment that impresses, without overwhelming, which marks this project above all. As such, it was unanimously selected as the IDEA 2015 Overall Winner and richly deserves such accolades, for an exceptional design.

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