

# VISION

ISSUE 35

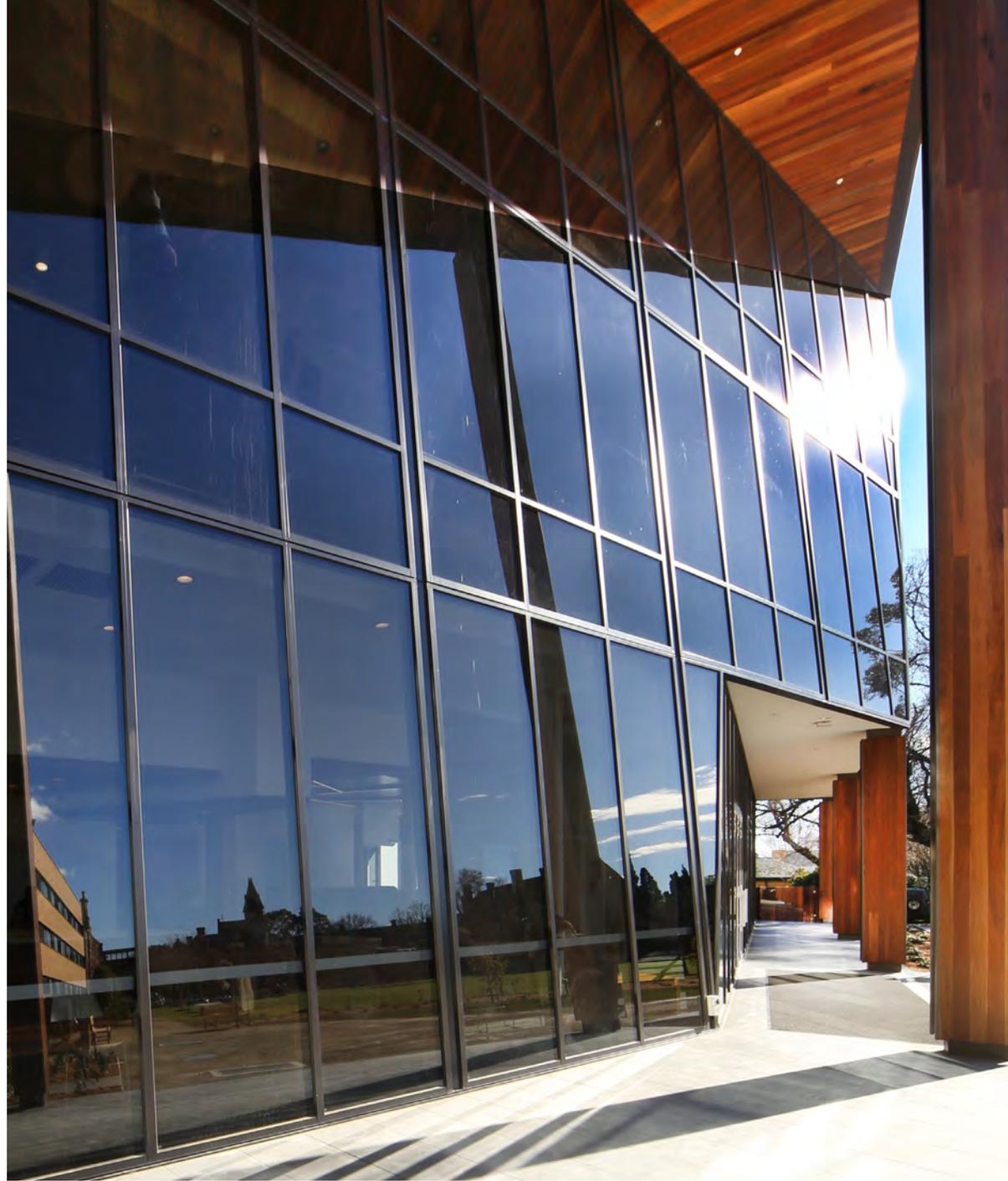
## HIGHER LEARNING

University of Melbourne Southern Precinct Building  
Carlton, Victoria

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Saltwater Community Centre  
Point Cook, Victoria

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## 04

### HIGHER LEARNING

University of Melbourne Southern Precinct Building,  
Carlton, Victoria

Glazing as feature windows and full height inclined walls, showcase interiors of enquiry in the University of Melbourne's 'Gateway Building'.

