



# WESS Building our Future

September 2019



## WOW! If we fast forward twelve months,

we will be on the cusp of launching the extended campus and our Preps and Year 1s will be getting ready to make their way to their new homes!!

When I think about how much is, and has been, involved in the process of building our extended campus, I'm reminded of just how many people, behind the scenes, are heavily immersed in the fine detail of balancing the bricks with the teaching goals of the school.

The quiet site next door belies the intense activity of everyone involved in bringing it to life. Our extended campus is a school community-led building and I've tapped the shoulders of experts amongst us to make sure we get the best out of the building.



Master Planning Committee meetings



Our WESS Vision and Values



Niamh from 4AL using flexible learning furniture

As always, I am focused on ensuring that the expansion reflects our school's values as well as providing an environment where teachers can maximise learning opportunities for our WESS students to become curious, life-long learners.

With our learners in mind, we are currently implementing research-based teaching practices, which centre on flexible learning principles. WESS is an early adopter of these principles and interested teachers have been trialling some of these flexible learning practices within an action research framework. Flexible learning is where teachers create a learning environment reflective of the many different learners in their class. Whilst it may sound simple in design, it is actually a complex process, which requires teachers and students to know how they learn best. The focus on flexibility in design supports students to self-regulate and tap into their curiosity and creativity. Our extended campus will include design elements and the flexibility to implement various learning areas to cater for our learners. Read about this further in this newsletter.

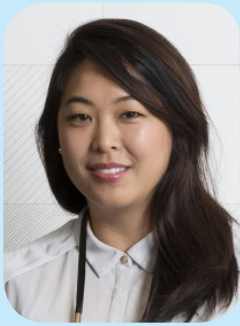


To help us make sure the design meets our goals, Prep teachers Sarah Kelly (Koalas) and Kylie Heron (Wombats) have been heavily involved in what our early years' learning spaces will look like; Tania Venuto (WESS teacher librarian) has been working on creating an inspiring design for the new library; Patty Murphy (4PM) and Amanda Lowry (4AL) have been trialling flexible furniture in their classes this year; and Joel Saunders (4JS) has drawn on his experience playing 20 gigs a year in two bands to look at the acoustic design of the performing arts space. These are only a few of the teachers who have had their say on what they know will work best for our students.

I'm really enjoying being the common thread between the teaching team, the Master Planning Committee, the School Council, the P&C, our students, the Department of Education, and the architects and helping each share their expertise to make our school the best it can be—the results, I know, will be amazing!

**Kim McNamara, WESS Principal**

# Meet our architects—Cox Architecture



Christina Na-Heon Cho, Director

Christina is passionate about creating active, inclusive, and inspirational learning environments.



*Delivering a place of learning, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging and community engagement that comes with the best schools.*



Steven Harth, Associate

Steven has an expert knowledge of education, conservation, and adaptive re-use projects, and is passionate about delivering engaging, modern places of learning that focus on the student experience and creative learning opportunities.

## Delving into WESS design with Cox Architecture

### What is your vision for the design?

A belief that well-designed physical environments can enrich the individual student in a variety of ways, and sustain effective and inclusive learning communities.

### What do you think is the most important aspect in developing the design?

Places shape how we see ourselves and our feelings; they have the capacity to motivate our performance and to directly impact the outcome of what we do. The new learning environments at WESS's extended campus have been an opportunity to create authentic and student-centred learning experiences.

### What do you hope students will gain from your design?

The extension has been designed as a learning topography, with multiple opportunities for learning outside of the traditional classroom and a strong connection to the natural environment. This empowers and motivates students, benefits student health and wellbeing, and celebrates the social dimension of learning.



Stage 1 3D model —early years' learning areas



Colours that will feature in the new campus





## Timeline

**Now**—tender closed for Stage 1 of the expanded campus

**October 2019**—awarding of Stage 1 tender to the successful contractors

**Before the end of 2019**—building of Stage 1 commences

**Term 4 2020**—16 early years' learning rooms of Stage 1 open to take in the Preps and Year 1s.

## A new way of learning—flexible learning environments (FLE)

WESS is an early adopter of flexible learning principles and has been implementing FLE for the past two years in various classrooms throughout the school. We have been doing an action research project on FLE to ensure that we make the right choices for all WESS students.

