Introducing Darren McKee

Darren McKee, Property Services’ Executive Director, has been at the helm since August 2008. Darren has joined RMIT at a significant time, in which the University is in the midst of rolling out a comprehensive infrastructure upgrade across its onshore and offshore campuses in the Melbourne CBD, Brunswick and Bundoora and Saigon South in Vietnam.

Darren is presiding over a program of works that will significantly change the RMIT landscape and consolidate its global reputation as a leading-edge University with sustainable, state-of-the-art resources and infrastructure. The five-year, $500 million capital investment program represents the largest expenditure on capital works in RMIT’s 121-year history.

On the City campus alone, around 26 per cent—approximately 63,000 m² of Gross Floor Area (GFA)—of the overall 243,000 m² of GFA is being impacted by the building renovation component of the capital works program. The capital investment program will also add approximately 70,000 m² of GFA in new teaching and learning venues, staff offices and student recreation spaces to the City campus.

One of the major initiatives of the capital development program that Darren has expedited in 2008 is an Urban Design Framework for the Bundoora West campus, which will see the development of new teaching and learning facilities and outdoor recreation spaces, a greater connectivity between the campus and general community and enhanced access to public transport.

Prior to his appointment with RMIT University, Darren held the position of Director of Strategic Planning at Monash University. This appointment was preceded by his role as Manager for Planning and Development at the Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. Before embarking upon a career in the tertiary sector, Darren held strategic asset management and planning roles in the finance industry. Darren is a Director on the Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association (TEFMA) Board.
Major building projects overview

In 2008, $47 million was invested across 40 major projects that included infrastructure upgrades, building renovations and constructions, campus landscaping, recreational facilities, sustainability projects and feasibility studies.

With the focus on improved student services, consolidation of Schools, new and refurbished teaching and learning spaces and staff facilities, Property Services significantly progressed RMIT’s five-year $500 million capital works program in 2008.

The projects are at various stages of completion, with some in the Schematic Design phase, others at Design Development stage and others in the process of construction.

Throughout the year, the media has shone a spotlight on several of RMIT’s high-profile construction and renovation projects: namely the Design Hub, the Swanston Academic Building and the Emily McPherson Building.

The University has also been awarded more than $35 million in both State and Federal funding for two City-based projects that are set to distinguish RMIT as an epicentre of design research and application and advanced manufacturing skills training.

Read on for overviews of key major construction and refurbishment projects.

At the cutting edge of the Design Hub

The high-profile, future Design Hub gathered much momentum in 2008. To be located on the north-west corner of Victoria and Swanston Streets on the former Carlton United Brewery (CUB) site, RMIT’s 12,000 m², eight-level Design Hub will expand the University’s position as an internationally renowned leader in design education and research.

The Design Hub was recently awarded $28.6 million in capital project funding from the Federal Government Higher Education Endowment Fund (HEEF).

The Design Hub will provide facilities, accommodation and a collegial research base for RMIT’s diverse range of design initiatives, design research groups and postgraduate programs.

The Design Hub is also being built to a high sustainable standard and is aiming to achieve a 5 Star Green Star rating.

The building’s key green feature is its façade. The translucent “smart skin” will be made up of more than 16,000 sandblasted glass cells, some of which have photovoltaic collectors to harness solar power.

Upper sections of the Design Hub façade will be designed to be back-lit and rear-projected and have the potential to become a digital billboard.

The Design Hub will contain open-plan, research warehouse spaces, exhibition spaces, lecture theatres, seminar rooms, function rooms and a café. A Design Archive housing permanent collections and a sunken forecourt will also be a key feature.

The tender for the Design Hub’s main contractor will be awarded in the first quarter of 2009. The Design Hub is due for completion in early 2011.

Advanced Manufacturing Precinct

RMIT University’s close collaboration with industry has resulted in a major step forward for manufacturing skills training in Victoria.

RMIT’s George Thompson Building (Building 55) in Cardigan Street, Carlton will be the home for the future Advanced Manufacturing Precinct.

The Victorian Government has recently allocated $7 million in funding for the development of the Advanced Manufacturing Precinct, as part of the action plan outlined in its major statement on manufacturing and industry, “Building Our Industries for the Future”.

