



West Lakes Shore School unlocks the design potential of flooring with Tarkett Floorcraft

Project: West Lakes Shore School, SA

Product: Acczent Excellence 80

Tarkett Australia is now at the forefront of intricately detailed vinyl flooring design, thanks to its revolutionary Floorcraft technology which allows digital designs to be perfectly replicated via sonic cutting.

The first project in Australia to receive the showmanship of Floorcraft is West Lakes Shore School in the western seaside suburb of Adelaide, South Australia, whom installed a sensory walk – in the way of an artistic mural hallway.

Architect Hodgkison's senior interior designer, Tina Murray, said the school briefed her for the sensory walkway, seeking a space to stimulate the young students when learning, walking or playing on it.

"With the school being by the salt lakes, we drew our design inspiration from sea creatures and took advantage of an opportunity for it to be a learning experience for the children," said Ms Murray.

With such a detailed design in mind, she consulted flooring experts Tarkett Australia for a means to bring her design vision to life.

Tarkett SA State Manager, Phillip Curtis, said he was excited by the design brief. "Tina told us they were looking for something a bit different," said Mr Curtis.

"Because it's a primary school, they wanted a bit of playfulness and creativity – as opposed to just a plain colour going down a hallway. The school is by the water so they had incorporated a lot of marine motifs and made it really bright and interactive.

"We mentioned that Tarkett internationally had a product, Floorcraft, that we hadn't used in Australia before but which would give them complete flexibility in terms of design creativity.

"We worked closely with the Tarkett team in the United Kingdom, and together we came up with the embodiment of their design using our Acczent Excellence 80 heterogeneous vinyl flooring products.

"For what resulted in such an intricate design, the whole process was actually pretty simple and straightforward."

Tarkett Floorcraft employs a technically sophisticated sonic-cutting service to shape complex bespoke designs with extreme accuracy. These are pieced together and protected with a clear adhesive film that holds them together during installation. The film is removed once the flooring adhesive has set.

Floorcraft designs are scalable, so there is no size limit for customised flooring schemes.

Virtually all Tarkett vinyl flooring is suitable for Floorcraft design solutions. In the case of West Lakes Shore School, Tarkett recommended the Acczent Excellence 80 heterogeneous vinyl flooring product for the entire hallway mural because – with 132 designs and colours – it features such a large range of options to draw from.



Combined with Floorcraft, Acczent Excellence 80 offers endless possibilities to create inspiring, bespoke interiors.

Aesthetics were obviously especially important for the project, as well as the flooring's practical performance, which senior interior designer Tina Murray said was a foremost consideration.

"I also choose vinyl flooring depending on what the usage is for the client," said Ms Murray.

"By going through the specification process with Tarkett, I knew that the Acczent Excellence 80 heterogeneous vinyl flooring had the appropriate durability and maintenance properties for the school's environment.

"I spent a lot of time talking with Tarkett to ensure that the Floorcraft system wouldn't compromise the fundamental benefits of its vinyl flooring range, namely its excellent wearability and cleanability."

Tarkett's Phillip Curtis said the Acczent Excellence 80 range is a heavy-traffic vinyl flooring with high indentation-resistance and treated with Tarkett's trademarked Top Clean XP surface protection, for extreme durability and cost-effective maintenance.

"When you've got kids constantly running up-and-down on flooring, you really want something that's got longevity and is also easy-to-clean and maintain, so that it keeps its good-looks for its lifespan.

"Acczent Excellence 80 is very suitable for the high foot-traffic areas in the school and it requires very little maintenance. You don't need any wax or polish for the life of the flooring."

Hodgkison's Tina Murray said alternatives to Floorcraft were explored, but none could match its durability or ultimate value. "The builder was trying to push for an installer that would create the design with bespoke cutting, which is fiddly, but I was sure that the reduced installation costs for Floorcraft would offset the investment. With Floorcraft, all the work was done up-front because it comes in singular panels and, as such, lays similarly to other kinds of vinyl.

"Knowing what we could do with the design and still install it easily was great to discover because it would save us time on labour and wouldn't cause the installers concern.

"We also had an option from another supplier to print our design, but I didn't want to do that from a wearability point-of-view because you have kids jumping all over it. I just couldn't see that it would withstand the wear-and-tear, whereas with Tarkett I knew the vinyl had good durability properties all the way through from top-to-bottom, even with the Floorcraft intricacy. I knew it would be hard-wearing and therefore have a long life, making it a great return-on-investment. So it seemed like good value to me."

SA Competitive Flooring director, Darryl Foulis, oversaw the Floorcraft installation at West Lakes Shore School and was impressed by how easily it was to lay.



"It was a bit of a novelty for me to work with something I hadn't seen before," said Mr Foulis. "We have done pattern-style jobs where we cut-out our own patterns, but this Floorcraft job was quite good because we didn't have to inlay the vinyl cuttings.

"The Floorcraft system really does create design possibilities. It's one thing for an architect to draw something on a piece of paper but being able to accurately transfer that into flooring can be difficult.

"When you're dealing with a design that is as detailed as the hallway at West Lakes Shore School, then you probably wouldn't be able to do it in a conventional fashion. You'd have to do a lot of trimming, whereas on this job with the Floorcraft system there was literally only one piece that we had to trim and it was a big bit. It was pretty much one hundred percent spot-on in the cutting."

Mr Foulis said the installation process was surprisingly easy, given the intricacy of the end result. "The pieces come in two-metre-wide panels and vary from that to a metre-long. They are already inlaid and then taped together. It's pretty much like a jigsaw in that you just put down the numbered pieces. All we had to do was set-up the centre and everything just flowed from there. It worked really well.

"With Floorcraft the hard work is already done. It's a lot easier than doing it in a manual fashion."

Asked his opinion of the finished result, Mr Foulis said "It looks great. If we come across clients who have a need for particularly detailed designs, such as at the school, we will definitely let them know about Floorcraft. I think the school is already considering doing some more of this kind of Floorcraft art in other areas."

Tarkett's Phillip Curtis was similarly taken with the completed installation. "I love how playful it is and that it demonstrates what can be achieved with some creativity," Mr Curtis said.

"So many architects and designers have abundant creative ideas but don't realise that they can bring those to life in the flooring.

"There's a lot of beige and grey flooring out there, which creatives find a bit stifling. Floorcraft is a great opportunity for them to have some fun and explore possibilities. Once they are aware of Floorcraft, they'll know there is no limit to their ideas being accurately reproduced with Tarkett vinyl flooring.

"In this case, Floorcraft gave the designers so much flexibility and really showcased its versatility. And it certainly is unique to Australia, being the first-ever such Floorcraft installation, which was quite a proud achievement for us."

Hodgkison's Tina Murray said she enjoyed being able to achieve such a detailed replication of her design.

"Given that our practice specialises in education, healthcare and corporate, we have of course had a lot of experience with vinyl flooring, but never a job like quite like this. So it was nice, as a designer, to be able to do something different.

"We provided the CAD plan and what I had originally put down on paper is exactly what was produced on the other end, with an amazing degree of detail. So that was cool to see. Floorcraft is certainly going to be something that we will continue to work with in the future."