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CASE STUDY



**A world-leading approach to wellbeing and ergonomics:
Melbourne Connect by Melbourne University**

Melbourne, Australia

Schiavello's ergonomically-designed Krossi Workstations and Product of Australia manufacturing process are the perfect fit for Melbourne Connect, an innovation precinct problem solving for the world.

In the heart of Carlton, the University of Melbourne, in partnership with a consortium led by Lendlease, has created a connected innovation ecosystem: connecting people, place and possibilities. The Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (FEIT) occupies 15,000m2 of workspace and the 'Telstra Creator Space', a 1,100m2 fabrication laboratory, both delivered as an integrated fitout.

Opened in March 2021, the purpose-built precinct acts as a front door where industry can connect with the best and brightest minds to build a powerful network of innovation to solve society's challenges in a forward-thinking environment. Built for the FEIT, the thoughtfully designed office and research space – for academics, professional staff and graduate researchers – considered environmental and human factors integral to delivering a high performing workplace.

With a 6-star Green Star rating for sustainability and environmental performance already under its belt, FEIT at Melbourne Connect is targeting a WELL Platinum rating for how well a space and an organisation supports the health and wellbeing of people. Subject to final independent testing, this would make the University of Melbourne the first university globally to achieve this level of accreditation, which judges buildings based on tenant wellbeing in categories such as air, light, movement, mind and community. Wellbeing is of such high importance for FEIT that it has a dedicated team looking after Health Safety and Wellbeing for its faculty staff and students.



Krossi Workstation electric height-adjustment

“It’s about fitting work systems and environments to people – as opposed to fitting people to environments – in order to create healthier, safer and more productive workplaces.” Rosie O’Halloran, Melbourne Connect’s ergonomist said when describing the importance of her role within the University of Melbourne. While her remit spans the organisational, cognitive and physical elements of the university’s work environments, one of the key considerations is the furniture. That’s where Schiavello’s Krossi Workstations come in.

Designed with health and wellbeing at the fore, Krossi features heavily throughout the Melbourne Connect workspace, with over 1000 installed across the engineering workspace and surrounding specialist areas including the Telstra Creator Space and the user experience labs, created for a world-leading group of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) researchers who study, teach and are fascinated by issues arising from humans interacting with emerging technologies.



Krossi Workstation, Monitor Arms & Cache Storage



Krossi Workstation and Vide Panel

According to Rosie, Krossi “has all the features we want in terms of adjustability and dimensionality to accommodate the diversity of the user group. Integrated features include pre-set height functionality, a matte surface to reduce reflectance, ease of use as well as ticking all the boxes with sustainability and warranty.”

In addition to the workstations, Schiavello also supplied privacy screens, adjustable monitor arms and bespoke tall storage units with custom designed handles for use by graduate researchers. Of these handles Rosie says, “we worked with Schiavello to design a new handle with a much stronger, functional and usable grip, which speaks to the willingness of the team to adapt and respond to our concerns.” The end result being a fully adjustable, ergonomic workstation within an environment carefully designed to fit all user capabilities, requirements and work styles.

While ergonomics played a crucial part in the furniture fitout, it wasn't the only consideration for University of Melbourne; using Products of Australia was one of a number of benefits to consider in the selection process for Project Director, Sarah Nickas.

Sarah explains, “the University recognises the importance of manufacturing in Melbourne, including the ongoing lifecycle and practical benefits, such as

replacing components over time or adding workstations that are manufactured locally with minimal imported components.”

With the project completed during the COVID-19 pandemic, being a Product of Australia meant Krossi was resistant to the worldwide supply chain issues that crippled the globe. While still up against lockdown implications and capacity limits, Schiavello was able to demonstrate how Product of Australia delivers by manufacturing and installing the workstations within the promised 6-8 week timeframe.

The pandemic highlighted the value of the decades-long working relationship Schiavello has developed with the University. “Relationships built on a spirit of collaboration and shared experience result in a level of respect and trust that then provides the best opportunity to deliver excellent outcomes” Sarah said. This includes a commitment post completion to refine solutions for individual stakeholders and their issues as they arise.

The University's holistic, people-centric approach perfectly aligns with Schiavello's, which Sarah describes as “not just selling boxes, but providing an experience that's tried and tested here in Melbourne, with long term support if you need it.”



Krossi Workstation