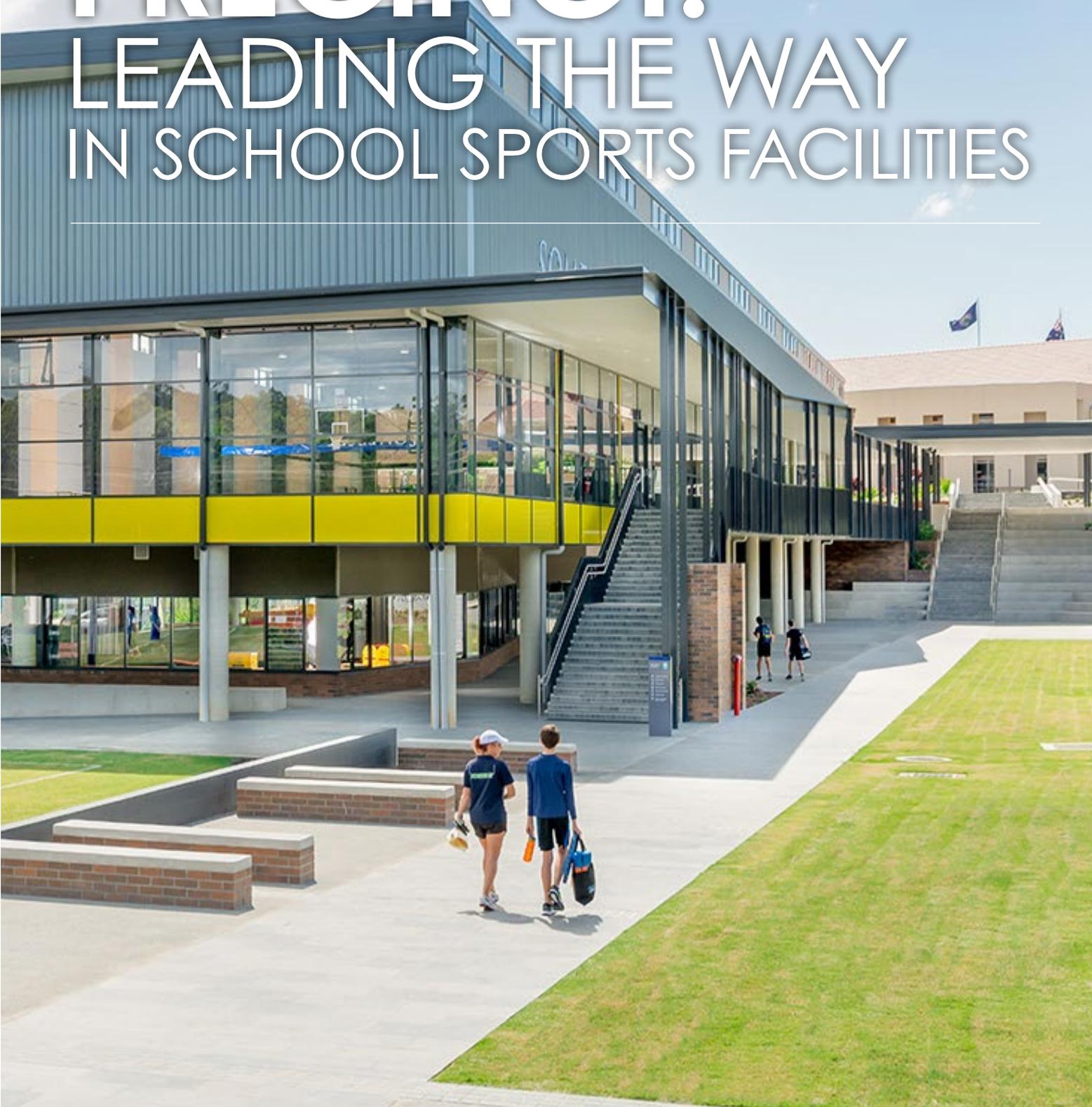
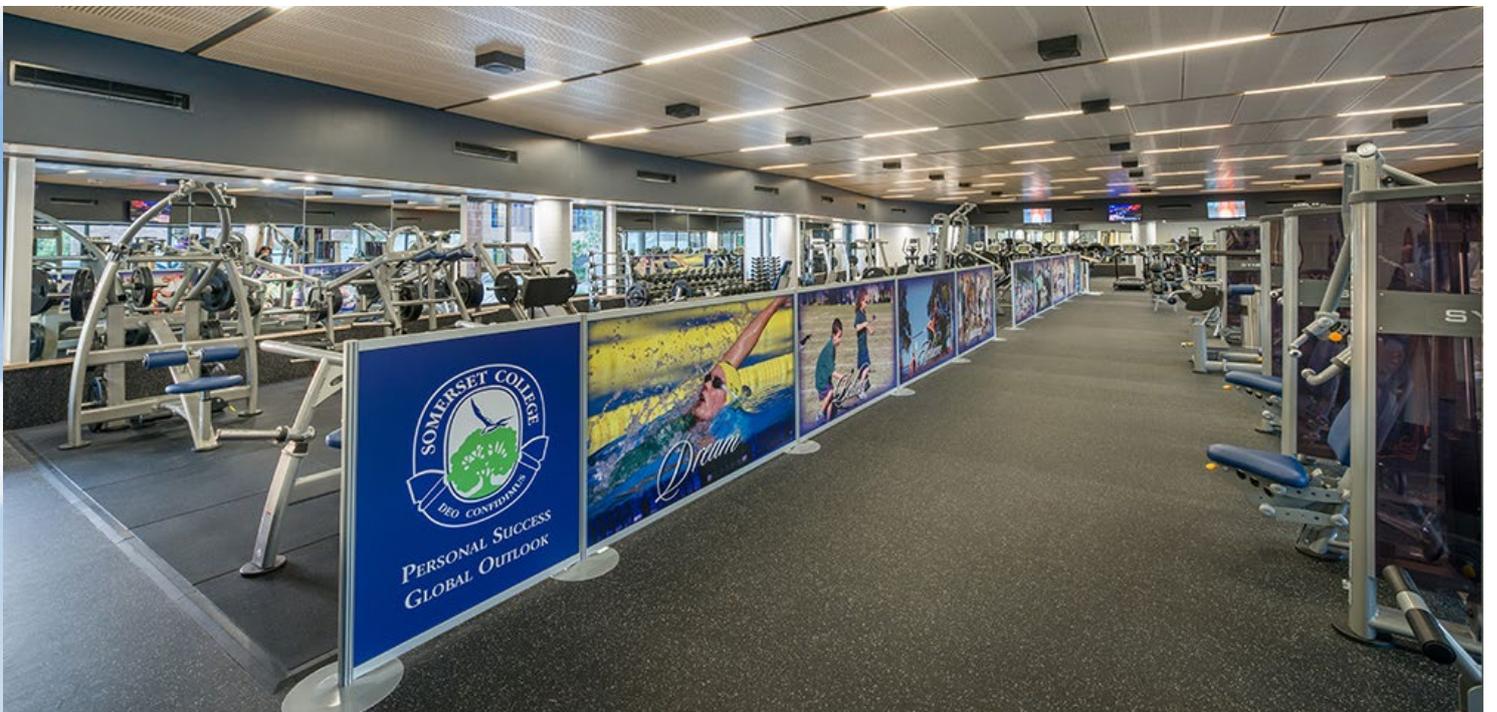




