2026 LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AUSTRALASIA QUEENSLAND CHAPTER AWARDS

ASSOCIATION FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
Enhancing the Educational Experience
Queensland

CATEGORY WINNER: INNOVATIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVE (Category 1)

Designed to showcase significant contributions to learning environments by schools, educators, students, designers and/or community organisations.

Brisbane Boys' College – Prototyping the Future of Education
Kensington Terrace, Toowong, Queensland, Australia

Architect: **Hayball**

Summary Citation

The Brisbane Boys' College Education Prototype demonstrates the magic that occurs when early adopter and inspired teachers are paired with an artfully reimagined project space.
By converting a dark classroom and covered courtyard into a Maker Space and Green Room, the project delivers a powerful, inspiring learning outcome that is deeply valued by middle years' senior boys and their teachers.
Careful attention to light, texture and materials has created a comfortable, engaging environment where active learners can thrive.
Grounded in research from the University of Melbourne and championed by strong staff leadership, the space enables more thoughtful, experiential curriculum — exemplified by students recreating scenes from Anh Do's refugee journey.
This prototype offers a compelling model for rejuvenating tired outdoor and general learning areas across Queensland and warrants broader sharing through platforms such as Learning Environments Australasia.

Full citation

The Brisbane Boys' College Education Prototype demonstrates the powerful outcomes that emerge when early adopter and inspired teachers are supported by an artfully designed, reimagined project space. In awarding this Category Winner, the judges noted the strength of leadership shown by the teaching staff in embracing the Green Room, combined with Hayball's intelligent and resourceful reuse of existing spaces to achieve an inspiring educational result.

What distinguishes this project as a Prototype Classroom is the transformation of very traditional, underperforming environments — a dark classroom and a covered courtyard — into a dedicated Maker Space and Green Room. These refurbished spaces have quickly become beloved by middle

years' senior boys and their teachers, providing a setting that actively supports experimentation, collaboration and creativity. Photographs and drawings clearly evidence how shifts in lighting, textures and materials have created a comfortable, welcoming environment for active learners.

The initiative is strongly underpinned by research from the University of Melbourne, which informed the brief and guided the spatial and pedagogical ambitions. Teaching staff, particularly within the English Faculty, showed notable leadership in accepting the Business Manager's challenge to deliver a more thoughtful curriculum through the new space. A standout example is the unit in which students used the Maker Space to recreate scenes from Anh Do's journey to Australia by boat, bringing literature vividly to life and deepening engagement.

Key moves include the removal of traditional classroom finishes in favour of flexible, curriculum-responsive materials, and the conversion of a dark roof form into a light-filled clerestory that transforms the atmosphere. Underpinning the project is a clear acknowledgement that environment profoundly influences learning, and a commitment to creating a space where all learners can succeed. This prototype offers a compelling, widely applicable model for reinvigorating tired outdoor and general learning areas across Queensland, with significant potential for broader sharing through the Learning Environments Australasia network. The awards jury recognises the valuable contribution of Hayball's work and congratulates the team on an outstanding awards submission.

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CATEGORY WINNER: NEW CAMPUS WITH NEW EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES (Category 2)

Applies to construction of a new school or educational institution on a new campus.

Newman Catholic College, Smithfield
Panguna Street, Smithfield, Cairns, Queensland, Australia

Architect: **TPG Architects**

Summary Citation

Newman Catholic College Smithfield, by TPG Architects, is a progressive, climate-responsive Years 7–12 campus on a compact 1.6ha site with prominent highway frontage within James Cook University, Cairns. Extensive site testing, precedent research and future-focused leadership shaped a design that prioritises relationships over corridors, organising specialist and flexible learning spaces around a 'vertical learning commons'. Naturally ventilated, daylit and acoustically treated environments are underpinned by strong environmentally sustainable practice and clear connections to the surrounding rainforest and mountain landscapes, reinforcing a strong sense of place. A carefully considered Level 1 concourse dissolves the boundary between circulation, learning and social space, creating a seamless student experience. The awards panel recognises TPG Architects' innovative response to a challenging, shared-campus model on a tight university site, delivering a coherent, future ready learning environment that offers a compelling blueprint for sub-tropical secondary education and coexistence.