The building’s existing facilities will be renovated and will also be extended to become one of the key manufacturing training hubs in Victoria.

The Advanced Manufacturing Precinct will provide “real-life” industry training in high-level skills and paraprofessional areas that have been identified as skills shortage areas.

The Precinct will also enable opportunities for new product development through the close collaboration of applied design and advanced manufacturing specialisations.

The Advanced Manufacturing Precinct will also facilitate joint ventures between industry and training providers and the facilities will be available to other Registered Training Organisations.

Design Development is scheduled for completion by mid next year and construction will begin in late 2009. The Advanced Manufacturing Precinct is set to open at the end of 2010.
The Swanston Academic Building takes shape

The future Swanston Academic Building (SAB) took significant shape during 2008. The Swanston Academic Building is the largest construction project that RMIT has ever undertaken. The 33,000 m², 11-storey building will form a high-profile part of RMIT University’s “Swanston Street Precinct.”

The building will occupy the vacant Swanston Street car park next to the Oxford Scholar Hotel and will be flanked by Swanston, A’Beckett and Stewart Streets.

Polishing a landmark gem (Francis Ormond Building)

In 2008, the refurbishment of the 121-year-old Francis Ormond Building began in earnest. Also known as RMIT’s Building 1, the heritage-listed Francis Ormond Building is the corporate headquarters of RMIT and the home to the University Chancellery. After the appointment of the main contractor, major construction work began in May. The building’s north-facing wing is being prepared for extensive landscaping. This outdoor space will be transformed into a courtyard, which will be flanked by a campus lawn. Café and function facilities will be introduced into the building and will open up onto the courtyard.

Internally, the 3,700 m² building is being opened up from within by the introduction of an open, glazed stairway and gallery. A passenger lift will also be installed.

Sustainable design is key to the refurbished building, with water harvesting for garden irrigation and solar hot water generation being two of the standout sustainable features. The Francis Ormond Building is aiming to achieve a 4 Star Green Star rating.

Last year, the Francis Ormond Building was added to the Register of the Victorian Heritage Council, which lists the State’s most significant heritage places and objects. Accordingly, the Gothic-revival façade of the Francis Ormond building will remain largely untouched and key period features inside the building will be revived.

The Francis Ormond Building will re-open in April 2010.

Communicating UP at RMIT

The future School of Applied Communication is gradually taking shape. In 2008, significant inroads were made into the refurbishment and extension of the 71-year-old Building 9, located on the corner of Bowen and Franklin Streets on the City campus.

Two additional storeys—equivalent to 2050 m² of additional space—are being added to the building. The existing basement and three levels are also being substantially renovated. Extensive works have been carried out on the lift shaft and concrete foundations have been laid for the new Levels 4 and 5.

The Swanston Academic Building will open for business in early 2012.

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Building 9 will have a number of sustainable design features, including rainwater collection tanks, natural ventilation, chilled beam technology and energy-efficient lighting. The refurbished building is aiming for a 4 Star Green Star rating.

The building will also be distinguished by innovative teaching and learning spaces, staff offices and meeting room accommodation.

A Building 9 classroom prototype has been installed in Building 10 on the City campus. The prototype space was constructed for the specific purpose of “road testing” a typical cross-disciplinary, collaborative learning space that has been designed for the School of Applied Communication.

A staff precinct will span the top two new levels of Building 9. An “open to the sky” courtyard, lounge spaces and meeting rooms will be interspersed with staff offices.

The two-level extension to Building 9 will be completed by mid-2009 and levels 2 and 3 will be completed to allow occupancy in late 2009.

Works on Level 1 and the basement are earmarked for completion in late 2010.

Getting down to Business at “Emily Mac”

Renovations to the historic Emily McPherson building—RMIT’s Building 13—are well underway. With the appointment of the main contractor in September 2008, major works on the future home of the Graduate School of Business and the Juris Doctor program are in full swing.

Demolition works have been carried out at the rear of the Emily McPherson Building to make way for a glazed, ground-level “street” that will open the building up to the rest of the City campus. There will also be a new rooftop addition to the building.

