



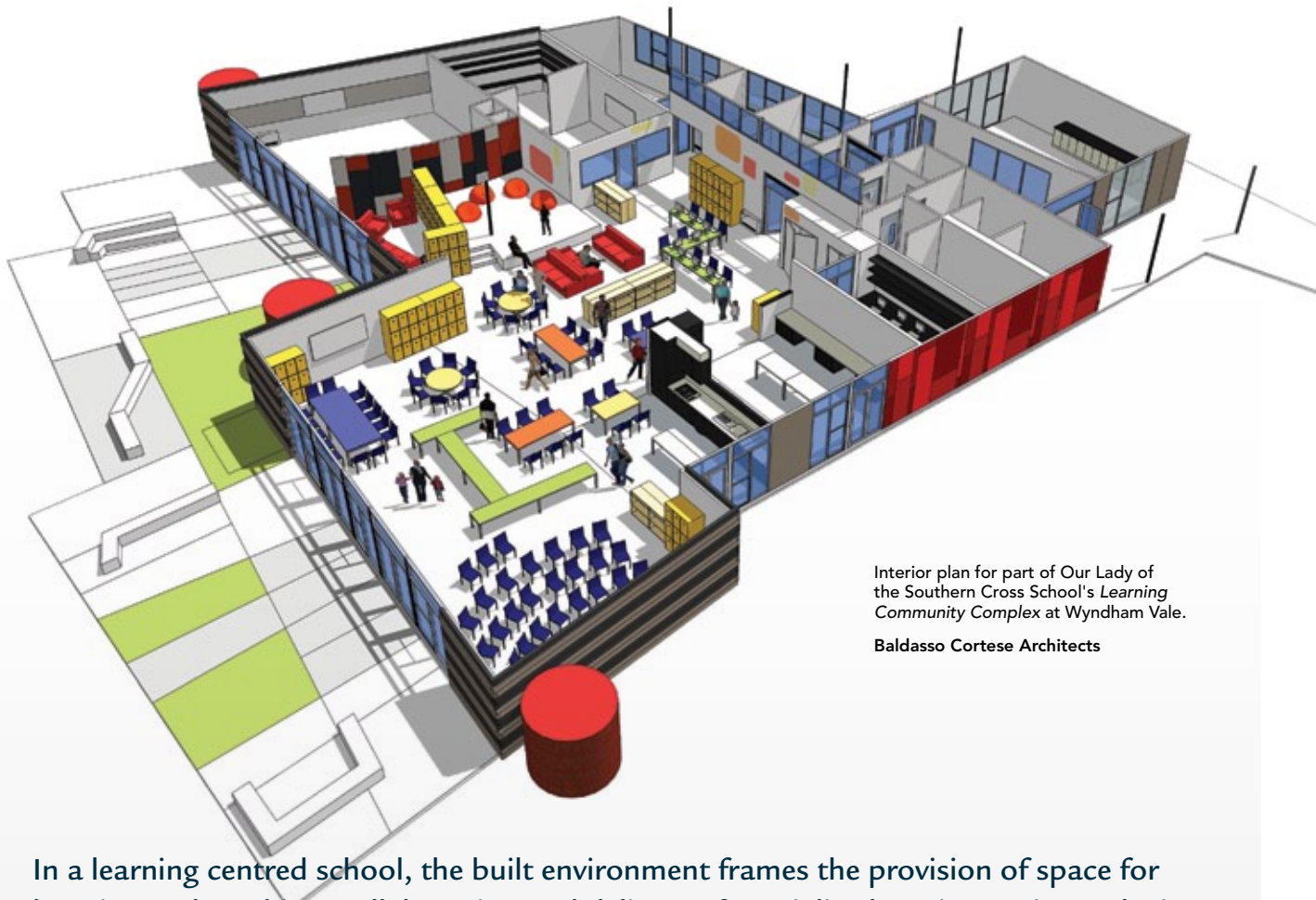
# LEARNING SPACES

2009-2013



**Catholic Education Office**  
Archdiocese of Melbourne

# THE PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE



Interior plan for part of Our Lady of the Southern Cross School's *Learning Community Complex* at Wyndham Vale.  
Baldasso Cortese Architects

In a learning centred school, the built environment frames the provision of space for learning and teaching, collaboration and delivery of specialised services. It is conducive to quality learning outcomes. Leaders in Catholic schools thoughtfully assess the built environment and its capacity to provide engaging, adaptable learning spaces.

