

Transforming the Library into an Iconic Student Centre at Waikato

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Tony Dicks is Group Manager: Facilities at the University of Waikato, a position he has been in for the last 11 years. His earlier background in civil engineering and management - railways, ports and harbours - in South Africa, Holland and New Zealand have ensured a slightly different outlook on tertiary facilities management. He was the University's project manager during the project which forms the subject of this presentation, working closely with Facilities, Library and Student Administration staff as well as the design team (and of course students) over the 4 year life of the project

The 1970s library building – large, heavy, imposing, inward-looking, dull and generally outdated – has been completely refurbished and extended over the last three years into an attractive and environmentally-sensitive exemplar. Student social spaces and student administration services have been introduced into the building to create a student-focused and easily-identifiable heart to the campus.

This 5 Green Star-rated facility (NZGBC) was completed late in 2011, a project made more difficult by the fact that the library continued to function within the building throughout the whole process. During the design and construction every effort was made to:

- maximize the re-use of the existing structures and services;
- create clearly identifiable spaces for the various activities whilst maintaining flexibility;
- provide as many opportunities as possible for views to the exterior;
- ensure a wide variety of spaces for study, groupwork, relaxation and socializing;
- complement the extensive use of glazing on the façade by landscaping and water features;
- introduce energy-saving measures and other sustainable practices and features wherever appropriate.

The introduction of the student administration services and social spaces into the centre has increased the potential for library patronage and it has also provided a welcome student-oriented haven for those who formerly went off-campus during breaks between class commitments.

The overall project was completed within budget at a cost of approximately NZ\$30m; it has realized benefits which belie this modest level of expenditure – a really iconic heart to the campus has been created.

The presentation provides some insights into the facility and its features – with some reference to the former layout – to serve as an inspiration for those contemplating a similar innovation.