The large-scale renovation will add a third more floor area to the Emily McPherson building. Interactive, flexible lecture theatres and classrooms, a multipurpose hall, a hybrid lounge space designed for teaching and socialising, a dining room, and the latest multimedia technology are the key features of the building.

In 2008, the Emily McPherson building was the site of an archaeological dig. Foundations of the neighbouring Old Melbourne Gaol were unearthed, including the original circular panopticon watchtower, several radial walls that demarcated the individual men’s exercise yards, and the footings of the north-west corner of the former Melbourne Gaol Chief Warden’s house.

Consideration is being given to building strategies that will permit the protection and retention of as much of the Gaol remains as is feasible within the fabric of the newly refurbished building.

The Emily McPherson Building will be open for business in 2010.

Transforming a busy street corner

RMIT’s Info Corner (Building 22) is set to undergo a second transformation.

Plans to refurbish Levels 3 and 4 in Building 22 and the construction of an extra level containing a rooftop atrium space are now in progress. The refurbished third and fourth levels of Building 22 will provide new office accommodation for International and Development Portfolio staff.

Building 22’s new fifth level will house two conference/function rooms with adjoining gallery and foyer space and an outdoor terrace that provides panoramic views of the city. The new fifth level of Building 22 will be connected to the facilities on the top level in the neighbouring Storey Hall.

The green penrose motif on the façade of the Storey Hall building will also be reinterpreted in the canopy of Building 22 and the continuity of this design feature will visually link the two buildings.

The architects have completed the Design Development documentation for Building 22. The tender has gone out for the main contractor and construction is set to begin in early 2009.

The second stage of Building 22 is scheduled for completion in early 2010.

Building 201 at Bundoora

The Siddons Building (Building 201) on the Bundoora campus is undergoing an infrastructural upgrade prior to the complete redesign of the building.

Plans to remove the escalators from the building and replace them with lifts progressed significantly in 2008.

Architects have completed schematic drawings for the lift core. Design Development documentation will be completed in early 2009 and the lift construction contract is expected to go to tender by early 2009.

The façade of the Siddons Building will be transformed as the three high-performance lifts will be installed on the west-facing façade of the building.

The removal of the escalators will also free up a lot of space in Building 201. Meeting spaces and light recreation/lounge areas are planned for several levels of the building.
Completed projects in 2008

In 2008, a significant number of staff accommodation, teaching and learning spaces, student recreational and lounge areas were completed.

Staff and students across the Business, DSC and SET colleges and staff in a number of portfolios have benefited from the Property Services refurbishment program, which has seen the completion of 25 smaller-scale projects.

Teaching and learning spaces include nine 35-capacity classrooms on Level 3 of Building 51 in Victoria Street that are now available for general University use.

RMIT English Worldwide has also relocated to its newly refurbished premises in Little La Trobe Street. Other teaching and learning spaces include editing suites and a recording studio in Buildings 12 and 14 for School of Applied Communication students and a computer laboratory for Fashion and Textiles students in Building 512 on the Brunswick campus.

Renovated staff office spaces include Level 3 of Building 88 on Elizabeth Street, which is the interim home to Financial Services and People and Culture staff. The Ngarara Willim Indigenous Centre has also moved to its new premises on Level 4 of Building 14, on Swanston Street. The staff offices are located next to the indigenous student lounge and informal study area.

A number of student recreation spaces have been introduced onto the City campus. A student lounge with flat-screen TV and kitchenette on Level 4 of Building 10 has proven to be popular with students who use the space for study and relaxation.

The City campus cafeteria on Level 4 of Building 8 was also enhanced with the introduction of an outdoor seating area, facing on to Swanston Street. Large picture windows have been installed, that open up onto a smoke-free balcony where students and staff can eat, converse and watch the passing parade of people.