By Toni Krasicki

SOMERSET SPORTS PRECINCT: LEADING THE WAY IN SCHOOL SPORTS FACILITIES





The upgraded and extended Somerset Sports Precinct at Somerset College gives students access to first-class sporting facilities.

School sports facilities in Australia have come a long way in the last 30 years – my high school didn't even have grassed areas let alone a football pitch, and every sports day we had to catch buses to take us to external sporting venues!

Somerset College, an independent school in the bushy hinterland of Queensland's Gold Coast, has definitely embraced the 21st century. In an effort

to improve the health and wellbeing of the school community, and provide students access to top notch sporting facilities, the school recently undertook a \$14 million upgrade, one of the most expensive capital works in its 33-year history. Taking up a significant part of the Mudgereeba campus, the upgrade to existing facilities and the addition of international standard sports facilities



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now allows students to develop sporting skills right on campus.

“To make use of the world-class facilities and to benefit students, new initiatives and partnerships have been created with external organisations.”

Opening in March this year, the state-of-the-art Somerset Sports Precinct has been well received by the student body, the school community and affiliated sporting bodies. Offering two international-standard indoor netball/basketball courts with Canadian Maple sprung flooring, a fully equipped fitness centre, an IAAF accredited ten-lane synthetic running track, an olympic-size swimming pool, a tennis complex comprising six courts, a premier football

(soccer) field, a football practice field, as well as an international-standard rugby field, the precinct, has added an indoor rock climbing wall for less sports orientated pursuits.

Sport Facilities Manager, Damian Flint, has been with the College since August 2015 bringing with him extensive experience from ten years of study and work abroad. Damian says that one of the goals of the College's Strategic Plan is to broaden community outreach. In doing so, professional teams such as the Australian Opals Basketball team completed a training camp here before heading off to Rio. The school has also established a relationship with the Gold Coast Titans who use the facility for training purposes, and in 2018 the Commonwealth Games teams will train at the Precinct.

To make use of the world-class facilities and to benefit students, new initiatives and partnerships have been created with external organisations. The Somerset College Basketball Club was formed, and the team practices and competes out of the new facility in the Gold Coast Basketball League. In partnership with Gold Coast Gymnastics Club, a gymnastics program was established for the students, and more recently Araken Martial Arts has developed a martial

arts program. Ignition Athletics Club uses the track facility as a training base and City Coast Physio operates their business in the Precinct under the direction of owner/physiotherapist Scott Whiting.

Yearly memberships to the fitness centre and group fitness classes are available for a nominal fee, while pool lanes, athletics track usage and tennis court hire is subject to availability. While the Junior and Senior School students primarily use the facilities, memberships are available to the College Community.

During term, the group fitness timetable reads like any health club timetable, offering 19 class staples such as Pump, Pilates and Yoga, as well as high intensity Boot Camp and Boxing, to Zumba®, and a Run 4 Fun program. At a cost of approximately \$500,000 the fitness centre fit out includes Synergy Fitness equipment and although limited in its offering, personal training is also available at the facility.

As the reputation of the Somerset Sports Precinct continues to grow, the prestigious Somerset College's huge investment in the health and wellbeing, and sporting ability of its community provides a benchmark for future school sporting facilities in Australia.

www.somerset.qld.edu.au

