

The Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator (HVCCC) are an organisation who are charged with coordinating all coal train movements from Hunter Valley to the loaders of Port Newcastle.
HVCCC wanted their new office to look professional but not showy. Using raw and industrial materials a pallet was developed in galvanised mesh, corten steel and large recycled timber to highlight spaces. The finish is striking yet in keeping with the industrial background of the HVCCC.

The site for the HVCCC was a run down office/warehouse in Broadmeadow. The existing building, a dark and cavernous monolith did not present well to the public domain. Two raking light wells in the ceiling are central to the buildings design. The north well, protected by timber blades, flood the building with light. These timber blades extend to define the front facade leading visitors in from the public domain.

Working within the existing building the program aimed to retain much existing fabric from the original fit-out whilst making selective changes to improve amenity. This included retaining much of the original office including structure, cladding, existing grid ceiling and some internal offices.

The design reintroduces light deep into the building providing an improved working environment to workstations. Clerestory light wells at each end of the building provide a bright open space inviting to staff and visitors.

Working within the existing building drove the consultant team to find creative solutions for existing services. Interestingly the existing, yet recently replaced, air conditioning plant was successfully reused despite initial problems.

The budget was set by a prearranged lease with the owners. Throughout the documentation, decisions were balanced between a desired aesthetic and the cost of each detail developed. Upon completion the total cost per square metre for the fit out was \$517/sqm or \$750/sqm including exterior landscaping, car parking and disabled access upgrade.

Building reuse, materials reuse, natural light and power control are some sustainable elements of this project. Retaining the existing building fabric reduced embodied energy while recycled timber blades keep this down further. Carpet tiles were selected so when they reach their end of life can be selectively removed and replaced or incorporated into a new project. Natural light reduced the need for artificial lighting and users retained control of lighting through local switching. Lights and air conditioning are also tied to the security system, so that when armed at the end of each day, all lights and air conditioning power down from a single point of control.

In early meetings, the HVCCC expressed the need for occupation on the 1st of April 2012. Timeframes became tighter during the pre-design phase due to unavoidable holdups, so in order to regain time a dual authority approval path was used. Webber Architects prepared two separate documentation packages allowing part of the works to be commenced under a complying development certificate whilst other parts were submitted to council. Webber Architects worked with council closely and obtained approval for the whole project in only eight days, including the DA.

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