Transparency and daylight transmission are keys to a project that creates opportunities large and small to be made in its bustling and beautiful setting.



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UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



# 22

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Saltwater Community Centre, Point Cook, Victoria

An imaginative glazing program can elevate good to great and this is precisely the result at Melbourne's Point Cook, Saltwater Community Centre. Organic design needn't result in undisciplined beige. At its best, it brings the stars into alignment and offers a range of beautiful spaces housed within a credible whole.



CLICK TO VISIT  
SALTWATER COMMUNITY CENTRE



CLICK TO SEE VIRIDIAN'S  
CON KANTIS INTERVIEW



HIGHER



LEARNING

Architecture as a full spatial  
and sensory experience is tertiary  
education's trump card in the age  
of online learning.

A vibrant campus culture grounded  
in amenity and delight adds  
immeasurably to the hard educational  
equation. With students able to swiftly  
negotiate cyber-space, immersion  
in quality and peer interaction  
is still paramount.

**PROJECT**

University of Melbourne  
Southern Precinct Building

**ARCHITECT**

McIldowie Partners

**PRINCIPAL GLAZING**

Viridian ThermoTech™ Clear

**TEXT, IMAGES & VIDEO**

Peter and Jenny Hyat

Trinity College has opened its flagship building for the Foundation Studies program which assists international students setting out at the university.

The building provides a pathway for its 300 resident and 150 theology students between Tin Alley and picturesque college campus.

The building serves complex learning requirements and is equipped for the task and includes a 300 seat theatre, drama and music rehearsal spaces, physics laboratory, archive and art gallery.

The 'Gateway Building' is hard on the southern boundary and closes the quadrangle around the 'Bulpaddock' which is the college social heart.





The north facing elevation and entrance-way from Royal Parade (to right) and Trinity College Building has a sense of inverted massing with glass on ground level surmounted by visual weight of upper-level brickwork.