Property Services also logged thousands of building and systems maintenance requests in 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2008 BEIMs maintenance requests</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total number of requests—28,383</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of completed requests—25,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of requests completed—91%</td>
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Other 2008 highlights

- 2009–2013 infrastructure plan revision
- Collaboration with risk management consultants to develop systems for height safety
- Acquired new property at 444 Swanston Street
- Collaborated in the development of a Critical Incident Management Policy and Safety Team
- Collaborated with the Educational Media Group to produce an evacuation procedures video

Projects on the go for 2009

Thirteen major projects are earmarked for completion in 2009.

Two of these projects are the comprehensive makeovers of the RMIT Union and Student Union spaces on the City and Bundoora campuses. The distinctive horseshoe-shaped Building 204 on the Bundoora campus—that lies adjacent to the main cafeteria and is located on the central spine running through the campus—will be completely overhauled and become an all-purpose student amenity.

A mezzanine level will contain office space for the Student Union and RMIT Union, hot-desk facilities and storage space. There will also be a general lounge area, light recreational space, a postgraduate student lounge, womyn-only and queer-only spaces.

In early 2009, a host of central teaching spaces are undergoing an upgrade to meet RMIT’s teaching space standards. Forty City campus and six Bundoora campus classrooms will be fitted out with new audio visual equipment and furniture and another six Bundoora class rooms will have seating and carpet upgrades.

A large program of minor projects is also scheduled for 2009. An estimated 209 jobs that include regulatory and maintenance works, sustainability projects and small-scale office refurbishments will be rolled out through the year.
Streamlining essential services

In 2008, the Facilities Services Branch of Property Services received approval from the Vice-Chancellor to reduce the number of contractors who are responsible for the University’s building maintenance and mechanical services.

One major contractor now has responsibility for works on the City campus and another will be responsible for maintenance on the Bundoora (east and west), Brunswick and Hamilton campuses.

The streamlining of essential services will minimise risk to the University as two main contractors will reduce the amount and associated complexity of insurance vetting, confirmation of contractor solvency, onsite job safety analysis and financial paperwork as well as improving efficiency and communication which will benefit the whole University community.

Facilities Services has appointed a new mechanical services contractor who will provide a 24-hour call centre service and will work with Property Services staff on energy management issues.

A contract has also been awarded for the provision of comprehensive preventative maintenance for the University’s vertical transportation.

RMIT staff and students should notice the enhanced operation of lifts in 2009 as the pre-emptive maintenance will minimise breakdowns and faults.

“All Systems go” for Property Services

Throughout 2008, Property Services’ Space Planning and Management Branch introduced some vital systems and will be implementing new online applications and enhanced versions of existing applications in 2009.

A web room booking system that enables staff to make ad-hoc room bookings was rolled out in 2008.

View the user-friendly system at www.rmit.edu.au/timetabling/wrbs

The University will upgrade to an enhanced Version 2 of the web room booking system in early 2009, which will enable School controlled spaces to be booked by School staff only.

University timetabling staff and lecturers will benefit from the latest version of Syllabus Plus—Syllabus Plus Enterprise—that is currently in development mode and will also go live in early 2009.

Syllabus Plus will “talk” to the University’s Groupwise email application. A key feature of the new and improved Syllabus Plus is that academic staff’s teaching timetables will appear in their Groupwise calendars and any timetable updates will automatically appear.

View more information at www.rmit.edu.au/timetabling

In 2009, the SiSfm web portal system will be implemented. SiSfm is an industry-standard GIS (Geographical Information System) application and is a user-friendly repository of all building and facilities information. A standout feature of the SiSfm application is that GIS references will be incorporated into the University’s online building floor plans.

The introduction of SiSfm will enable Property Services’ space planners and facilities staff to more efficiently manage the University’s physical resources and will enhance access to physical school, college and division information via the web.

A new module was also added to the University’s Archibus asset management system. A leasing module was introduced to manage the University’s property leasing and a Condition Assessment module will be introduced in 2009 to provide easy access to comprehensive building condition information.

Sustainable solutions on campus

RMIT University is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and providing a safe and “green” university for students and staff.

RMIT is fostering a “think green” culture within the University community and beyond and encourages staff, students and the general public to make changes in their day-to-day lives, both at work and at home, to minimise their impact on the environment.

RMIT aims to lead the way in environmentally sustainable best practice and set a high benchmark by which other organisations can measure themselves against.