Every school needs to develop a considered Facility and Infrastructure Master Plan to ensure contemporary learning spaces are developed to support the school's educational aims and to inspire new generations of students and teachers.

To fully realise the goal of developing contemporary learning spaces, careful and practical assessment of existing building conditions, building suitability and type, available space, built form, environmental sustainability, furniture, equipment and technological infrastructure, is needed.

When developing the Master Plan, consideration of the physical environment surrounding the school, such as adjacent parish and community facilities, landscaped and outdoor areas and places of interest, and community connection to the school is important.

Changes associated with the development of a global, knowledge-based world, together with a growing understanding of how people learn have shifted the focus of education. The physical spaces must reflect this new understanding if the quality of learning is to be improved.

The learning spaces of a contemporary school need to:

- Be open, flexible and adaptable
- Include a range of areas suitable for collaborative learning, individual learning, small group work and support services
- Be connected to the external environment
- Be ICT and resource rich
- Be environmentally sustainable
- Incorporate modern, changeable and flexible furniture

In addition to the design, layout and connection of spaces the schools developing contemporary spaces should specifically consider:

## Environment

The consideration of internal and external environmental elements is paramount. Planning for these features should happen at the start of the facility planning process. Spaces should:

- Have excellent natural cross-ventilation
- Have extensive natural lighting



- Include sustainable heating and cooling where necessary
- Be suitably orientated to maximise environmental benefits
- Be heavily insulated to ensure building efficiency
- Incorporate sophisticated “green” building systems where possible
- Incorporate energy efficient lighting
- Recycle and reuse water wherever possible
- Use efficient water fixtures

## Furniture

The clever use of modern and unconventional furniture can transform seemingly inflexible learning spaces. The removal of walls together with excellent furniture and flexible movable partitioning can be a simple way to alter a learning space to better meet a contemporary pedagogy.

## Aesthetic

Many factors contribute to the overall performance of a building. Light, colour, glare, scale, texture and acoustics are important elements to consider.

## Specialist Spaces

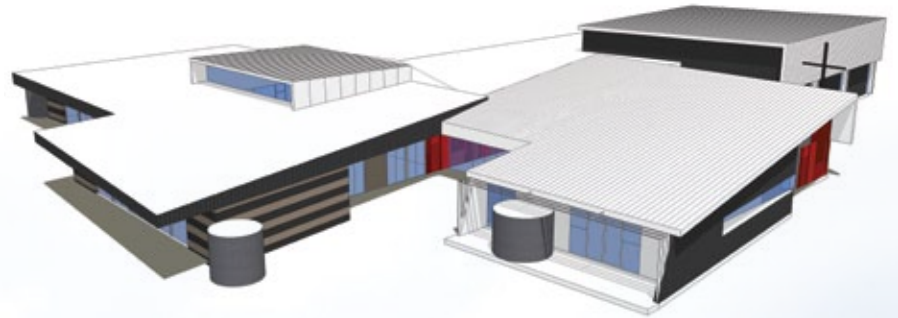
When designing traditional specialist spaces, consideration should be given to their integration into general learning areas. While this integration is not always possible, opportunities must be explored.

## Technology

Technology is an important consideration in the delivery of learning and teaching and it needs to be seamlessly incorporated into learning spaces. Flexibility and capacity in the infrastructure is required to allow for emerging technologies. All possible appropriate existing technologies should be incorporated into the planning of the learning spaces.

It is appropriate and desirable to consider technology infrastructure requirements and needs when undertaking an overall facilities Master Plan.

Ultimately, learning spaces need to be customised to suit the resources and needs of any given school and be developed in line with each school’s educational vision



Exterior plan for part of Our Lady of the Southern Cross School's *Learning Community Complex* at Wyndham Vale.





### Setting Directions

Over the next five years the Catholic Education Office Melbourne will continue to work with school communities in the design and development of learning spaces with a particular emphasis on:

- Facility and Infrastructure Master Planning that links educational vision with sustainable and contemporary learning spaces
- Suitable maintenance plans that address all planned and non-planned maintenance and upgrade needs
- Forward planning of major capital works programs in schools across the Archdiocese.

### Exploring Pathways

To ensure continued innovation and educationally sound and sustainably built learning spaces the CEOM will support schools with the:

- Development of an online resource bank that will illustrate best practice and design in response to contemporary learning and teaching pedagogy
- Master Plan Development to ensure that every school has a Master Plan linking educational vision and the built environment.

Master plan for Our Lady of the Southern Cross School's Learning Community Complex at Wyndham Vale.

