# A new meeting place for marrickville

The much-anticipated BVN designed Marrickville Library and Pavilion will open this Saturday 31 August 2019. The new library is a diverse and accessible community space, with its cutting-edge design incorporating technology and sustainability.

‘Catering to Marrickville’s diverse community, the new library will be a place for curiosity and learning. It will allow for a range of great community activities and public events,’ said BVN Project Director Brian Clohessy.

Once the home of the old Marrickville Hospital, the heritage building has been retained and restored as part of the new library works. The site, now known as Patyegarang Place, is located on the corner of Marrickville and Livingstone Roads.

An oversized folding roof, emulating the old Hospital roof behind, acts as an exclamation point for the main public forecourt on Marrickville Road. Elongated timber columns support large sections of the floating roof and provide sheltered public thoroughfares to the connecting roads and smaller lanes on the site.

Below street level sits a 1200m² landscaped, sunken-lawn with public artworks. This space provides an oasis, a sanctuary from the noise of the surrounding main roads. The lawns connect to the main library entrance, the Pavilion and café run by Double Roasters.

Upon entering the library, visitors are welcomed into the main atrium. Natural light illuminates the space through triangular skylights that throw light across a stretched fabric ceiling. A three-storey void creates a sense of openness and provides visibility across the major spaces and circulation routes. A large timber auditorium stair guides visitors up through the building and offers a place to sit, read, work or meet.

Buzzing spaces of activity such as the children’s area are located on the ground floor of the library. This space is specifically tailored for little ones with its low-level shelves for visibility, a reading pit complete with a mini auditorium stair for school groups and storytime, as well as hidden reading nooks. This area also opens out to an engaging and fun 100m² enclosed junior playground, perfect for carers to keep an eye on their energy-fuelled charges.

The three-storey internal atrium has perimeter seating and accesses views across the library via sculptural curved balconies. The upper floors of the building host the library’s significantly expanded collections. A variety of reading and study spaces are available for all ages and stages of life, including a teen area, reading room and bookable meeting/study rooms.

A suspended bridge with views to the site’s surrounding laneways and lawn connects the first floor of the main library building to the two-storey Pavilion. The Pavilion provides a range of hireable AV-equipped multi-purpose spaces and a catering kitchen.

Unused since its closure in 1991, this opening marks a new life for the previous Marrickville Hospital. It now houses the main library collection, council and library staff office spaces, along with outdoor reading areas on external balconies. Every effort has been made to retain and restore the heritage-listed building with many of the original hospital features including tiling, floorboards, terrazzo flooring, brick, window frames, and ceiling beams remaining. Generous floor to ceiling windows link the new library spaces to the old building, establishing unique vistas from the inside out. A long, narrow skylight runs along the roofline of the hospital’s original slate tiled roof, which directs sunlight into the main atrium - a literal ‘light’ touch to respect the form and articulate the materiality of the heritage building.

‘Incorporating a building as historically rich as the old Marrickville Hospital, and developing it into a piece of contemporary architecture, to meet the needs of Marrickville’s diverse community, was a truly rewarding project for us,’ said Mr Clohessy

Timber finishes on the building exterior and interior spaces provide a warm and calming background for the many activities the library plays host to.

The new library is also a progressive model in terms of sustainability. Design features such as natural and mixed-mode ventilation systems, raised flooring and controlled solar gain through roof overhangs and external sun shading are significant design features of the build. Rainwater collection tanks and low maintenance planting are environmentally friendly. The use of renewable and recyclable materials including 27,000 recycled bricks, 10km of recycled/FSC certified timber, as well as the adaptive reuse of the hospital building make this a front runner in terms of considered and practical sustainable options.

Marrickville library joins BVN’s other well-loved libraries, the acclaimed Woollahra Library in Double Bay, and the soon to be opened City of Sydney Library at Darling Square. **ENDS**

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