RMIT’s Sustainability Committee

Property Services is represented on the recently re-formed Sustainability Committee, which had its inaugural meeting in December 2008. Property Services Executive Director Darren McKee and Property Services’ future Environmental Advisor—to be appointed by Property Services in 2009—are two of the 14 Sustainability Committee members.

The Sustainability Committee has been formed to provide leadership, coordination and guidance to the University for the incorporation of sustainability principles and practices into teaching and learning, research and operational activities.

The Committee will also report to the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive on RMIT’s sustainability performance, the University’s government reporting requirements and commitments and set University-wide sustainability performance targets.

An energetic response to energy management

Facilities Services’ Energy Manager Craig Handley worked across a number of key energy and water management projects throughout 2008.

Energy conservation initiatives include a key organisational role in RMIT’s participation in Earth Hour, a global initiative that aims to lower energy use and raise awareness about the steps that are necessary to combat global warming.

RMIT University joined the throng of businesses, organisations and households in Melbourne to turn off all unnecessary lights from 8 pm – 9 pm in late March. In that hour, electricity consumption across the City, Bundoora and Brunswick campuses dropped by five per cent, to about 2300 kwh.

Other energy-related tasks for 2008 were several power factor correct projects on the City and Bundoora campuses and finetuning of the energy management facets of the Building Automation System.

Water management tasks included assistance with the design of the black water treatment plant and the trial and installation of tap water flow control valves in four City campus buildings.

Data has also been collated and analysed for several audits and reports to external legislative bodies, which include:

• the City West Water and Yarra Valley Water WaterMAP (Management Action Plan) Annual Report, which reports on RMIT’s water consumption and details of actions taken to conserve water;

• The Australian Technology Network (ATN) Inventory and Energy Audit preparation due for completion in mid 2009;

• A report that complies with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts’ National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007; and

• A report that complies with the State Government Environment Protection Authority’s Environmental Resource Efficiency Plans (EREP).

RMIT is (black) water smart

Property Services is introducing a black water treatment plant to the City campus, which recycles black water for a variety of uses. Blackwater is waste water from toilets and sinks that contains animal, human or food waste.

The state-of-the-art system will treat 5,000 litres of black water a day, which will be used for garden irrigation, toilet flushing and two display fountains.
The black water treatment plant will be located on the ground level of Building 10, on Swanston Street, and existing collection tanks will be used to contain the water.

The black water system will be automatically controlled and monitored 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The purified water will be clean, clear, and odour-free, and will be regularly tested to ensure that it complies with Department of Human Services standards and Environment Protection Authority criteria.

The black water treatment plant will be operational in the first half of 2009.

The power of green
RMIT is paving the way as a green University—green in the energy-efficient sense.

RMIT can now display the GreenPower logo on the University website, which is featured on the home page of Property Services’ revamped “Think green at RMIT” website.

Visit www.rmit.edu.au/thinkgreen

The presence of this logo indicates that RMIT has purchased renewable “clean” energy, acknowledged by GreenPower, a national government accreditation program that sets exacting environmental and reporting standards for renewable electricity products that are available through energy suppliers to both businesses and general households.

In 2008, RMIT purchased 15 per cent of GreenPower through Country Victoria and has made a commitment to increase this to 20 per cent in 2009 and 2010.

Building Automation System

In the past two years, Property Services has invested in and implemented the first stage of a Building Automation System (BAS) that monitors and controls the mechanical and lighting systems in buildings. Over the same period of time, the Property Services team has installed energy measurement and management systems.

The BAS facility is based on the City campus and uses a data communications protocol that enables computerised building automation devices to exchange information about heating, ventilation, air-conditioning control, lighting control, access control and fire detection systems.

The BAS facility has identified energy consumption issues in RMIT’s engineered services and the University is focusing on increased energy efficiency in mechanical services in the forthcoming years.

In late 2008, the second stage of the BAS rollout began and further upgrades are earmarked to continue into 2009.

A campus lawn in the Alumni Courtyard

In 2008, RMIT’s Alumni Courtyard was turfed with environmentally sustainable, synthetic grass that saves RMIT about 16,000 litres of water a week. The TigerTurf can be recycled at the end of its lifespan.