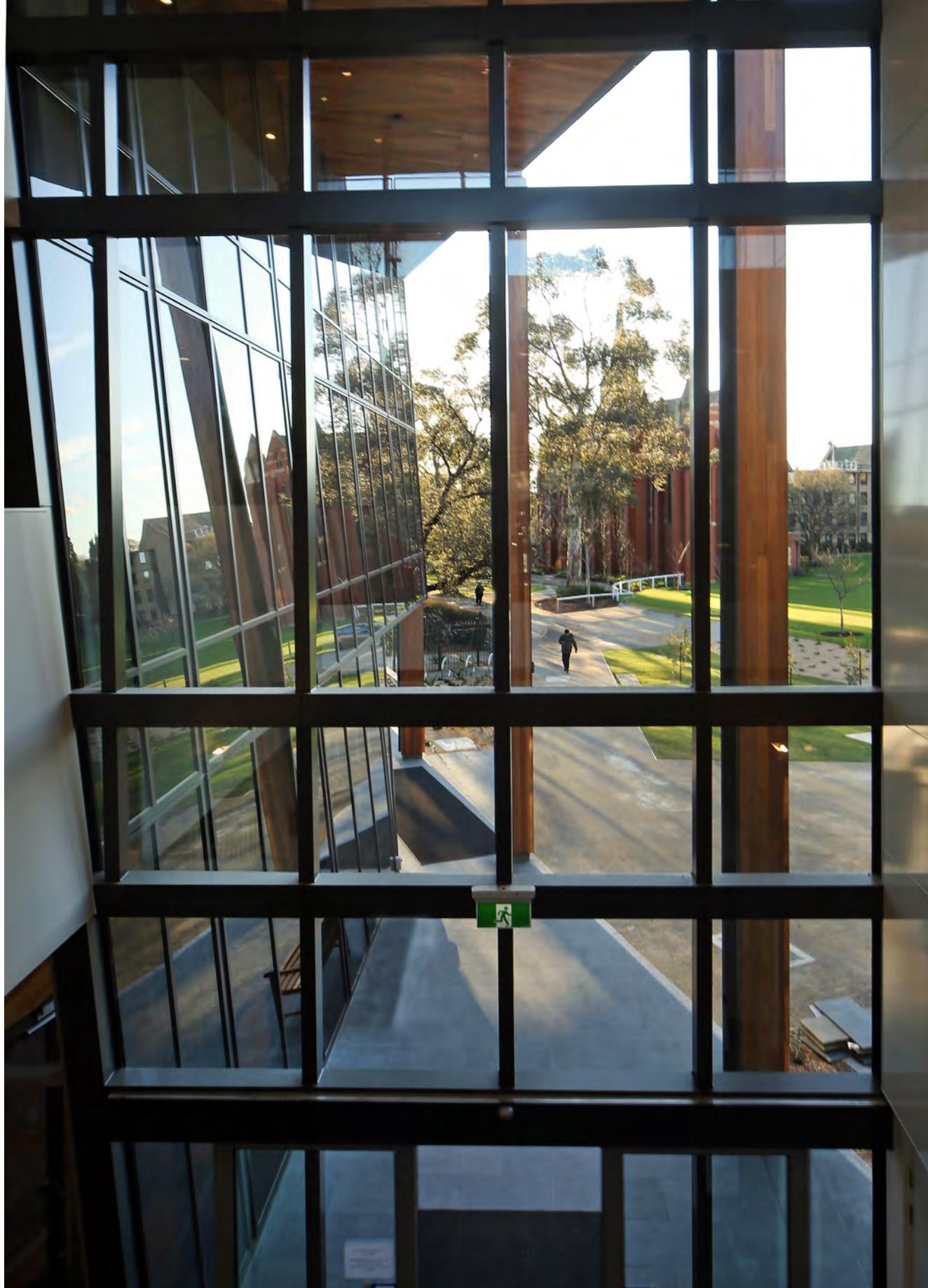
With the proximity to this busy thoroughfare and campus, the college was keen to put life on display. McIlldowie's design creates strong links with predominantly glass ground floor walls. These provide strong physical and visual connections. One of the stars is a south-facing, inclined glass wall and timber lined cloister, with its jewellery case proportioned display cabinets facing the pedestrian pathway of Tin Alley.

Materials were selected with a respect for the traditions of the College—expressed through 'Hawthorn Black' bricks, bluestone clad plinth and rich timber paneling but it is through the glazed connections that a contemporary and evocative building shines. Elegant voids, sweeping staircases and multiple footbridges create opportunities for visual links and connection in the building.



Top & right: main glazed cloister as light-filled shelter connecting to Tin Alley on the south.





Left: Cloister glazing incorporates computer controlled adjustable vents along its base to naturally ventilate and purge as required.

Above: the view from the main entrance toward Trinity Chapel.





Vision's Peter Hyatt spoke with McIlldowie Architects Director, Craig Brown about the role of design in shaping more complete tertiary education:

**VISION** What do you hope the project says to people who use the building, passersby and the world at large?

**CRAIG BROWN** The Trinity College Gateway Building is an exceptionally strong statement. It forms this spiritual and physical pathway from a college campus for its 1,700 international students each year. In their journey towards the university. This building symbolizes that and creates a connection between the college heart called the 'Bulpadock' and the university heartland which is the student union building.

**There is a broad diversity of informal areas where you have made the informal as important as the formal learning areas.**

It's a building broken into smaller parts. Part of vertical learning is about creating a sense of smaller spaces and pods where students feel a personal contact and friendship, or fellowship. The building has an eastern and west side, with a very clear nodal point, defined by the main glazed atrium that runs through the building. We've called it the

"Glazed Cloister" with reference to the cloister of Clarke and Behan Buildings on the college campus, and it works extremely well.

