

World-First Smart 'ChillOUT Hubs' Designed and Built in Australia

New experimental open-air smart hubs, created by Australian manufacturer Street Furniture Australia at the company's studio and factory in Western Sydney, will be officially launched by The Hon. David Coleman, MP on Thursday February 20, 2020.

Street Furniture Australia Head of Innovation June Lee Boxsell said the "ChillOUT Hubs aim to offer some relief in our densifying cities by providing opportunities to meet, work or rest, and spend more time outdoors."

"Each hub packs a punch - integrating shade, seats and tables, charging stations, solar power, sensors, lighting, public WiFi, greenery, smart fountains and smart bins - a big feat combining tech, industrial design and placemaking," she said.

Three hubs are already installed in the Georges River Council region in south Sydney as part of a pilot study for the Australian Government's Smart Cities and Suburbs Program. They were the result of collaboration between the Council, the Smart Social Spaces research team from UNSW and the University of Sydney, and Street Furniture Australia.

Street Furniture Australia designed the hubs with input from its partners. Council undertook the overall project management, including installation. The Smart Social Spaces team is developing a digital asset management dashboard, and will evaluate the impact of the hubs with a formal study.

University of Sydney Associate Professor Nancy Marshall said her Smart Social Spaces research team was particularly interested in "how smart street furniture alters human behaviour in public open space, and how it might contribute to the community's health and social well-being. We were also curious whether a dashboard could enable councils to more effectively manage their infrastructure," she said.

"Person-on-the-street surveys are being conducted to give us a complete picture of why the hubs and their technologies are, or are not, being used. We are also analysing how the hubs impact the urban heat microclimate," Marshall said.

Georges River Council Mayor Kevin Greene said that "as technology becomes more integrated into our lives, it's important for councils to harness new technologies to better serve the needs of communities and improve services."

"These new public spaces are an exciting achievement as we move towards our goal of creating a connected city," he said.

Design Story

Before sketching the hubs, Street Furniture Australia undertook a discovery process to understand the user needs and aspirations of each site.

"We wanted to tailor each ChillOUT Hub to serve its community rather than creating a one-size-fits-all solution. The three sites are very different; spending time in each brought us many insights that are built into each design," Boxsell said.

"For example, we have an urban streetscape in Kogarah between the train station, hospital and library, surrounded by offices. There are people constantly passing through. The Kogarah ChillOUT Hub allows you to stop and eat your lunch outside, work using the charging stations, or wait in comfort for a ride.

"We created user personas for all three sites, and designed the hubs around their needs. The ChillOUT Hubs became a 'system' or a kit of parts for site-specific solutions."

Technology Concept

In the back end, the ChillOUT Hubs are connected to the IoT network to deliver data to councils to assist with decision-making, safety and maintenance management.

Sensors are embedded in the hubs to measure three areas: users, microclimate and utilities. Data sets include visitation and median dwell time; local UV, humidity and temperature levels; power and water use, and bin fill levels.

A digital dashboard, called SAMS (Smart Asset Management System), will display the information in one interface, and provide alerts for fire and power outage.

A Smart Future

The increase of high density living in cities brings greater pressure on public space to provide opportunities to rest, connect with community and immerse in nature. ChillOUT aims to test a model of how this could be achieved with smart furniture.

“In the context of smart cities, partnerships are vital in delivering successful outcomes. As long as there is a shared goal, a culture of trust and win-win outcomes, we believe collaborations are the way of the future for private industries,” Boxsell said.

“For Georges River Council, the Smart Social Spaces team and Street Furniture Australia, the community was at the heart of this project, so now it’s about listening to them to see how we can bring further amenity and enjoyment to their parks and public spaces. We are here to learn.”

Results will be shared in a White Paper and short film in mid-2020.

[END]

--

Contact

Available for interview:

June Lee Boxsell

Head of Innovation,

Street Furniture Australia

jboxsell@streetfurniture.com 0432 398 937

Kevin Greene

Mayor, Georges River Council

Contact Emily Kaelin: ekaelin@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au 0438 912 557

Dr Nancy Marshall

Associate Professor,

University of Sydney

nancy.marshall@sydney.edu.au

0434 140 092

Official ChillOUT Launch Event

Date: Thursday 20 February 2020

Time: 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Location: Kogarah ChillOUT Hub, Kogarah Town Square, Belgrave Street KOGARAH

RSVP: To events@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au

About Street Furniture Australia

Street Furniture Australia is a leading innovator in furnishing the public realm in Australia. The company uniquely operates both a factory and an active research and development program under one roof in Western Sydney.

The design team launched Australia's first smart bench in 2017, and won numerous awards including the Good Design Award. It is also the only manufacturer to win a coveted Australian Smart City Award by the Smart Cities Council Australia and New Zealand.

Street Furniture Australia is committed to creating smiles in public spaces, which is a philosophy well-aligned with Georges River Council and the Smart Social Spaces team from UNSW and University of Sydney.

Describing itself as a '34-year old start up,' Street Furniture Australia has furnished more than 30,000 projects in Australia and around the world.

streetfurniture.com

Images

Industry site tour of the ChillOUT Hub in Kogarah.

Kogarah ChillOUT Hub.

Mortdale ChillOUT Hub.

Timothy Reserve, Hurstville, ChillOUT Hub.

Kogarah ChillOUT Hub.

Installing the solar panels onsite.

Installing solar panels at the Mortdale hub.

Cranes were used to install prototype smart trees.

ChillOUT Aria Table casting sample.

ChillOUT Smart Tree node: comparing sample to 3D-printed prototype.

Testing ChillOUT Smart Tree electricals.

ChillOUT Hub system.

+ High res versions and more in the Google Drive Folder.

Contacts

Tiffany Hoy

0287748832

mailto: editor@streetfurniture.com