This initiative is one of RMIT University’s many water conservation projects that are outlined in the “RMIT Water Management Plan 2007–2010”.

The turfing of the 900 m² courtyard on Russell Street has added a new dimension to the City campus, opening it up and offering a large recreation space for both students and staff.

The Alumni Courtyard is a historically significant site, formerly the Old Melbourne Gaol Hospital Compound, from 1865 to 1925, and the Victoria Police Garage, from 1925 to 1994.

Recyclable artificial grass has also replaced the drought-affected remnants of natural grass on Ellis Court that flanks the Bowen Street entrance into the Francis Ormond Building on the City campus.

On RMIT’s Bundoora campus, artificial grass will be used for the new soccer field and athletics track being developed as part of the “Playing Fields Precinct”.

The existing soccer field at RMIT Bundoora will also be rejuvenated with TigerTurf. The playing fields will be ready for use by first semester, 2010.

A leading light in recycling

RMIT was awarded a “Certificate of Recycling Excellence”, by Advanced Recycling Australasia P/L for its fluorescent tube and lamps recycling program. The program was initiated by Dr Abbas Mohajerani, from the School of Civil, Environmental and Chemical Engineering, as part of his research into the toxic effects of mercury.

Since September 2007, RMIT’s fluorescent tube and lamp recycling team—comprised of Property Services Maintenance staff—has collected 2,544 kg of used fluorescent tubes and 884 kg of lamps from the City and Bundoora campuses. Advanced Recycling Australasia is responsible for removing the fluorescent tubes and lamps from RMIT and recycling them.

Property Services anticipates that around 20,000 fluorescent light tubes will be recycled on an annual basis through the program.

Think green at RMIT

Property Services is spreading the green message in an environmentally sustainable, paperless way. The “Think green at RMIT” website that recently went live showcases RMIT’s sustainability initiatives around carbon emissions reduction, water conservation and recycling, building construction and refurbishment, and waste management and recycling.

The website also lists RMIT’s key sustainable research institutes and research projects and has the latest news from around the University about staff and students’ “green” endeavours.

Other website features include useful guides on how to go green at work and at home and a list of definitions for the green jargon that has become part of everyday parlance.

Visit www.rmit.edu.au/thinkgreen

Keelbundoola Scarred Tree and Heritage Trail

In 2008, the Keelbundoola Scarred Tree and Heritage Trail was officially launched at RMIT Bundoora. The heritage trail consists of rare Aboriginal scarred trees, wetland and vegetation sites that are registered under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act (ATSIA).

The scarred trees are estimated to be around 800 years old.

The “scarring” of trees occurred when bark was stripped from them to use for shelter, weapons, watercraft, tools and containers. Three of the six trees on the Bundoora campus are canoe trees and the other three are food implement trees.
The Keelbundoora Scarred Tree and Heritage Trail is a self-guided walk that was created to recognise and preserve the ecological and cultural significance of remaining vegetation on the Bundoora campus, which sits on Aboriginal (Wurundjeri) land.

Keelbundoora Scarred Tree and Heritage Trail map. Illustration by Sharon West.

The key contributors to the development of the Keelbundoora Scarred tree and Heritage trail were Property Services, the Ngarara Willim Indigenous Centre, the Student Services Group, the School of Art, the School of Education, the Wurundjeri Land Council and the City of Whittlesea.

The Bundoora gardening team constructed the trail, landscaped the gardens around the trees and provide ongoing maintenance. Property Services also funded the construction of the viewing platform that overlooks the Scarred Tree trail and the Bundoora campus lake.

The Peppercorn Tree, one of the sites on the Keelbundoora Scarred Tree and Heritage Trail. The Peppercorn Tree was commonly planted around homesteads in the colonial period because of its qualities as a hardy shade tree.

New staff on board in Property Services

Property Services has appointed new staff to support the University’s extensive operations.

