

campus **living** villages

media release

23/11/05

No more grotty couches: student life goes five star!

Old style dorms are out; sophisticated high-tech living is the new catchphrase for student accommodation.

In-built LCD screens, stylish kitchens, business centre and heated pool are some of the features of the newly refurbished 228 room RMIT Village Old Melbourne.

The \$10 million refurbishment at RMIT Village Old Melbourne has been underway for the past year.

To transform the "Old Melbourne" hotel into one of Australia's most glamorous student digs, student accommodation company **Campus Living Villages** called on the expertise of 5-star hotel designers Chhada Siembieda Australia - whose other projects include hotels and resorts in Hong Kong, India, Dubai and Fiji along with the W-Hotel, Sydney and the recently refurbished Sydney Hilton Hotel.

"**Campus Living Villages** threw down the gauntlet, challenging us to design a new style of student room," said Chhada Siembieda Practice Director, Michael Watson.

"Why should students get a second-rate, boring fitout," Mr Watson said. "For far too long the approach has been, 'you get what you're given'. **Campus Living Villages** wanted us to think laterally and design a room students would enjoy living in.

"We wanted to create something that hadn't been done before," Mr Watson said. "We managed to give students sharing a room, both private space (for sleeping or studying) and communal space (for dining, watching TV and socialising) within the footprint of the

existing hotel room. As designers we are very proud of the outcome."

Campus Living Villages CEO Dr Patrice Derrington said "We do more than offer rooms at our campus villages – we create an exciting community for our residents. Our approach is to provide students with a lifestyle that supports their study at prices competitive with other student accommodation."

Some of the features of the new rooms include:

- In-built LCD screen (on swivel stand) that can be used as a computer monitor, TV, and radio;
- Sliding privacy walls;
- Security compartment inside wardrobe – large enough to fit laptop, wallet, passport, phone and iPod;
- Double depth wardrobes – with hanging space at the front and storage at the rear. Storage large enough for two suitcases and able to fit archive boxes;
- Wardrobes have heavy drapes instead of doors – to add colour, texture and pattern to the rooms;
- Kitchenette with _ fridge, two burner hotplate and microwave;
- Foldaway multi-purpose dining table;
- Larger than usual desks; and,
- More intimate, indirect lighting to create a warmer, home-like feel.

Along with the outdoor heated pool and business centre, the 454-bed RMIT Village Old

Melbourne also has a café, a bar, smart-card door locks and laundry facilities. There are 14 one-bed rooms, 206 two-bed rooms, 6 three-bed rooms, and 2 five-bed rooms.

"As part of the project, a wide range of student-support and student-life programs have been developed with very diverse activities ranging from sports activities to study skills and cultural and craft pursuits," Dr Derrington said.

"Many parents of potential students say they remember visiting the Apollo Old Melbourne– and are amazed at its transformation," Dr Derrington added.

About 60 students already call RMIT Village home, with up to another 394 students expected to move in for the start of the new study year. With the refurbishment almost complete, there will be two open days on the 4th and 11th of December.

Campus Living Villages specialises in the integrated development, financing and long-term operation of purpose-built accommodation for university students. Along with RMIT Village Old Melbourne, the company also operates Sydney University Village.

RMIT Village is on Flemington Rd, North Melbourne.

Media Contact:

Toni Rankin, KJA - (02) 9955 5040 or 0419 255 022

For a virtual tour of RMIT Village Old Melbourne visit -

www.campusliving.com.au/virtual_tours.html

for more information please call **+61 9955 5040**