**Is it more difficult for architects to design a building that's quite multi-purpose as opposed to one with a singular role?**

Yes, this building has a multitude of uses, for example there's an auditorium capable of accommodating 300 students. That plays a really key role in bringing the whole college community and the resident college students into the one place. It celebrates the fact that music and recital is very special for Trinity. There are other specialist spaces as well. The gallery is an incredibly strong statement by the college about celebrating visual arts and its exceptional collection of portraits, the ER White Collection and Sharwood Collection.



Student common room with views through to main entrance and reception and left towards college green sports and recreational grounds.





**Buildings can be like your children—all of them your favorites, but within this building is there an area or feature of which you are especially fond?**

One of the project's aims was to reveal learning within the building rather than defined as a mausoleum or triumph to a piece of architecture; it was about revealing what's going on. The student common room, for example, opens out onto the Bulpaddock, to the north which is the social heart of the college. The glazed cloister reveals and opens the wonders of Trinity College life back into Tin Alley. It's probably this relationship on the ground floor that works best of all.

**Where does this building succeed where many other campus buildings fail?**

The project demonstrates a level of innovation while striking a balance with heritage and tradition. There's the Hawthorn black bricks and use of bluestone that express absolute elegance, counter-balanced with understated simplicity with a good measure of innovation and our modern approach to learning.

A distilled material palette achieves high levels of natural illumination and 'warmth' via natural timbers and colour highlights.

Right: Central staircase connects to footbridges. Administrative offices are on the top floor with classrooms on all levels and music tuition and rehearsal rooms are below ground.

