

## 2024 LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AUSTRALASIA DESIGN AWARDS



### JOINT CATEGORY WINNER: NEW BUILDING/S OR FACILITIES - LARGE (Category 3)

A new building or new buildings in an existing school or campus, value over \$10 million.

**Aitken College, Cumberland - Junior School Years 3-6**  
1010 Mickleham Rd, Greenvale, Victoria, Australia

**Architects:** Hayball

#### ***Summary Citation***

Aitken College, a P-12 independent school in Greenvale, Melbourne, partnered with Hayball in 2016 to develop a masterplan emphasizing modern, flexible learning spaces. In 2019, the College developed its pedagogical vision and guiding principles, informing stage one of the Junior School project, the Cumberland Building, catering to Years 3-6. The building houses facilities for Performing Arts, Technology, Visual Arts, and Administration, prioritizing sustainability. This collaboration reflects a deep connection, integrating visionary planning, innovative design, and adaptable functionality. Meticulous planning, stakeholder engagement, and responsive design fostered alignment with educational objectives. The project's dedication to STEAM-based learning, holistic development, sustainability, and energy efficiency sets a high standard for learning environment design, enriching the educational experience.

#### ***Full citation***

Aitken College, a P-12 independent Primary School in Greenvale, Melbourne, collaborated with Hayball in 2016 to create a masterplan for its expanding campus, aiming to design modern learning spaces with flexibility and direct instruction areas. By 2019, they finalized their Pedagogical Vision for Learning Spaces and Guiding Principles Design, shaping stage one of the Junior School project, which focused on building facilities for Years 3-6, including Performing Arts, Technology spaces, Visual Arts, and Administration. This partnership between Aitken College and Hayball reflects a deep connection, resulting in a dynamic, future-oriented environment that seamlessly integrates visionary planning, innovative design, and adaptable functionality.

From its outset, the project embraced a meticulous planning process tailored to the evolving needs of Aitken College and its educational philosophy. Extensive stakeholder engagement, involving the Principal, Deputy Principal, Junior School leadership, Project Coordinator, and Business Manager, ensured that diverse perspectives were integrated into the project's development. This inclusive approach fostered a sense of ownership and alignment with the project's objectives, enriching the final outcome.

Central to its success is the project's adept response to pedagogical objectives and spatial requirements. Through iterative exploration and responsive design, the team has crafted a 21st-century learning environment that seamlessly integrates responsive spaces with areas for direct

instruction, group collaboration, play based learning, and individual learning. This long term vision, manifested in a detailed masterplan, lays the groundwork for an educational landscape that adapts and grows.

A feature of the Aitken College project is its dedication to STEAM-based learning and holistic development. Specialist spaces tailored to project-based learning, exhibitions, and performances highlight its versatility and adaptability, enriching the educational experience beyond traditional classroom boundaries. Furthermore, the integration of learning opportunities through play within vertical outdoor spaces promotes creativity and interaction, enhancing student engagement and exploration.

Beyond its architectural innovation, the project exemplifies a steadfast commitment to sustainability and energy efficiency. Passive design elements, active systems, and a comprehensive building management system emphasise its environmental stewardship while providing valuable learning opportunities for students, aligning with Aitken College's ethos of holistic education.

In summary, the Aitken College project stands as a shining example of excellence in learning environment design, embodying the principles of collaboration, innovation, and sustainability while laying the foundation for a vibrant educational future. The panel congratulates the school, community, and architects for achieving a high-quality outcome.