

western australia chapter events 2021

please refer to learning environments wa chapter website  
for details: <https://a4le.org.au/news/wa-news/>

september

wednesday 22nd

4:30-6:00pm

site visit #03

Balcatta Senior High School

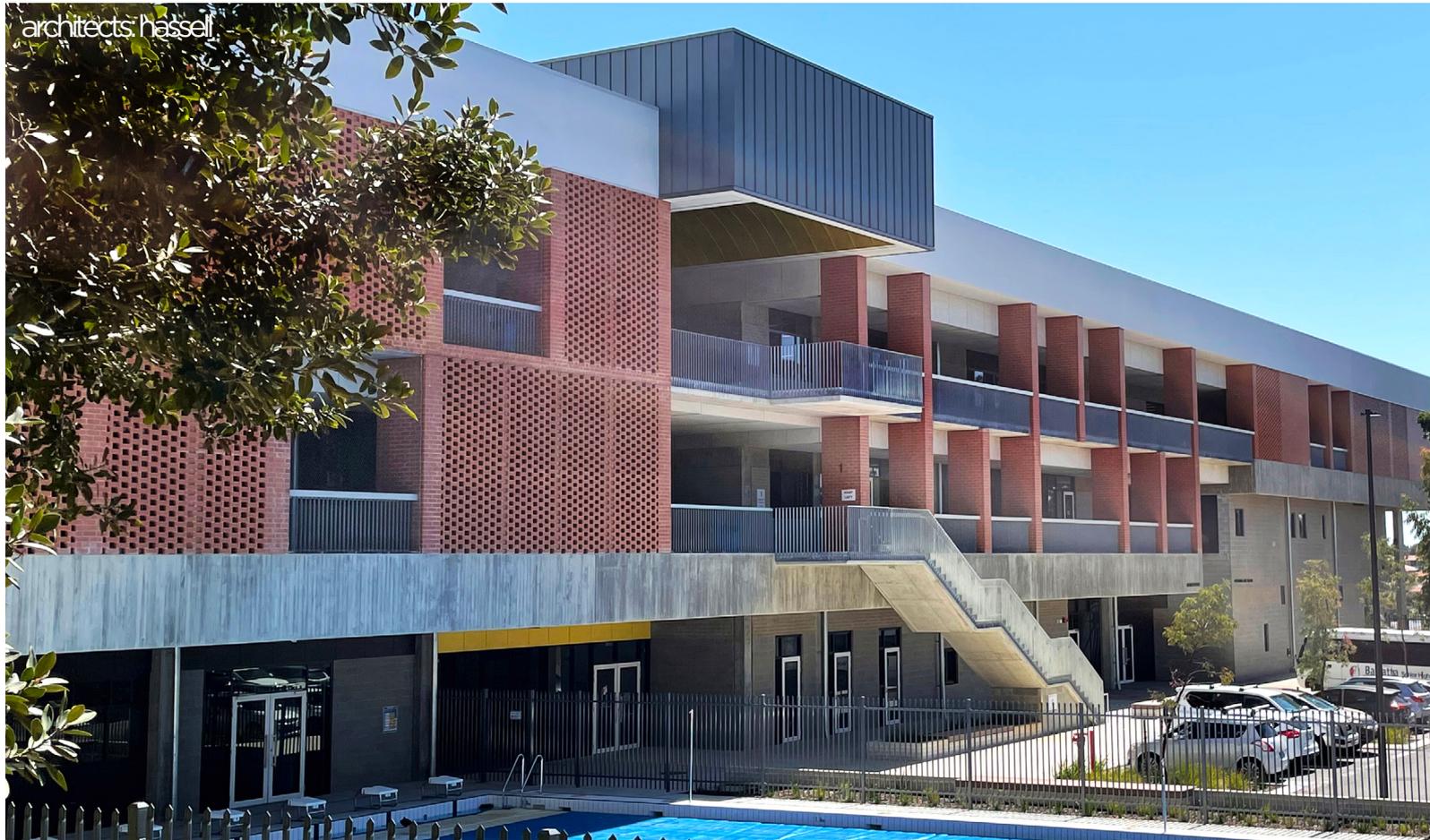
//join us for a tour// drinks and nibbles provided

all welcome

members: no-charge

non-members: \$15

architects: hassell



The 1960s heritage listed Balcatta SHS sits at the top of a hill with extraordinary 360 degree views and steep drop to the north. A new, 4 level building continues the existing school main circulation spine into a new and singular northern structure extending down to the ground as the site drops. This gives a single point of universal access for the entire school and a new front door to what was previously the rear of the site.

Different activities are consolidated into the one building – performing arts, science, sports facilities, administration, informal learning and more – encouraging overlap and mixing of different curricula. Extensive refurbishment of existing, tired buildings

and a major landscape refresh for courtyards has reinigorated the existing school master plan, enhancing indoor/ outdoor connections and social space. At the heart of the school, a new cafeteria at the junction of refurbished and new buildings creates a crossroads meeting point that emphasises the connection between contemporary and heritage without prioritising one over the other. A modern, light, steel-based “knuckle” design strategy informs this connection, creating a third element that celebrates the transition between new and old.

A strongly modern material palette of pre-cast and off-form concrete, split face blockwork and terracotta complements the existing school fabric and has been reinterpreted for the new buildings. On the western facade, the building opens up as a series of concrete ‘gills’ in response to its solar orientation, shielding

the western sun but opening up north and south for natural light and views. An existing school swimming pool from the 1970s has been virtually re-built insitu, sliding under the new building and offering unexpected glimpses of deep blue water from a number of vantage points.

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