



## Matching the future of education with new directions in conscious design

Located at Deakin University's Burwood campus, the Deakin Law School Building was completed in 2020. Including six levels of learning space and a further two levels devoted to student support services, the building was conceived with an eye to the future. It is designed to cater for growing student numbers, support the latest teaching methods, and deliver an improved student experience.

"What's interesting about the Burwood campus is that it's

essentially split into two. A nature reserve and waterway divide the eastern and western sections," said Bruno Mendes, principal of Woods Bagot, the studio responsible for the project.

"A bridge connects the two and the Law School Building stands as the first thing you see as you pass over it, into the western section of the campus. The landscape is incredible, so we realised early on that we had to be conscious of context. We needed to maintain an outward focus."

With the most recent addition to Deakin University, Woods Bagot was able to balance design aspirations with environmental concerns to create something special. It did so with a little help from Verosol.

The architects took several steps to achieve this. Firstly, they made their own contribution to the public grounds. They included a “Zen Garden” – featuring native plants and a deconstructed creek – which not only engages with the existing vegetation, but also greets those approaching the new building.

And they sought to maintain an outward focus when you move inside. To explain the thinking here, Mendes painted a familiar picture of students sitting in class



### Functional, versatile blinds

Naturally enough, achieving this involved a lot of glass along with reliable blinds to control the associated glare and heat. Specifically, the architects chose Ambience manual and motorised single, twin, and multi-link roller blinds from Verosol, a specialist in the design and manufacture of environmentally focussed shading systems. Installed throughout the building and specified according to the requirements of each specific area, these blinds incorporate both the 234 semi-transparent VScreen and 741 VBlock blackout fabrics.

As Mendes explained, the beauty of pairing the materials in this way – semi-transparent with blackout – is that one or the other can be raised or lowered at different times of the day. In this way, a balance between views and thermal efficiency is achieved.

Asked why Woods Bagot went with these particular products, Mendes nominated their versatility as a key consideration. “Within the premier learning spaces, the windows are actually slanted so most blinds don’t sit comfortably on them,” he said. “We’ve got a lot of non-

yet finding themselves becoming lost in their thoughts and allowing their imaginations to wander. What better way to facilitate this, he said, than provide them a framed view to entice them?

So that’s just what they did. Regardless of which of the building’s 27 learning spaces such students find themselves in, a view out to the trees and the birds is right there with them.



custom window opening sizes, strong backs without traditional aluminium frame windows, steel strong backs, and various kinds of substrates. So, in terms of blinds, we needed products that could handle all this irregularity.”

Verosol was able to not only provide the products that were up to this task but also the assistance to ensure they would operate as required. In the case of the slanted windows, for example, they recommended the use of automated wire-guided systems for a correct fit. Overall, their expertise proved invaluable to the project’s success.

With its striking appearance, the new Deakin Law School Building stands like a gateway, welcoming all to the western section of the campus. Conceived with an eye to the future, it has successfully met its brief. Its innovative learning spaces mean it is ready to facilitate emerging teaching methodologies, while its thoughtful design – and incorporation of products like Verosol roller blinds – ensure it is an attractive and comfortable building in which to study.