The Projects Branch has engaged the services of six Project Managers from Montlaur who are working on key projects, which include feasibility studies for the Central Library and Student Services upgrades, the Bundoora campus lecture theatre, the Franklin Street recreational facility and the Urban Spaces Upgrade. In early 2009, the Projects Branch is appointing a Manager, Construction—a 2IC to the Deputy Director—and one Project Manager, Major Projects.

Property Services will continue to support RMIT’s commitment to Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and will recruit two part-time Student Project officers from the School of Property Construction and Project Management. The students will complete the compulsory industry experience component of their program with Property Services’ Projects Branch.

In the Space Planning and Management branch, a Timetabling Systems Coordinator was appointed to provide support to all users of Syllabus Plus, manage the Syllabus Plus database and develop and maintain the timetabling website.

There have also been several new staff to Property Services’ Corporate and Client Services team.

A new Finance Manager was appointed and a Senior Advisor, Health and Safety has been seconded from People and Culture and is working with Property Services, focussing on the development of procedures around the handling and removal of hazardous building materials.

A Communications Coordinator also came on board to improve communications and promote the extensive capital works program and Property Services functions and initiatives.

Four new Security Shift Supervisors and a Security Systems Supervisor have joined the Facilities Services’ Security team.

In 2009, a Manager, Security will be appointed and a Senior Advisor, Environment will also be coming on board to ensure Property Services complies with environmental best practice in its operations and building design and construction.

Creativity and colour on campus

During 2008, RMIT University put its buildings, campus grounds and physical resources to creative use. Property Services has lent its support to public art installations, a cancer awareness campaign and the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Victorian women’s suffrage.

In late September, RMIT’s City campus was literally in the pink for a good cause.

Property Services maintenance staff worked behind the scenes to ensure that the heritage-listed Francis Ormond Building (Building 1), Buildings 2, 3, 4 and the La Trobe Street end of the Bowen Street thoroughfare were glowing pink in support of breast cancer awareness.

This is the first year that RMIT has participated in the Estee Lauder Corporation’s Global Illumination event, which sees significant landmarks and monuments around the world bathed in pink. Global Illumination is one of the signature events of the National Breast Cancer Foundation’s annual Pink Ribbon campaign.

The Property Services maintenance team was also responsible for lighting Bowen Street a vibrant purple to coincide with RMIT’s celebration of the Centenary of Victorian Women’s Suffrage in mid November.
The Frances Ormond Building glowed pink to promote breast cancer awareness.

Property Services also answered the call of an RMIT student who prefers to paint on the side of buildings rather than conventional canvas.

Master of Arts (Art in Public Space) student, Rowena Martinich used the south-facing, glass façade of Building 15 on the City campus as the backdrop for her vividly coloured, abstract expressionist painting.

Property Services contributed some funding to help Ms Martinich defray the installation costs of the work, which was erected piece by piece with the help of a boom lift. The painting was 15.5 metres high, 8.5 metres wide and was painted over 55 panels of clear, industrial vinyl.

The artwork was on display until the end of 2008.

The Alumni Courtyard on the City campus was recently converted into an al-fresco exhibition space.

A Property Services Project Officer oversaw the temporary removal of the artificial grass from the Alumni Courtyard to enable internationally renowned installation artist Martin Boyce construct his large-scale sculpture, entitled *We are Shipwrecked and Landlocked*.

RMIT University collaborated with Kaldor Public Art Projects to host Martin Boyce’s high-profile artwork. The modernist-inspired oasis of abstract palm trees, rubbish bins and other industrial objects was officially opened by Professor Margaret Gardner, Vice-Chancellor and President, RMIT University on Tuesday, 21 October.

The installation closed on Sunday, 30 November.

RMIT’s Building 15 is transformed by the vibrant artwork of RMIT Master of Arts (Art in Public Space) candidate, Rowena Martinich.

RMIT Gallery offers a rich program in 2009

RMIT Gallery has always played an important role as an innovator in Melbourne, providing a program of Australian and international fine art, fashion, architecture and design for the University community and Melbourne’s cultural life.

In 2008, its exhibition program explored, among other things, the flamboyance of British fashion designer Zandra Rhodes; leading German contemporary artists’ interpretation of interiors; the legacies of Rengetsu, a Japanese nineteenth century ceramicist and poet; recent work from esteemed artist Klaus Rinke; and *Heat: Art and climate change*, a global look at how artists are representing this volatile issue.

