

Concurrent Session J
Wednesday 14 September 2016
11:10am – 12:00pm



Session 1

Buranda Student Accommodation: Creating a Home Away from Home

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Woods Bagot, UniLodge

Sarah McMahan is passionate about the integration of interiors into a building's shell in order to achieve optimum function, aesthetics & economies of material and project cost. Her strength is in the expression and execution of the 'big idea' – making for spaces that not only meet budget but exceed expectation and are a source of delight for the client, end user and visitors alike.

Peter Bates joined UniLodge as Chief Executive Officer in September 2006. UniLodge is a privately owned market leader in the operation and management of student accommodation across Australia and New Zealand providing a home away from home for more than 12,000 residents annually. Prior to joining UniLodge, Mr Bates held Senior Executive roles within Lend Lease.

How do you create a home away from home for over 1600 tertiary students whilst satisfying the demands of developers, accommodation providers and the Brisbane City Council? This was the challenge facing architects of Australia's largest off-campus student housing development currently being built in the Brisbane suburb of Buranda.

Singapore Developer Wee Hur Holdings purchased land directly adjacent to the Buranda train and bus stations, ensuring easy access to the CBD as well as three of Queensland's major universities. Stage 1 of the development, to be completed in 2017, will yield 1608 student rooms and 7 commercial tenancies across two towers of 25 and 14 levels. Both towers are connected by a podium at level two and retail tenancies on ground level. UniLodge were appointed as managers of the facility, bringing an explicit pastoral care approach which has further impacted upon the building's design.

Student accommodation is generally associated with small rooms, shared bathrooms and often not much more. However the Buranda project differs in that UniLodge have set out to create a home away from home that fosters community and looks out for student welfare. The premise is that UniLodge staff will connect directly and frequently with students through simple activities such as collecting mail. A vibrant student culture is anticipated to revolve around the Level 2 podium, featuring shared student kitchen, dining, lounge and social spaces, recreation amenity and – importantly – informal study spaces. UniLodge will manage formal and informal events to foster and support the student community.

Apart from the student rooms (some including their own bathroom) architects Woods Bagot initiated a number of design principles to promote high rise livability. These principles include orienting the building to optimize environmental conditions and views, creating sky gardens at every third level and locating student common spaces at the end of each floor plate.

This presentation will detail operational and design considerations in developing the Buranda student accommodation project, demonstrating that financial viability and a vibrant student experience do not have to be mutually exclusive.