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Hoop pine panels in class of their own at \$55m school build

COVER STORY P 12



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Hoop pine ply a learning ‘curve’ for NSW state school building program

90-year-old Brisbane manufacturer in a class of its own for panelling

THE design and construction of the \$55 million Jordan Springs primary school in suburban Sydney was completed in just over 12 months – a record for any state government schools infrastructure project.

The project was a close collaboration between Melbourne-based modular homes manufacturer Modscape, Group GSA, a building design consultant, and Richard Crookes Constructions, both in Sydney.

Jordan Springs is seen as the beginning of a new era for the Department of Education as it examines modern and innovative methods of construction. And Brisbane-based plywood manufacturer Austral Ply met the challenge, supplying its factory-finished architectural panels for internal and semi-exposed areas throughout the school’s 4406 sq m of learning space.

Jordan Springs, north of Penrith, demonstrates how design for manufacture and assembly can be utilised for off-site works to create a seamless, high-quality and rapid project. While the modules were being constructed within the



Plywood panels finished in a unique three-coast system at Jordan Springs provided durability and an attractive outward appearance for the school’s modular buildings. Photos: Modscape and Richard Crookes Constructions

Modscape factory, the school site was being prepared and Richard Crookes Constructions was able to undertake preliminary traditional construction works that would eventually marry the modules after installation.

More than 95% of the school was built off-site under a pilot of a new construction method that can deliver permanent buildings in shorter time-frames. It is part of the state government’s \$6.7 billion commitment to accommodate surging populations in NSW schools.

Jordan Springs is the first of five to be built using a ‘design for manufacture and assembly construction’ method, which involves architecturally designed buildings being constructed in

factories for more sustainable and efficient project delivery.

Classroom components were built in factories in Victoria, then transported up the Hume Highway over four weeks by large trucks under police escort.

While a typical school build takes one to two years, Jordan Springs was assembled within seven months, with an extra two months to finalise additional works such as landscaping.

Education Minister Sarah Mitchell said the new method had reduced on-site building

time by up to 50%, without project delays due to bad weather or external factors.

While not all Sydney schools will be deemed suitable for the new construction method, the government has suggested it was a good option for fast-growing areas with high demand for enrolments. It will also look to move construction to NSW factories, instead of Victoria.

Premier Gladys Berejiklian said the coronavirus pandemic had enabled some infrastructure projects such as schools to move faster.

“That’s really been something we’re proud of in NSW and we’ll need it to continue,” she said.

“\$6BN UPGRADE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NSW”

From P 12

Comprising 46 modules, Jordan Springs includes 27 internal learning spaces, six covered outdoor learning spaces, a library, learning auditorium, administration spaces, a school hall and plenty of landscaped 'play' areas for 600 students with capacity to increase this to 1000 students.

Austral Ply's key role focused on supplying more than 2000 sq m of 2400 x 1200 x 9.5mm Ariaply panels that were adhesive-fixed to metal framing.

The ready-to-install panels have found applications for ceilings, soffits and internal walls, available in seven colours to suit any project – blackbutt the choice for the Jordan Springs school.

Made from high quality certified Queensland hoop pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*), the exterior Ariaply was finished with a unique three-coat system that provided durability along with an attractive outward appearance for the school buildings.

The same product has been



1/ Austral Ply supplied more than 200 sq m of Ariaply panels that were adhesive-fixed to metal framing.

has Responsible Wood forest certification and chain-of-custody under the Australian standard AS 4707:2014, awarded through an independently-audited process by the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia.

JIM BOWDEN

(With information from the NSW Department of Education).

Sydney's Jordan Springs primary school features hoop pine cladding manufactured in Brisbane by Austral Ply. Photo: Modscape

“ON-SITE BUILDING TIME REDUCED BY 50 PERCENT”

supplied to the Galungara Primary School at Schofields in Sydney's north-west, a \$54 million project to be completed early this year.

A plywood manufacturer since 1925, Austral Ply draws on 100% plantation-grown hoop pine, sourced from HQPlantations in southeast Queensland and

Loans for new homes continue to set records

LOANS for the construction of a new dwelling rose in December, for the sixth consecutive month, to reach a new record.

This is the highest monthly result since the Australian Bureau of Statistics began reporting this data in 2002 surpassing the record set in September, October and again in November.

“Since the announcement of HomeBuilder in June 2020, confidence in the housing market has continued to thrive, aided by low interest rates and house price growth,” says HIA's economist Angela Lillicrap.

“The number of construction loans to owner occupiers in the December quarter has doubled since

the same time last year,” she said. “This leaves the number of loans in 2020 higher than in 2019 by 36.3%.”

The number of loans for the purchase of land in the December 2020 quarter is also up by 86.3% compared to the same period in 2019.

Ms Lillicrap said first home

buyers were extremely active in the market, taking advantage of HomeBuilder and various other federal and state incentives.

The number of loans to first home buyers reached the highest number since 2009, when post-GFC housing stimulus stimulated housing activity.