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UTAS to go green at

BY **CAITLIN JARVIS**

IT MAY have spent its past life as a bustling industrial hub of railyards and ships, but the Inveresk precinct's future as the University of Tasmania's Northern campus is decidedly green.

Dubbed the "urban realm", UTAS recently advertised its development application with the City of Launceston council for the green spaces between the campus buildings.

It features one of the first examples of bioremediation, which uses plants to extract contaminants from the soil put there by past services. It will also include distinctive nods to its Indigenous past.

Landscape architect firm Ream Studios, based in Hobart, was commissioned to design the urban realm area to create a uniquely Launceston urban area for the entire community to enjoy.

Lead designer Alaric Hellawell said the university wanted to create something distinctly place-based that played on the site's past - both its industrial heritage and its Indigenous history.

"We were really involved in the engagement right from the beginning and having that ability, to talk to people from those communities, like the Aboriginal community, gave us a really good idea of how to create spaces in between the buildings that would be culturally distinctive," he said.

"What we wanted was to create something that was unique to the site, and to make something that you wouldn't find anywhere else in Tasmania or even in Australia."

Mr Hellawell said the site's past use as an industrial railyard had been something the team of designers needed to work through, along with it being a flood-prone area.

However, he said great design always needed challenges, and they'd been able to work through those impediments.

"You wouldn't find an urban site in the world that didn't have some level of contamination, so we're very used to that," he said.

Part of the site's challenge was to create environmentally sustainable and resistant things like climate change and floods, which affected decisions such as plant choice.

GREEN SPINE

A vital component of the urban realm is the "green spine" that will connect the Willis Street buildings, via the pedestrian bridge, with the central University Square and campus buildings on the precinct.

Mr Hellawell said the green spine would help encourage pedestrians, such as visitors and students, to walk through the campus and learn its history.

The way-finding Guardian Stones throughout the campus, which were developed with consultation from the Aboriginal community, will welcome and identify the entry to the precinct.

"The two stones have been purposefully located on the alignment of the bridge landing as an arrival gesture/gateway element, transitioning from the bridge to the urban realm," documents in the DA state.

"This intentional manoeuvre establishes a pattern of meandering and discovery based upon the way in which movement through traditional landscapes occurred, separating the user from the regular orthogonal pattern of the site's industrial footprint."

The Green Spine is the North Esk River's ecological conduit to the Pulingina Milaythina (or welcoming space).

PULINGINA MILAYTHINA

Mr Hellawell said, working closely with the Aboriginal community to design a distinctive urban realm that aligned with their values was one of the most rewarding parts of the process.

"On all of our jobs we make a concerted effort to consult with the Aboriginal community, but it's not always possible," he said.

The result of that collaboration is that the new campus will feature a welcoming space geared towards sharing Indigenous culture.

The cultural events space will include separate men's and women's business spaces, circles to be present in the gathering space design and a fire-pit for ceremonial burns.

It will be located at the Stone Building's front, where the lightning bolt sculpture is now. The statue will remain in place, with some enhancements.