### What is FLE?

Students are individual—each learns in their own unique way and responds differently to stimuli. The classroom adapts and evolves as education practices and student needs evolve and change, with teachers working closely together to plan for instruction based on student need.

### What does FLE look like?

- Spaces adaptable to a range of needs—individual, small group, large group, whole class
- Variety of learning areas to suit different styles of learning and students' preferences
- Spaces where students can group to collaborate on tasks
- Spaces where teachers can extend the learning for students who need it
- Spaces where teachers can support students' individual learning needs
- More shared space—learning through observation.

### Which WESS classes are trialling new classroom design elements to assist furthering flexible learning principles?

- Preps (on rotation)
- 2SP
- 4PM
- 4AL
- 5CW
- 5HG
- Various other classes are trialling smaller elements.

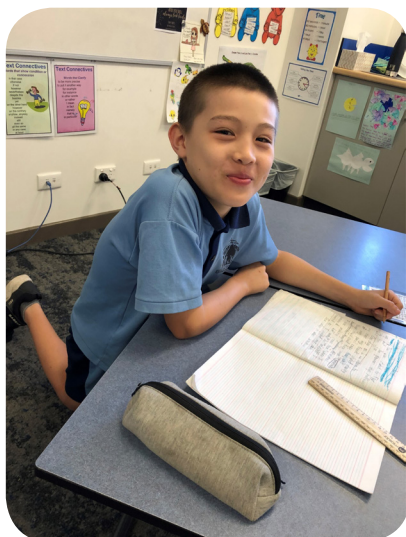
### Why adopt flexible learning principles in FLE?

- It creates a sense of student ownership of the space and how it's used
- It has a positive impact on student attitudes to learning
- It best supports the diverse learning needs of our students
- It facilitates active and collaborative learning
- Students can better self-regulate their emotions and their learning enthusiasm by having a greater say in their learning journey
- Students like to learn when they have the freedom to self-direct elements of their education.

*"Student engagements and outcomes are always our priority. Flexible learning environments support these with a Brisbane 2018 study showing a 15 percent increase in academic outcomes of a flexible learning environment compared to traditional educational delivery."* Amanda Lowry, 4AL.



Tracey and Chantelle using the seated desks in 4AL



Arthur (4AL) enjoys working at a kneeling desk



Design enhancing gross motor skills



Stephen (4PM) working at a standing desk



Patty Murphy (4PM) and Amanda Lowry (4AL) and their combined FLE classroom

## Extended campus—flexible learning environment (FLE) design

Our extended campus focuses on matching the use of the spaces with the design of the building.

- Large, open spaces for whole class learning and instruction
- Classrooms able to open onto large corridors—bringing the outdoors in
- Learning spaces with flexible furniture and learning hubs to allow collaborative learning
- Furniture that will assist learning activities—flexible to students' learning needs.

## Design considerations

Sustainability is a key consideration for the WESS community. It has been at the forefront of the Master Planning Committee's decisions with sustainable and recycled options chosen when able. The design aims for:

- 100 percent recycled nylon
- Use of marmoleum—a natural alternative to linoleum; CO2 neutral product made from natural materials such as linseed oil, wood flour, limestone, and jute
- Multiple purpose glass including writable film.



The Master Planning Committee deliberating colours and textures





## Our extended campus design inspirations from interstate schools



*Focus  
on flexible  
learning  
spaces*



### Early years' classroom design

Prep Year Leader and Koalas teacher, Sarah Kelly, and Wombats teacher, Kylie Heron, have swapped the classroom for the architects' boardroom to make sure the needs of WESS younger students will be met at the extended campus.

They have been working behind the scenes on the new early years' learning spaces ensuring that their experiences influence the design of the early years' classrooms.

*"We know what fosters a love of learning and our job is to create spaces that do that."*

### Early learning spaces in the extended campus

- Classrooms opening onto large corridors creating collaboration spaces among the classes
- Home corner within each Prep class for storytelling activities and dramatic play
- Book area to foster a life-long love of reading
- Gross motor walkways and activity stencils in the corridors surrounding the early learning spaces
- A teaching wall in each classroom with whiteboards, magnetic boards, and cupboards
- A neutral colour palette to let students' learning and artwork become the main design feature.



