Breaking Ground: Central Courtyard construction begins

On Tuesday 28 May, to commemorate the start of construction on Central Courtyard, the University’s biggest, most transformative project for decades, Vice Chancellor S Bruce Dowton donned a hard hat and hi-vis vest, turned the first sod with a golden shovel and spoke about what the endeavour will mean for upcoming generations of students, staff and extended community when it opens in early 2021.

Professor Dowton noted that although the previous Hub building served the University very well, he acknowledged the enormous impact on learning and teaching the purpose designed, future-proofed spaces in brand new buildings will have, and opportunities for celebration and social connection the graduation hall and courtyard areas will create.

It is fitting that a student at Macquarie, Sarah Treacy gave the event’s Welcome to Country address, as the Central Courtyard precinct has been designed around the student experience at Macquarie.

The VC was joined at the ground-breaking ceremony by many of the University’s senior leadership team, project architects and consultants plus a large contingent of builders, one of whom fed back that the VC’s speech was a perfect reminder to many of the site staff of the importance of the end product they are building.

Head of Property at Macquarie University, Mark Broomfield said of the project commencing, “After seven years of consultation and planning, it is so great to finally see this amazing project come to life.”

Overview of what’s happening:
1 Central Courtyard building

Previously known as ‘the Hub’, the new, five-level building is the largest element of the project and will be the new heart of campus with showcase design features and destinations:

- **Basement level**: Graduation hall and stage, function rooms, commercial kitchen and plant area.
- **Ground level**: 12 food and beverage retail areas adjacent to the new Central Courtyard; UBar and terraced area overlooking the lake; semi-covered/open-air communal dining areas with seating.
- **Levels 1 and 2**: 25 formal and informal teaching spaces.

Outdoor areas

- The **Central Courtyard** area will dominate the precinct, provide a central plaza space as before but with upgraded amenity, new trees and outdoor entertainment capability in a contemporary landscape design installing quality paving, seating and pathways.
- A landscaped **Residential Courtyard** will service students living in the new residential towers and connect to the Central Courtyard.

Student accommodation (two buildings)

A first for Macquarie University, two brand new student residential towers with up to 342 beds will be built, with further residential towers planned for the precinct at a later date. The design caters for contemporary student study and living needs. Ancillary and function spaces are also included. Given the proximity to Central Courtyard buildings and plaza-facing retail areas, the student accommodation is set to encourage night-time and student-led use of the new development.

Lincoln building, 16 Wally’s Walk

A campus architectural icon, the four-level Lincoln building will undergo an internal and facade refurbishment with the Ground Level converted into six retail food and beverage outlets that will open onto the new Central Courtyard area. Upper floors will be used for the Higher Degree Research Office and Research Services.

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