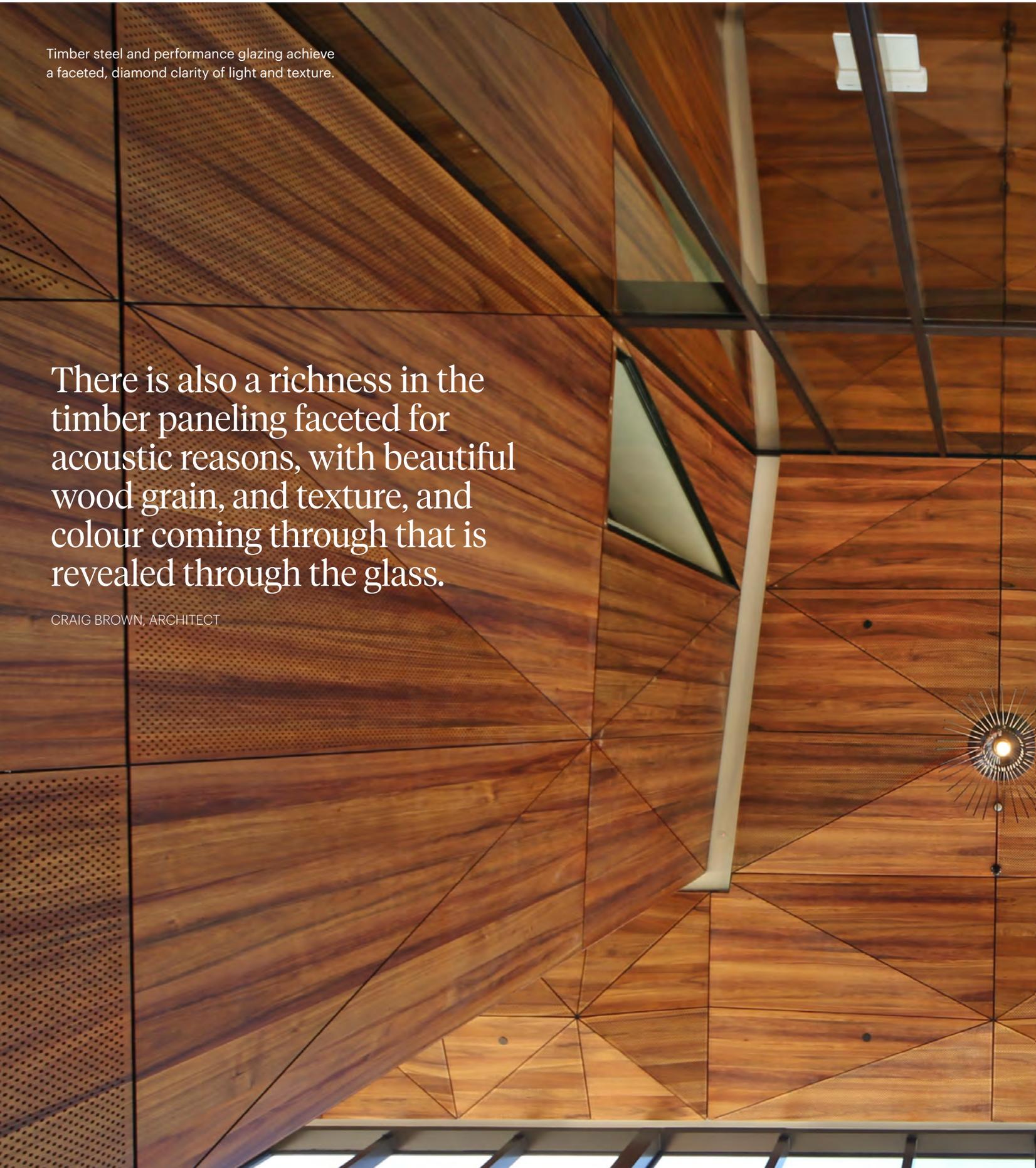




Timber steel and performance glazing achieve a faceted, diamond clarity of light and texture.

There is also a richness in the timber paneling faceted for acoustic reasons, with beautiful wood grain, and texture, and colour coming through that is revealed through the glass.

CRAIG BROWN, ARCHITECT







Glass is a really important component in what we've done with large scale glazed walls for deep light and orientation. Rather than being trapped within a building in a learning program, you're actually connected to the world.