Full citation

Newman Catholic College Smithfield is an outstanding example of contemporary sub-tropical education design. TPG Architects' future-ready design for a modern Years 7–12 campus for 840 students was delivered in three stages on a compact 1.6-hectare, four-level facility with prominent highway frontage within the James Cook University Cairns campus, sharing key assets such as oval, sporting infrastructure and car parking to establish a powerful model for integrated secondary–tertiary learning environments. From the earliest stages of briefing through to completion, decision-making was anchored around a single guiding question: "Could the space teach a confident, collaborative lifelong learner?" This disciplined ethos is evident in the way spatial planning, climate responsiveness and learning pedagogy are seamlessly intertwined. Framed dramatically between the highway on one side and rainforest and mountains on the other, the architecture reinforces and amplifies its setting through verandahs, external circulation paths and naturally ventilated learning

spaces that prioritise daylight, acoustic performance and visual connection to landscape. Specialist and flexible learning environments, along with a network of breakout zones and gathering hubs take precedence over generic classrooms and form a ‘vertical learning commons’ that supports collaboration, social learning and pastoral care. A carefully considered Level 1 concourse dissolves boundaries between circulation, learning and informal gathering, making every journey through the campus part of the educational experience. The unfenced campus model further reinforces community ownership and openness, aligning the college with its broader Cairns and JCU context. Newman Catholic College Smithfield demonstrates how a rigorous brief, clear educational ambition and a sensitive response to climate and place can combine to create a highly progressive model for secondary education in the sub-tropics. The awards panel recognises TPG Architects’ coherent and thorough submission, reflecting high-quality educational planning and architectural design.

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COMMENDATION: NEW BUILDING/S OR FACILITIES – LARGE (Category 3)

A new building or new buildings in an existing school or campus, value over $15 million.

The Hub - Coomera Anglican College
8 Days Road, Upper Coomera, Queensland, Australia

Architect: **Burling Brown Architects**

Summary Citation

The Hub at Coomera Anglican College translates a considered and engaged educational brief into a thoughtfully connected learning environment at the heart of the campus. The brief, developed through research, stakeholder engagement, and pedagogical review has resulted in a facility designed to deliver on its mission to become the physical and community heart of the secondary school.

The Project has combined a diverse and complicated educational and spatial brief into a cohesive and sensitive approach in its internal planning, whilst integrating multiple entries and campus connections.

The Hub is commended as a considered and adaptable learning environment, distinguished by the strength of its briefing process, its subsequent translation and its capacity to support a changing culture of learning well into the future.

Full citation

The Hub at Coomera Anglican College translates a considered and engaged educational brief into a thoughtfully connected learning environment at the heart of the campus. The brief, developed through research, stakeholder engagement, and pedagogical review has resulted in a facility designed to deliver on its mission to become the physical and community heart of the secondary school.

The resulting building offers a diverse combination of learning spaces designed to support a broad range of learners, teaching approaches, and group sizes. Wide circulation spaces and spines merge into active extensions of the learning environment. These connect classrooms, breakout areas, meeting spaces and collaborative settings, whilst also becoming learning areas themselves. A feature of The Hub's design is its integrated spatial and technical flexibility. Across the building, interconnected specialist and collaborative spaces provide capacity for teaching practices and

technologies to evolve over time. The Project has combined a diverse and complicated educational and spatial brief into a cohesive and sensitive approach in its internal planning, whilst integrating multiple entries and campus connections.

Natural light is drawn deep into the building's floor plate via central light wells and skylights, designed to elevate student wellbeing and engagement. Tactile hints of the site's heritage are integrated into the design through the reuse of reclaimed bricks from the original site structure.

The building management system supports ongoing monitoring and optimisation of environmental performance. Future-proofed service corridors, conduits and utility networks establish The Hub as an infrastructure gateway for subsequent campus development. The structural design has considered future redevelopment and future refurbishment outcomes supporting adaption and reconfiguration in years to come.