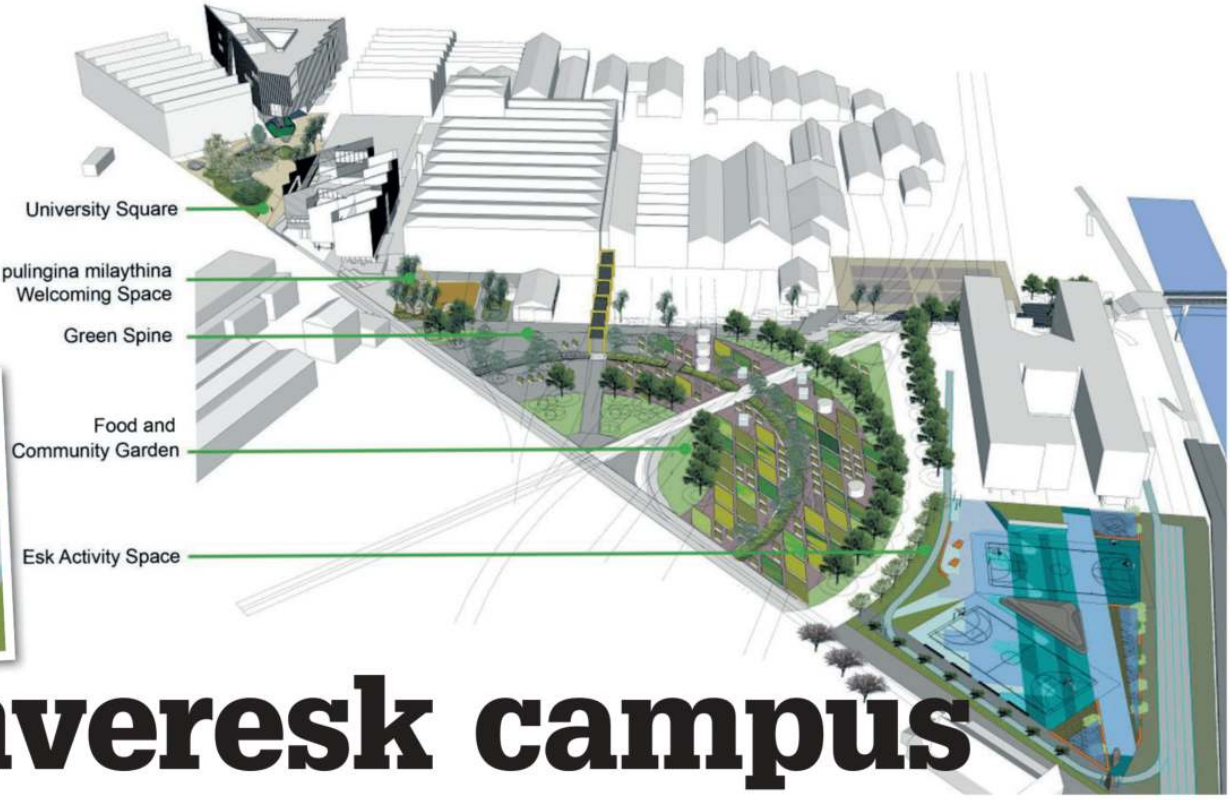
The Aboriginal community also provided guidance and direction for the species of plants installed and the material, with sand chosen as the preferred material in



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Inveresk campus



BUILDING UP: UTAS pro-vice-chancellor Dom Geraghty in front of the under-construction library and student experience building at Inveresk. **Picture: Phillip Biggs**

the performance space.

Launceston pro-vice-chancellor Dom Geraghty said the consultation of the Indigenous community was of crucial importance to UTAS.

"It's a precinct, so that means there's no walls around it, but we will have the Guardian Stones, which will provide entry and exit points at key locations around the campus," he said.

And it's not the only place the Aboriginal community will have a presence on the campus.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

A native food garden focused on Indigenous plants will be part of the new community garden/food systems area.

The community garden will be located at the front of the QVMAG in what is now part of the half-circle car park's parking area.

Mr Hellawell said the community garden would be "a productive space" and would feature raised garden beds at different heights for accessibility, as well as greenhouses.

"The planters will be removable so it can be adapted for events. It's one of the spaces that will be activated to invite the community in," Mr Hellawell said.

A vital tenet of the new campus was to create a precinct that was accessible and activated for the entire community, not just for current and future UTAS students.

Professor Geraghty said the garden would grow food to be used on campus and be used in research and experimentation.

The Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture will relocate its headquarters to the Newnham campus as part of its revitalisation, and Professor Geraghty said TIA would need research facilities.

"It will be a very large urban garden or urban farm, which will be about 8000 square metres occupied by raised growing beds," he said.

The garden will produce seasonal vegetables, and there is also an Indigenous component with native foods grown as well.

"There will be opportunities for our different ethnic groups to utilise some of those beds to grow culturally important foods," he said.

Professor Geraghty said the garden was for the community and was a space to be used with pride.

ESK ACTIVITY SPACE

Another community component of the urban realm is the Esk Active Space, located at Station Cottage.

As the name suggests, the active space is an active area for the community and students to enjoy communal activities.

It will feature bouldering areas, a running track, multiple sports courts for basketball and netball and the like, and a fitness area and outdoor ping pong balls.

Professor Geraghty said it would also hopefully invite the community to spend more time on the campus.

"We expect that to be heavily used not only by our own students and staff but also the community," he said.

"It's that idea of having an open campus, because this is meant to be the University for Tasmania, and for Launceston."

UNIVERSITY SQUARE

The final component of the urban realm is the University Square, located in between the library and Architecture.

Professor Geraghty said the university square would be a focal point for students and cover the triangular space between the buildings.

University Square will be a central place for gathering for students. The development application for the urban realm is open for public comment until March 4.