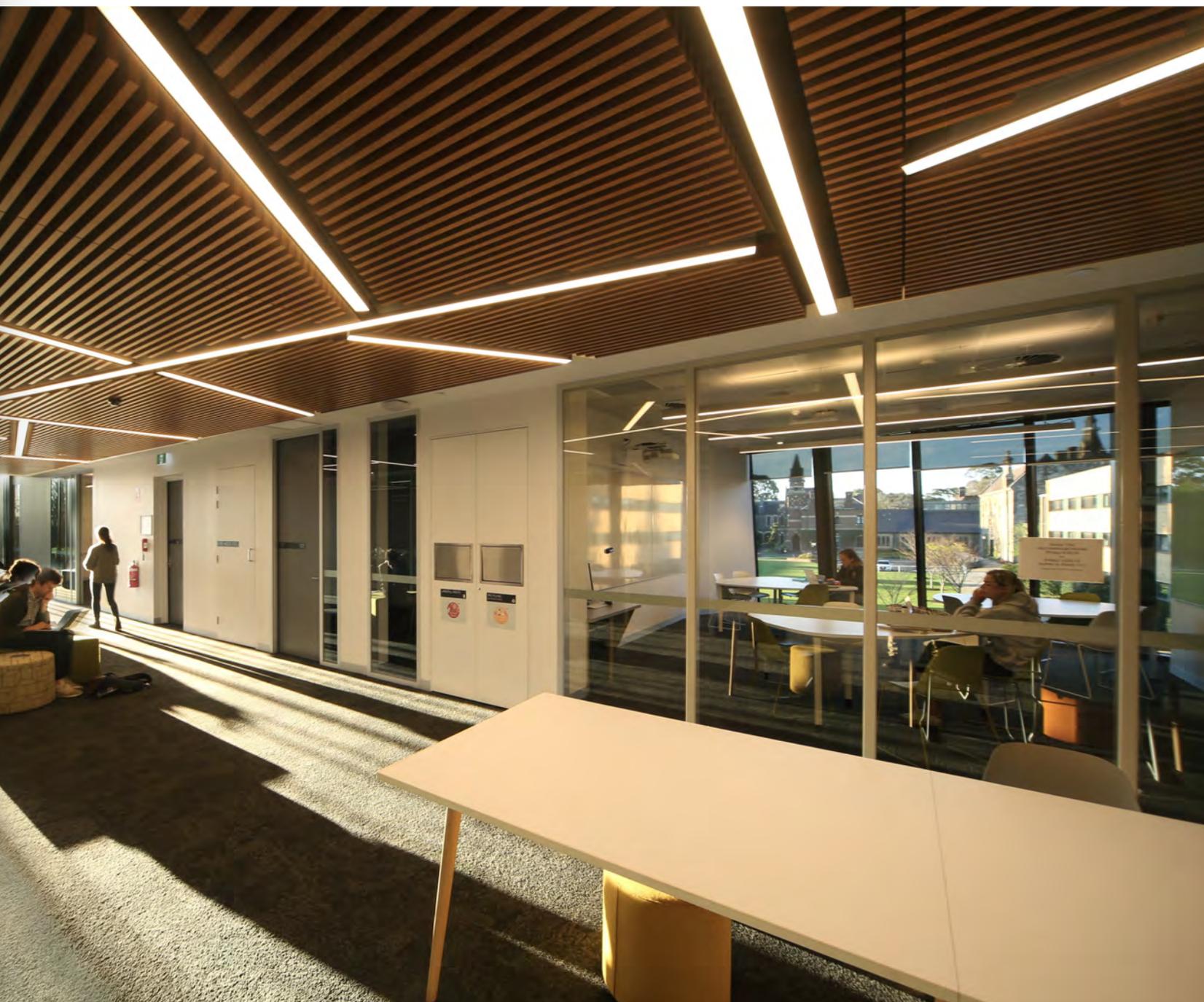
CRAIG BROWN, ARCHITECT



Left: A 300-seat theatre  
Below: Corridors are replaced by wide circulation zones and multi-purpose work/gathering spaces.

**Your glazing is one quality that really separates this building form so many others on campus.**

Glass is a really important component in what we've done with large scale glazed walls for deep light and orientation. Rather than being trapped within a building in a learning program, you're actually connected to the world. That's particularly dominant down at the ground level where you get sight lines out in all directions to the college, its chapel and the university. On upper levels at the end of what would otherwise be a particularly stark and cold corridor experience, glass draws light in and provides a sense of openness and opportunity.



**Clients demand sustainable architecture but often end up missing out on cultural sustainability.**

Sustainability is incredibly important in the systems we're creating, but you're right, sustainability is more than just about how we harvest energy and minimize energy consumption. It's also about understanding that curriculums change as do the learning programs. This particular built form is modelled on a fairly traditional pedagogy. We recognize that by having a column grid and simplicity in the form of the building that can evolve and it change over time. In 20 years' time the curriculum may have changed significantly, but on the other hand the simplicity of the building will have stood the test of time. We think it will last that magic 100 years.

**And input from Viridian?**

They assisted with the glass that operates in a clever way within the building by opening and revealing key areas including the ground floor. The building really needed tinted glass and shade to create a more mellow, sophisticated upper level. That sort of variation required technical support from Viridian. Really throughout the journey, they've been an integral part of our team.

**And glass has helped express the personality of the building?**

Its personality does change across the landscape of the day. You get this opportunity at night, to reveal what's inside. There are these beautiful jewellery box displays of memorabilia, yet to be filled. That will be part of the interface with the University. There is also a richness in the timber paneling faceted for acoustic reasons, with beautiful wood grain, and texture, and colour coming through that is revealed through the glass.



South-east corner along Tin Alley reveal diagonal circulation spine of cloister aligned with Trinity Chapel beyond.



**PROJECT**  
University of Melbourne  
Southern Precinct Building

**ARCHITECT**  
McIlldowie Partners

**FACADE ENGINEER**  
Aurecon (Facade)/Inhabit

**BUILDER**  
Kane Construction

**WINDOW INSTALLER/GLAZIER**  
ASG Victoria

**GLASS SUPPLIER AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT**  
Viridian

**INSTALLATION**  
Viridian Clayton

**PRINCIPAL GLAZING**  
Viridian ThermoTech™ Clear

**SIZE**  
6,350m<sup>2</sup>

**BUDGET**  
\$22 million



West-facing elevation reveals a long, low, linear building. Light coloured finishes tend to create a friendly, less institutional result.