Kylie Heron (Wombats) and Sarah Kelly (Koalas)



Designs will enhance gross motor skills

## Our new library

"I want to inspire a love of reading with the new library. WESS students are prolific readers and enjoy reading for pleasure. I hope to encourage more reading, more storytelling, and more love for books."

Library design has been spearheaded by our Teacher Librarian, Tania Venuto.

The library design draws on the most-loved aspects of the current library, which Ms Venuto designed, and ties in with the West End value for nature and sustainability.

Our teacher librarian Tania Venuto



More books, more storytelling, more reading in store for WESS students

## Extended campus nature-themed library

- Green colour scheme
- Tree icons in the design
- Wooden tree bookshelf as the key central feature
- Break out spaces
- Quiet spaces
- Spaces to play board games
- Window seating
- Spaces for friendship groups to gather
- Planter boxes
- Log seating
- Open, 'forest' feel with mid-height stacks of books.



Tania Venuto researching design inspiration for the new campus library

## Colour design for the new library - green scheme



## STOP PRESS

WESS is part of the Advancing Clean Energy Schools (ACES) Program installing energy conservation measures on our existing campus. These include:

- New 30kW solar PV system
- Replacement of some lights with LED
- Controller timers for the hot water storage & systems
- Smart remotes for air conditioning systems

NB. Stage 1 will deliver an additional 30kW of solar panels!!



# Performing arts complex (PAC) design

Performing up to 20 gigs a year with his two projects, *Spirit Bunny* and *A Country Practice*, Year 4 teacher Joel Saunders, has plenty of hands-on experience with what makes a good music venue and how to optimise the acoustics in a space.

*"In the past 10 years the technical side of live (and studio) music has changed dramatically. Pretty much every venue in Brisbane (except The Zoo and The Junk Bar) now have digital mixing desks, which means sound engineers can mix from iPads on stage, or anywhere in the room. The plan is for the new arts space to also have a digital mixing desk which should make things much smoother for staff to do sound in a concert while also prompting students with their lines in a rehearsal, for example."* Joel Saunders, 4JS teacher and musician.

Our PAC will include an auditorium capable of hosting a variety of performances from intimate to large-scale, with:

- 620 person seating on bench seats with backs
- Further ground seating
- Level stage with raised seating
- Flexible, multi-arts performance space
- Dressing room
- Box office.

The PAC will also be home to two music classrooms, two instrumental music practice rooms, and instrument storage. One of the music classrooms will open out to the central green space so it can be used for external performances and special events. The WESS music team have been an important part of the design process, ensuring we have the right type of spaces for our students to learn and perform.



Joel Saunders (4JS)

*"At WESS we have different musical ensembles; from large and loud to small and intimate. We have acoustic ensembles and use amplified music for dance. Drama performances can involve young actors needing to speak to large audiences. Making a space that is acoustically flexible is quite a challenge. Creating a space that is everything from a concert hall, to a small theatre, to a dance auditorium is challenging but we're up to that challenge!"*

## What excites you most about the extended campus?

*"There is something special about performing in a darkened room with professional lighting. If the space says 'this is a real performance' students will respond differently. I'm looking forward to seeing that."*

Joel Saunders, 4JS teacher.

*"I'm looking forward to shopping for books! Seeking out the latest books for our students will be a great treat and one I know our WESS readers will love!"*

Tania Venuto, WESS teacher librarian.

*"I'm excited to see the indoor / outdoor flow of the early learning classrooms and corridors. This will foster collaboration between students and feel open and flexible."*

Sarah Kelly, Prep Year Leader and Koalas teacher.

*"We're most excited about bringing the school community together in the new campus heart, and seeing how the students and teachers take advantage of our subtropical weather in the external learning environments and whole school gathering places."*

Christina Na-Heon Cho (Director) and Steven Harth (Associate) from Cox Architecture.

## See our extended campus designs and talk to our architects

See what's planned for WESS's extended campus at WeCreate. Our architects from Cox Architecture, along with the Department of Education, will be on hand to talk through the designs and show you the features planned.

## Save the Date for WeCreate!



## The Arts Showcase 25th October 2019

### We love to hear what you think

The last time we consulted with the school community we found out what was important to you and incorporated these elements into the design. We can't wait to hear what you think of the result! Come and see the designs at WeCreate!

