

Tech school takes cues from nature

Natalie Gerritsen

Environmental and mining influences combine in the new \$62 million building for one of Western Australia's largest vocational education providers.

The Central Institute of Technology, which trains almost 30,000 students, will officially open the new 11,000 square metre building this week.

Designed by Melbourne-based architect Lyons and local firm T&Z, the building was conceived to resemble an open excavation in the heart of the city suburb of Northbridge.

Australia's native environment also appears, with visual references to red desert termite mounds, turtle shells and fire-scorched wood.

Lyons director Neil Appleton said the building had been designed to inspire and educate the students that will study within it.

"The interior was designed to operate as a teaching resource to the building and engineering students, who are able to view directly some of

the construction elements that form the building," he said.

For CIT, the building is another step towards uniting its students onto a central campus.

Students previously studying engineering, architecture and beauty therapy at sites in the suburbs will come together in the new building.

CIT plans to create an education precinct in Northbridge for more than 26,000 students, and sees this new building as the "social heart" of that complex.

"As well as creating a campus feel in an urban environment, the new building will give students and the local community a great space to socialise," Mr Appleton said.

The CIT opening follows another major project by one of WA's tertiary institutions.

Edith Cowan University finished construction on its \$38 million student accommodation complex just in time for the 2011 academic year.

The 357-bedroom complex was a partnership between the university and Campus Living Villages.



The 11,000 square metre building will bring more students in from the suburbs to CIT's growing city campus in Northbridge. The design, by Melbourne architect Lyons and local firm T&Z, takes inspiration from the state's indigenous and mining history.