NEIC



# GHBOURHOOD WATCH

An imaginative glazing program can elevate good to great and this is precisely the result at Melbourne's Point Cook, Saltwater Community Centre. Organic design needn't result in undisciplined beige. At its best, it brings the stars into alignment and offers a range of beautiful spaces housed within a credible whole.

Such a facility might appear small fry in the grand scheme of a city bursting at the seams, but it offers a real alternative to malls, pubs and gaming venues.

At their best, community centres build pride of place. They are a great glue for new and young families hungry for information, sharing successes and calming anxieties.

It's why Croxon Ramsay's design is such an important statement. The result is a low-rise invitation not about 'us' and 'them' but 'we'. A finely scaled design strategy incorporating elegantly tuned Viridian glazing, helps ensure an inclusive, welcoming approach.

With a population of around 500 air-force base residents in 1996, Point Cook's numbers jumped to 14,000 by 2006 and today is rapidly heading north of 40,000. With jobs and growth pushing the suburban envelope new suburbs however are much more than about housing. They require infrastructure and all of the crucial support elements to contribute to the magic 'L' word 'livability'.

Wyndham City Council's Saltwater Community Centre is in many ways a 'pilot case' for the council and municipality, departing well and truly from the stereotype.





**PROJECT**

Saltwater Community Centre,  
Point Cook, Victoria

**ARCHITECT**

Croxon Ramsay

**PRINCIPAL GLAZING**

Viridian Thermotech™ IGU  
using SolTech™ Neutral

**TEXT, IMAGES & VIDEO**

Peter & Jenny Hyatt



CLICK TO VISIT  
SALTWATER COMMUNITY CENTRE







Vision's Peter Hyatt spoke with Saltwater architect Jeff Gabriel about a light-filled prototype attuned to possibilities rather than the shoe-horned, pre-determined model.

**VISION**      **What sets Saltwater apart from so many of its peer projects?**

**JEFF GABRIEL** Most community centres are quite institutional in character and experience. We decided to change all of that and foster genuine community interaction. The first step considered incidental spaces as positive elements. These spaces could contain a sequence of 'sticky' nodes, that well positioned could draw visitors through the building and encourage people to linger between programs or appointments and engender impromptu interaction. These spaces celebrate the notion that the building could be more than merely an efficient sum of its parts.

**Any other examples of how you try to reward occupants?**

The design elevates those experiences of light, air and space. Large light scoops hover dramatically above each node to bring swathes of light deep into the plan, while

the added ceiling height gives these spaces a generous civic quality, a counterpoint to deliberate low lighting and circulation between nodes. Increased fresh air from a pre-conditioned displacement system filters in directly from a basement labyrinth, providing a more comfortable environment to naturally draw people in. The third factor is space. The simple provision of areas earmarked for casual occupancy is attractive with the center planning to stage activities to cater for the planned numbers choosing to use them.

**Circulation routes are no longer narrow, window-less corridors, but more open in their planning.**

Key circulation spaces are really the community zone and within that we have improved quality of air so we have natural ventilation. What we hoped to provide are spaces where the community would gather between their programmed events. They would spend time at the centre and start to understand their networks, their local community networks. That's something again that was probably not prevalent in some of their other centres.



**There's design maturity and clarity rather than jelly-bean graphics to designate usage. That's impressive.**

Fundamental to our design was this really precious idea of place-making. It's a very precarious act and something we can't just really import. A community centre needs to grow from its community. And having the community on board from the start for place making was really fundamental to our process.

**Your use of glass is really a high-point—subtle as with the light scoops to decisive walls as windows.**

Glass is critical to the success of this building through its permeability and transparency of the programs that exist here. People within a community need to see other members of their own community and how they engage with the centre. We have these opportunities where people are seeing others engage with the space and engage with the outdoors. The way core spaces were set up was to ensure they were continued vistas to other activities. Glazing is essential in that. It provides this very strong and identifying wall. Visual and direct connection that's essential in this type of a centre.

Part child care facility, the generous play areas provide transition zones of filtered shelter with extensive glazing and excellent sight-lines for staff/children connection.