*Beyond Metal*, a group exhibition of Australian artists’ jewellery and holloware made from steel wire, twigs, beeswax, feathers and plastics was another standout show. Curated by the RMIT Gallery Director, Suzanne Davies, the show toured internationally to Chennai, New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore, India, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, and was met with great acclaim.

In 2009, the Gallery program will continue to investigate the idea of internal spaces, decoration and connections with shows including *Critical Fixtures*, installations by Australian artists and *Central Periphery*, work from contemporary European artists.

Mid year, the Gallery will show for the first time in Australia, an exhibition of the finalists in the prestigious European jewellery competition *Schmuck*. This will be followed by a major show of works from Chinese Australian artist Liu Xiao Xian, and an intriguing show *Super Human* from (ANAT) Australian Network for Art and Technology, which shows works developed in the areas of nanotechnological intervention, neurology and cognition, biological manipulation and augmentation.

A public program of either floor talks, artist talks or practical workshops accompanies each exhibition. The rising attendance at each event last year, showed an increasing awareness of the number of ways students and the public can interact with the Gallery and its artists.
Based in the historic Storey Hall, the RMIT Gallery is a valuable training ground. Its volunteer program enables students and professionals to develop skills in gallery management.

In its almost 30-year history, RMIT Gallery has worked with external partners including the Goethe Institute to initiate programs including lectures, master classes and workshops for students, with artists, historians, designers, town planners, and major artists, photographers and crafts people.

Each event has left an indelible mark on the city, forging strong links with communities of gold and silversmiths, architects, industrial designers, photographers and artists.

This year the Gallery will contribute to an exhibition space at the opposite end of Swanston Street at Federation Square. The Fracture Gallery, a unique exhibition space between two pieces of glass in the Atrium will showcase the work of new and established local and international artists.

The current work on show comes from UK artist Shane Waltener, Another World Wide Web. The artwork is made from hundreds of metres of hand-knitted shirring elastic stretched between the beams of the Gallery to create a giant spider web.

The Gallery is currently closed for renovations and will reopen in April 2009.

For more information about the Gallery program, or to join the mailing list visit [www.rmit.edu.au/gallery](http://www.rmit.edu.au/gallery)

A new lease on campus life

As RMIT rolls out its extensive capital works program and accommodates its growing student population, there has been an increased demand for leased premises in the Melbourne CBD.

In 2008, Property Services secured two new leases on the City Campus. One of the leased properties is Building 86, located near RMIT’s Swanston Street thoroughfare at 18–20 Little La Trobe Street. The 232 m² building is the new home for RMIT English Worldwide—RMIT’s English language centre—which has been refurbished to a high standard with state-of-the-art teaching and learning resources, including electronic whiteboards.

Levels 9 and 10 of Building 105, located at 501 Swanston Street are being renovated to accommodate the diverse needs of RMIT Training, Internal Audit, Legal Services and Property Services. These RMIT divisions are currently located in RMIT’s Building 48 at 449 Swanston Street, which is set to be demolished to make way for the future Swanston Academic Building. Staff will be moved to Building 501 in mid 2009.

The two new leases constitute 800 m² of additional leased space and bring RMIT’s total amount of leased space to 39,000 m², which represents approximately 15% of the University’s space portfolio. The inclusion of Buildings 86 and 105 has increased the number of RMIT’s leased locations to 19.


RMIT English Worldwide entrance on Little La Trobe Street.

Your thoughts

We hope you have enjoyed the inaugural edition of Property Central, the Property Services update. Property Central is a bi-annual publication and the next edition will be available in July, 2009.

We value our readers’ feedback and invite you to contact us if you have any comments, queries or suggestions. Please contact the editor (details below).

Editor
Alison Blackburn
Corporate and Client Services
Property Services
Tel. +61 3 9925 2645
Email: alison.blackburn@rmit.edu.au

Property Services
Building 48, Level 6
449 Swanston Street
Melbourne VIC 3000