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COMMENDATION: NEW BUILDING/S OR FACILITIES - SMALL (Category 4)

A new building or new buildings in an existing school or campus, value less than $15 million.

Nambour Christian College, S Block
2 McKenzie Rd, Woombye, Queensland Australia

Architect: **Conwell Architects**

Summary Citation

S Block at Nambour Christian College by Conwell Architects turns a modest brief into a campus-wide enhancement of learning and social life. Challenging site and budget constraints are leveraged to create tertiary-quality classrooms and generous, flexible external learning areas. Vertical circulation and clever movement planning, carefully link internal spaces with large, usable outdoor areas for teaching, gathering and performance. A rich variety of spatial conditions encourages uncurated occupation and supports an evolving educational program. Delightful details, including the school's sun-traced dove motif, reinforce college identity and bring moments of joy to everyday school life. The awards panel recognises Conwell Architects for this responsive, future-ready design, which contributes unquestionably to the ongoing development of learning environments.

Full citation

S Block at Nambour Christian College by Conwell Architects demonstrates how a disciplined, evolutionary design process can transform a modest brief into a richly layered social and learning environment. Working within challenging site and budget constraints, the project delivers not only additional learning spaces but also a meaningful expansion of student social interaction, staff presence and pastoral care. A clear decision was made to provide robust, functional classrooms that support the college's current pedagogy while elevating the quality and character of the learning environment. These spaces feel more akin to tertiary or commercial settings than traditional school facilities, signalling high expectations and preparing students for life beyond the college. Through careful option studies, the design team identified and activated small, underused pockets across the campus, linking existing and new spaces through vertical circulation and a sequence of internal and external learning zones. Internal teaching spaces are directly connected with occupiable outdoor areas in between, more than doubling the usable footprint via covered external environments. These spaces host lunchtime occupation, informal gatherings, talks, performances and college events, reflecting a deep understanding of how school life unfolds. The project embraces a diversity of spatial conditions, allowing the school community to occupy the building in multiple ways and supporting the evolution of the educational program over time. The design is deliberately non-

prescriptive; it accepts that not every use must be controlled or curated and trusts students and staff to make the spaces their own. Moments of delight, such as a western sunshade with a cut-out dove – the college's symbol – animate the architecture. As the sun moves, the shifting shadow of the dove plays across the façade, quietly reinforcing identity and offering daily moments of joy.

The awards panel recognises Conwell Architects for this responsive, future-ready design, which contributes unquestionably to the ongoing development of learning environments.

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COMMENDATION: NEW BUILDING/S OR FACILITIES - SMALL (Category 4)

A new building or new buildings in an existing school or campus, value less than $15 million.

St Luke's Anglican School, Upper Primary
4 Mezger Street, Kalkie, Queensland Australia

Architect: **McLellan Bush Architects**

Summary Citation

The St Luke's Anglican School Upper Primary Precinct exemplifies a ground floor learning precinct delivered with exceptional clarity of purpose and design intent.
The judges commended the rigorous planning and stakeholder engagement process, where genuine student voice informed key decisions, including the choice to build new rather than refurbish.
The resulting light-filled, acoustically comfortable environment offers a rich mix of learning areas, flexible hubs, specialist and withdrawal spaces that support diverse pedagogies.
Innovations include custom Aboriginal artwork developed through Indigenous consultation, flexible clusters of learning spaces defined by clerestory light and collaborative seating, and façades referencing regional Queensland infrastructure that speak to the boarding community.
The project provides a strong reference point for schools across Queensland, demonstrating how combining circulation and flexible learning areas can deliver both space efficiency and nurturing, high-performing learning environments.

Full citation

The St Luke's Anglican School Upper Primary Precinct exemplifies a ground floor learning precinct delivered with exceptional clarity of purpose and design ambition. The judges commended the rigorous project planning and stakeholder engagement process, in which student voice was embraced as a genuine design driver rather than a symbolic inclusion. This early and authentic consultation helped shape the brief and led swiftly to the strategic decision to construct a new facility instead of refurbishing existing buildings, allowing a fully contemporary and integrated learning environment to emerge.

