

# Tarkett Primo Premium brings less stress, no mess, at flagship women's and children's hospital



Project: Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital, VIC

Product: Primo Premium

## **Over 35,000 square metres of Tarkett homogeneous vinyl flooring has greatly contributed to the rigid hygiene standards and bold, colourful interior of the new Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital.**

Recently built in the north-western Melbourne suburb of St Albans, Victoria, the Joan Kirner Women's and Children's Hospital (JKWCH) is a healthcare facility providing a multitude of specialist services including birthing suites, operating theatres, special-care nursery, maternity wards and a paediatric ward.

The floor and walls of the hospital has been effectively designed and employed to reduce stress and anxiety amongst all occupants, and result in an easy to clean and maintain surface.

Such design is described as 'salutogenic' – in Latin *salus* (health) and Greek (*genesis*) – and focuses on creating an environment that promotes wellbeing and reduces negativity.

JKWCH architect, Lyons, used a number of design devices to achieve its salutogenic goals, including abundant

natural lighting and impactful colours. The leading interior influence in this pursuit is the vivid colour scheme and pattern of the flooring, comprised predominantly of Tarkett Vinyl Primo Premium.

Lyons site architect, Anderson Matthews, said the practice specialises in healthcare – mainly designing such sector projects – and liaised with Tarkett after consulting with Western Health about its cleaning and maintenance requirements.

"We worked with Tarkett to provide the most suitable flooring from a practical point-of-view and also to help achieve the salutogenic approach to the build by using colours to help decrease anxiety and stress for patients, their families and friends, and of course the staff," said Mr Matthews.

"Tarkett provided us with samples in different colours from different ranges. We concluded that we liked the speckle pattern in the Tarkett Vinyl Primo Premium range, from which we chose a grey colour for the vast majority of the flooring. Primo Premium's certified properties made it really easy to navigate the specification process and get things such as fire certificates through the building surveyor, which was really helpful."

Tarkett specifications manager, Louisa Keleher, confirmed Primo Premium's wide colour palette and suitability to healthcare environments appealed to Lyons architects: "There are 38 colours in the range so they had a lot to choose from," said Ms Keleher.

"For most of the flooring, about 80 percent, Lyons chose a neutral, base-grey colour which is enhanced by a non-linear pattern with large colour chips. This creates a fleck affect that is exclusive to the Primo Premium range.

"Also, because it is impervious, Primo Premium is an ideal solution for areas where hygiene and infection control are key, such as healthcare. It is also highly resistant and has a surface treatment offering enhanced protection, so it suits heavy traffic areas. It also provides resistance to staining from substances such as iodine, which is frequently used in hospitals."

Logically, the colours chosen particularly cater to children and women, being warm and playful, calming and cosy.

The colour scheme also provides a practical benefit, intuitively assisting with wayfinding throughout the hospital. Certain sections are themed in principal colours, such as the reception and staff bases.

Lyons' Anderson Matthews said the architects also employed their salutogenic thinking to the flooring design patterns, which feature soft lines and flowing circles.

"The design is quite playful in that there are a lot of smooth curves and huge dots in the floor patterns," said Mr Matthews. "Also, there may have been a nod there to Joan Kirner, Victoria's first female premier, as she was associated with polka-dotted dresses."

Not only is Primo Premium used exclusively for flooring, it makes its way up many of the building's walls. "We curved the top of the Tarkett vinyl up the walls in places, particularly in wet areas, and we took it up the walls in the corridors, as well – it looks really good," he continued.

"In terms of the design teams' efforts in creating the effect on the overall job – how it makes people feel when they walk in the entrance – I'm extremely happy. And so is the client. It has received a lot of praise. We'll definitely be using Tarkett Vinyl in our future healthcare projects."

The flooring installers were similarly impressed with the job, with Floor 91 managing director, David Lauder, describing it as one of the most innovative projects he's worked on. "Truly breath-taking and recognised even globally," he said.

"Many members of the Victorian health system and Lendlease marvelled at the vinyl application, some stating that it was the best vinyl installation they had ever seen in a healthcare facility of this magnitude."

The relationship with Tarkett is particularly lengthy. "Tarkett was there when I started in 1978 and I've been using their products, ever-since. We have always recognised them as supplier of quality products. We know that the project will go well when it's a Tarkett specification."



Like Lyons, Floor 91 is vastly experienced in healthcare projects. "We have worked with the JKWCH builder, Lendlease, consecutively on five major hospitals and they have an understanding of our systems and how we deliver quality flooring product.

"Our layers are skilled in applying our system-of-work, which provides a seamless result – from drawing-down product and getting rolls to site, to laying continuously. And because it's easy to install, our layers prefer to use Tarkett vinyl.

