



p o t a b l e / p o r t a b l e

The project – **potable/portable** - focuses on the design of a new type of classroom:

a sustainable prefabricated kitchen classroom

A key issue facing child health today is the question of nutrition. Childhood obesity in the developed world is on the rise. Governments and health agencies believe education is a critical determinant in addressing the problem. One initiative in Victoria has emerged from the **Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation**, a private non-government organisation established under the guidance of renowned chef, Stephanie Alexander.

Central to the Kitchen Garden's philosophy is the provision of a school garden which produces food which school-children will grow, harvest and then, in a specially-designed kitchen classroom prepare a meal. Growing, tending, preparing, eating – these are the pedagogical aims of the kitchen garden scheme. Ideally, every school in Australia should have a kitchen-garden and a kitchen-classroom.

With the **Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation** as a hypothetical client and using the typical briefing documents of the Foundation, fifteen Masters of Architecture students from the **Melbourne School of Design** at the University of Melbourne were asked to propose innovative designs for a prototype pre-fabricated kitchen classroom that was also a benchmark for sustainable design – a building which could be dropped into any school, perhaps even constructed by the parents and children, a building which also collects water and is utterly responsible about the energy it uses. It also needs to be a place in which children and teachers can work together and engage in that most essential of tasks: eating.

The **potable/portable** is thus not just a special form of classroom/laboratory but it is also a big public dining room, a public space.

Project Brief for potable/portable

A key focus for the students was innovation through research and design speculation. The intention was not to replicate existing prefabrication technologies but to invent at every level – from concept to detail.

The kitchen-classroom had to comprise the following:

- a learning space in which every child in the class can participate in a 'hands-on' experience
 - ideally five 'work stations' or kitchens
 - a 'harvest table' to display freshly grown produce
 - a dining area, ideally within the kitchen-classroom, so that everyone can sit and share the meal
 - round tables seating 8-10 people are ideal, but alternatives could be considered
 - potential for a covered outdoor eating area
 - laundry, refrigeration and storage facilities
-
- the building was to be constructed using a prefabricated building system (of the student's choice)
 - the building must include water tanks
 - the building should relate to the school's kitchen garden and educationally, highlight the cycle of growing, harvesting and the production of waste
 - the building must employ sustainable technologies, materials and processes
 - thought was to be given to concepts of inventive recycling and clever uses of embodied energy e.g. recycling existing buildings, objects, and materials

Students exhibiting (in alphabetical order):

Rohan Appel
Jacqui Bell
Rob Chittleborough
Clare Kwok
Fiona Lew
Codey Lyon
Michael McManus
Julia Makin
Sian Murray
Irene Ng
Claire Oliver
Katya Pellicano
Rochelle Skurnik
Chris Stribley
Kate Sutton

Studio Leader:

Philip Goad
Melbourne School of Design, University of Melbourne

