

Concurrent Session H
Tuesday 1 September
2.25pm – 3.15pm



Session 1

Differentiating Through Vision. New Health Training Facilities for a Second Generation University.

David Leece

Billard Leece Partnership

David Leece, Director of Billard Leece Partnership Architects, has 30 years' experience across major projects in all sectors. His skill in achieving innovative planning and design solutions is based on a hands on approach, actively engaging multiple stakeholders in the design process. David has successfully led projects including the Rural Health School projects for La Trobe University, the redevelopment of Melbourne's Grand Hyatt Hotel, the Albury Wodonga Health Regional Integrated Cancer Centre and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse fit out project. He is currently leading the Reid Building Adaptive Reuse Project for La Trobe University on the Bundoora campus along with justice projects for Court Services Victoria. An active conservationist, David expresses his passion for the landscape through painting and photography, and has undertaken numerous projects in remote areas working with indigenous participants.

How do second generation (post 1960) universities compete in an unregulated environment?

The higher education sector is on the cusp of radical reform. Within the new knowledge economy universities find themselves in an increasingly competitive market. While the 'sandstone' universities have the advantage of their traditional 'ivory towers' and 'gothic cloisters' the second generation universities can compete and survive by promoting themselves as niche universities – but that requires an investment in innovative and creative thinking in order to develop a compelling, clear and distinct vision for the University.

The La Trobe University's Rural Health School is a case study in the realisation of a University and Faculty vision.

The Vision for a second generation University

The La Trobe Rural Health School (LRHS) was established in 2010 to drive the future of health education in Northern Victoria. The School integrates health education across multiple campuses, health agencies and has close relationships with Bendigo Health, Echuca Health, TAFEs and Monash University.

The LRHS project vision was to enable significant growth in their School, with the creation of up to 750 additional student places being offered, resulting in an extra 200 graduates each year, providing crucial healthcare cover across rural Victoria.

The LRHS aimed to stem the shortage of health professionals in rural areas by revolutionising the way healthcare education is delivered. The strategic plans purpose was also to enhance the economic, social and cultural fabric of rural and remote communities.

The investment was designed to introduce an innovative and original model for health professional education and research for Northern Victoria with sustainable and long term benefits for the wider community through attracting and retaining students, health workers and their families.

The LRHS Vision

The LRHS project was a program of some 9 buildings across 6 regional locations in Victoria.

The programmed works included the delivery of; a new Health Sciences teaching facility at the University's Bendigo campus, a new Clinical Teaching facility at the Bendigo Hospital campus, ten new dental chairs at the Bendigo Hospital campus, a new 200 bed student residential accommodation facility at the University's Bendigo campus, a new 28 bed student residential accommodation facility at the University's Wodonga campus and a further 58 beds accommodated in house and land packages or lease agreement in 4 other regional locations. The final project being a new Dining Hall for 200 residential students at the University's Bendigo Campus.

Significant project partners were Bendigo Health and Monash University's Rural Health School. The project was funded by the Australian Government (through the Education Investment Fund), La Trobe University and the Victorian Government.

Vision realised through delivery and procurement

The suite of buildings was awarded as one overall project to a single consultant team as means of keeping the vision intact.

The functional brief was a separate component and separately awarded. The intention was part of the high level vision which was to have upfront stakeholder engagement, an outward looking brief and process to ensure that the facility would suit end users and most importantly ensuring that the brief was whole-of-experience student-focused (considering both the residential and teaching facilities).

The University engineered a collaborative and integrated process from the top down that was established at the outset of the project. This necessitated deviation from the usual University delivery and procurement processes, such as the one stop Project Control Group formed for all reporting and sign-offs and which included the key faculty stakeholders.

9 buildings, 6 sites. The method of procurement became bespoke and required some creative thinking to achieve cost effective solutions. Procurement methods ranged from leasing agreements, through traditional lump sum and novation to design and construct.

The Architectural Vision

The LRHS projects provided a significant opportunity for La Trobe University to re-position and re-fresh their brand. A brand aligned with a contemporary and world class campus that is outward looking, connected and activated.

Part of the success of the project was that the architectural response and process was championed. Rural, regional and remote campuses were to have the same standard and quality of building stock that was given to the flagship campus.

All projects are now complete and the Latrobe Rural Health school has successfully achieved its goal of attracting students through an innovative model of health education delivery and a suite of purpose designed projects to position itself as a niche offering in an ever competitive market.