The completed precinct recognises that learning occurs not only within formal classrooms, but across a wider ecosystem of people, place, culture and environment. A carefully composed mix of learning area spaces, flexible hub zones, specialist learning areas and smaller withdrawal spaces

enables a variety of pedagogical approaches and supports individual, small-group and collaborative learning. Abundant natural light, controlled through thoughtful orientation and clerestory glazing, combines with well-resolved acoustic performance to create a calm, comfortable and highly usable series of spaces.

Meaningful innovation is evident throughout. Custom-made Aboriginal artwork, developed through Indigenous consultation, informs the interiors and colour palette, embedding cultural narratives into the everyday experience of students. Clerestory windows and collaborative seating elements define clusters of adaptable learning spaces that students can mould to suit their preferred learning styles, encouraging agency, curiosity and ownership. For the boarding community, façades incorporate welcome and familiar references to the vertical infrastructure forms of regional Queensland, reinforcing connection and belonging for students from rural and remote areas.

The project offers clear and transferable lessons for schools across Queensland, demonstrating how circulation can be intelligently combined with flexible learning areas to achieve greater space efficiency, while simultaneously delivering richer, more pleasant learning environments in which children are supported to thrive. The awards jury congratulates McLellan Bush Architects on an exemplary and compelling awards submission.

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CATEGORY WINNER: NEW BUILDING/S OR FACILITIES - LANDSCAPE/OUTDOOR LEARNING AREA (Category 8)

Designed to showcase outdoor learning environments or landscapes targeted at improving educational outcomes.

All Hallows' School St Gertrude's Revitalisation
547 Ann Street, Brisbane City, Queensland Australia

Landscape Architect: **Place Design Group**

Summary Citation

The revitalisation of St Gertrude's Lawn at All Hallows' School by Place Design Group, is a thoughtful, and considered response to transforming a constrained and underutilised space into a subtle yet multi-layered outdoor learning environment.

The project is sensitive to the heritage of All Hallows school and its external surrounds, Brisbane tuff salvaged from demolished retaining walls has been repurposed as seating and wall cladding, connecting the users to the material history of the campus and its location. The decision to minimise hardscape, retain existing canopy, introduce predominantly native planting and use porous surfaces also contributes to reduced heat load, biodiversity and a more climate-responsive landscape.

Through thoughtful spatial planning, climate-responsive design, and an alignment with educational intent, St Gertrude's Lawn succeeds through its apparent simplicity. The awards jury recognises a considered and polished example of landscape design transforming an overlooked space into a valued part of everyday school life.

Full citation

The revitalisation of St Gertrude's Lawn at All Hallows' School by Place Design Group, is a thoughtful, and considered response to transforming a constrained and underutilised space into a subtle yet multi-layered outdoor learning environment.

Situated on top of an iconic seven-metre Brisbane Tuff heritage retaining wall on a prominent inner-city corner, the site was an underutilised outdoor area constrained by difficult access, and had limited shade. In its transformation to St Gertrude's Lawn, it now serves as an adaptable outdoor educational area.

The resultant design provides a variety of flexible learning spaces and settings catering for a range of learning opportunities and group sizes. The sheltered walkway provides an all-weather eating and learning setting equipped with multi modal learning opportunities, whilst serving and focusing on the outdoor performance green. The design divests from areas of hardscape towards favouring natural landscaped areas and micro environments catering to a full spectrum of activities, from physical play to quiet, contemplative retreat. The central rectangular lawn acts as an open-air performance space and outdoor classroom, while sheltered gathering areas accommodate class-sized groups. Tucked into the surrounding gardens, a prayer labyrinth leading to a circular seating node provides a quiet setting reflecting the school's faith-based values of reflection and prayer. A significant level change has been resolved through an accessible ramp, stairs and circulation network that are integrated and coinciding with the play experience.

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Through thoughtful spatial planning, climate-responsive design, and an alignment with educational intent, St Gertrude's Lawn succeeds through its apparent simplicity. The awards jury recognises a considered and polished example of landscape design transforming an overlooked space into a valued part of everyday school life.