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JEFF GABRIEL ARCHITECT

Rather than a bleak utility, the architecture offers multiple areas for staff and visitors to gather and relax. Formal meeting rooms, while available tend to be subordinate to the informal meeting areas.





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**What about the kids? What do you think glass offers children here?**

One of the things glazing does, certainly in the kindergarten, is to give them a very direct connection to their outdoor spaces. Often kindergarten spaces can be quite insular and probably not as outward looking as they could be. We've tried to model those kindergarten spaces to not just have direct visual connection to the immediate outdoor spaces, but also to the sky beyond. We have introduced, I guess, pop up glazing that gives them these fantastic sort of vistas to the wildly changing Wyndham sky. Which is this really lovely device that activates every space throughout the day.

**That's true. The circular windows, they're a bit of a playful element.**

Yes, the circular windows present in two ways. They maintain a connection for the kindergarten throughout the centre. In many centres that's missing. It also provides a portal for the community using the facility towards the kindergarten. They're a vital part of the community and that connection is really necessary.

**What really separates this from most community centres you have visited?**

This idea of ownership and authorship. There's a very real sense here that the community owns the centre, they built it and were involved in every stage of it down to the material palette. It also references the adjacent wet lands.

**How did Viridian assist you to target the best possible glazing for the task?**

Viridian enabled our intent and really mitigated all the complexities that we faced with Section J. Also dealing with the client's and our expectations as to the clarity of certain glazing. Really they've been terrific in that regard. Our expertise is not in glass, so they really provide that expertise that we need.



Clerestory glazing injects appreciable washes of daylight reflected of timber lined ceilings and walls.



**Have you tried to future-proof this project?**

Some of the environmentally sustainable drivers we've built into this go beyond how it functions. We have thought beyond those five to ten years when the demands of the centre will change. Adjustments will need to be made. Critical to that is disassembly. We've considered areas like the kindergarten. In ten years, the demand for a kindergarten here will be so much less. Those areas are designed to be disassembled, with bolt fixings and no welding or visible fixings on the timber or metal cladding. At any point that side of the building can be disassembled and those products renewed and used elsewhere.

**How successful is the process of collaboration without becoming bogged down in a committee?**

Inviting too many people to that process can be challenging, and really, it's about listening, which takes a great deal of time and patience. There's a need to be quite clear and firm. We had a very clear vision for this building and allowed for certain aspects of it to have very clear and direct input from other parties. In that, you enable this idea of ownership and authorship, and achieving that balance is challenging, but when it's realized, it's highly rewarding.

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JEFF GABRIEL, ARCHITECT



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JEFF GABRIEL, ARCHITECT







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JEFF GABRIEL, ARCHITECT

**What have you learned from this project you might take with you to the next?**

The whole thing, I think. In regard to the architectonics, this is not something we would necessarily replicate just because it worked well here. That process of prolonged consultation means you work through all of those uncertainties and disappointments on-site before they happen and you establish long beforehand everyone's real expectations for a project. That has been a very successful learning experience we will certainly take with us.

**You obviously have a strong grasp on the need to specify glass that allows a project to shine inside and out.**

We understand where we have expertise and where we don't. It is a really important part of our process to let go of certain areas and fully entrust them to other people. It's our role to create a pathway that brings clients, consultants and user groups along with us. This overarching, collaborative approach is really appealing. We trusted Viridian's calculations for such issues as sunlight, thermal efficiencies and clarity. We have no hesitation in benefiting from that sort of guidance and expertise.



**PROJECT**

Saltwater Community Centre,  
Point Cook, Victoria

**ARCHITECT**

Croxon Ramsay

**BUILDER**

Melbcon

**WINDOW INSTALLER/GLAZIER**

BT Windows

**GLASS SUPPLIER  
AND SPECIALIST SUPPORT**

Viridian

**PRINCIPAL GLAZING**

Viridian Thermotech™ IGU  
using SolTech™ Neutral

**SIZE**

1640m<sup>2</sup>

**BUDGET**

\$7.3 million

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