"Generally, Tarkett product is good at looking clean. Other products can be inferior because they're too plain in colour and also show-up marks.

"Covering most of the flooring at Joan Kirner Hospital, Primo Premium is particularly good at hiding marks because of its chip pattern.

"Because of its quality, you don't get the scratch problems. It hides blemishes very well and it's also easy to clean," Mr Lauder said.



"With the Tarkett product we used at the hospital, it was virtually defect-free, which means we don't have to keep coming back to rectify things. That's a significant consideration for us."

Floor 91 said the preparation and installation of Tarkett Primo Premium at JKWCH is "An outstanding end-result. The client is very happy and so is Lendlease. It was a win-win situation."

A project-lead spokesperson for Western Health said JKWCH architect, Lyons, made the eventual recommendation to specify Tarkett Primo Premium flooring. Primo Premium product samples were subsequently evaluated in terms of practical performance and cleanability, and in light of OH&S, and infection-control requirements.

"The speckled-grey Primo Premium, which comprises the vast majority of the hospital's flooring, was selected because it shows less marks – damage is less obvious," said the spokesperson. "But our favourite thing about the flooring is the bright colours – they have maintained really well; they still look good."

Western Health needed to check the hospital's support services had the appropriate machines and cleaning fluids to suit the Tarkett Primo Premium flooring – especially because JKWCH's cleaning regimen is much-more frequent compared with non-healthcare facilities.

Western Health ESD Coordinator, Ivan Avramovski, has been working for Western Health for 20 years and said that whilst he doesn't consider himself an expert in flooring, he certainly has extensive experience in cleaning and maintaining it.

He said a key factor in the successful performance of the Primo Premium flooring was early consultation by Tarkett with Western Health and its key services partners: its cleaning-chemicals and scrubbing-machines suppliers.

"It's very important that the flooring company consults with the chemical company and the floor-care machine company before deciding on the right specification of vinyl flooring," said Mr Avramovski.

"We hadn't those consultations before but the builder, Lendlease, was very supportive and asked us from the beginning if we had any concerns about what flooring was being specified.

"A meeting was set up so that Tarkett, our chemicals contractor, Ecolab, and our floor-care machine company, Hako, could consult. Tarkett was very instrumental in the process; they provided all the information needed and sent batches of samples.

"From there, it was determined what the most-effective and appropriate brushes and chemical compositions should be used. So, it was done properly. The results prove how important it is to have the right combination of flooring, chemicals and machines."



Over his career, Mr Avramovski has seen a lot of different types of flooring, from a wide range of different companies, come and go.

The new JKWCH building is connected to a pre-existing building which Mr Avramovski said features a different type of vinyl flooring that exposes wear. "The chemicals and scrubbers can't properly remove marks in the old building so it looks dirty, even though it isn't," he said.

"One of the main problems occurs when you are transporting a patient. The bed-movers' wheels can leave marks on the floor quite easily if it's moving fast and going around a corner. We simply don't have those issues at Joan Kirner Hospital."

Because of JKWCH 's high foot-traffic and infection-control requirements, the floor is cleaned daily. "It's a high-traffic area and we have not just the patients to transport, we have food delivery, stores coming-in, external storage – all on a daily basis. And it's been more frequent since COVID-19," he said

"We find the Tarkett flooring easy to clean, with the machine and also with mops. We've been doing that every day since the building opened over a year ago, and we haven't seen any issues such as marks developing."

Spending the majority of his daily work-life at JKWCH, Mr Avramovski said he appreciates all the efforts that the contributing parties made to create a building so cleverly designed to environmentally alleviate the everyday burdens that all hospitals' occupants must bear.

"A lot of women who come to the hospital are expectant, others have sickness and there's a lot of stress and worry.

But the colours help soothe that. The interior design is very friendly, comforting, and it makes it a nicer place to be for everyone – including myself and the other staff.

There was also an unexpected benefit from the Primo Premium installation: "When you walk on the Tarkett flooring, it has a softness to it so you're less-likely to feel 'heavy-legs'. This is especially important for staff who are working even longer hours due to COVID-19."

Mr Avramovski said he and Western Health take great pride in the new hospital's services and reassuring design. "We consider JKWCH to be a flagship hospital in our Western Health network. We are extremely happy to have a building offering best-practice healthcare facilities for women and children who couldn't benefit from that, beforehand.

"We are very proud of the new building and the quality of the Tarkett vinyl flooring which gives it a real 'X-factor'. It's a very-good flooring so we would recommend Tarkett Primo Premium vinyl, 100 percent.

"When it comes to maintenance, the Tarkett vinyl used here doesn't need any waxes or polishes and needs less chemicals than other similar floors out there. This makes the floor really easy to maintain so we know it will last a long time"