

# How to encourage conversation in a workspace? Build intelligently

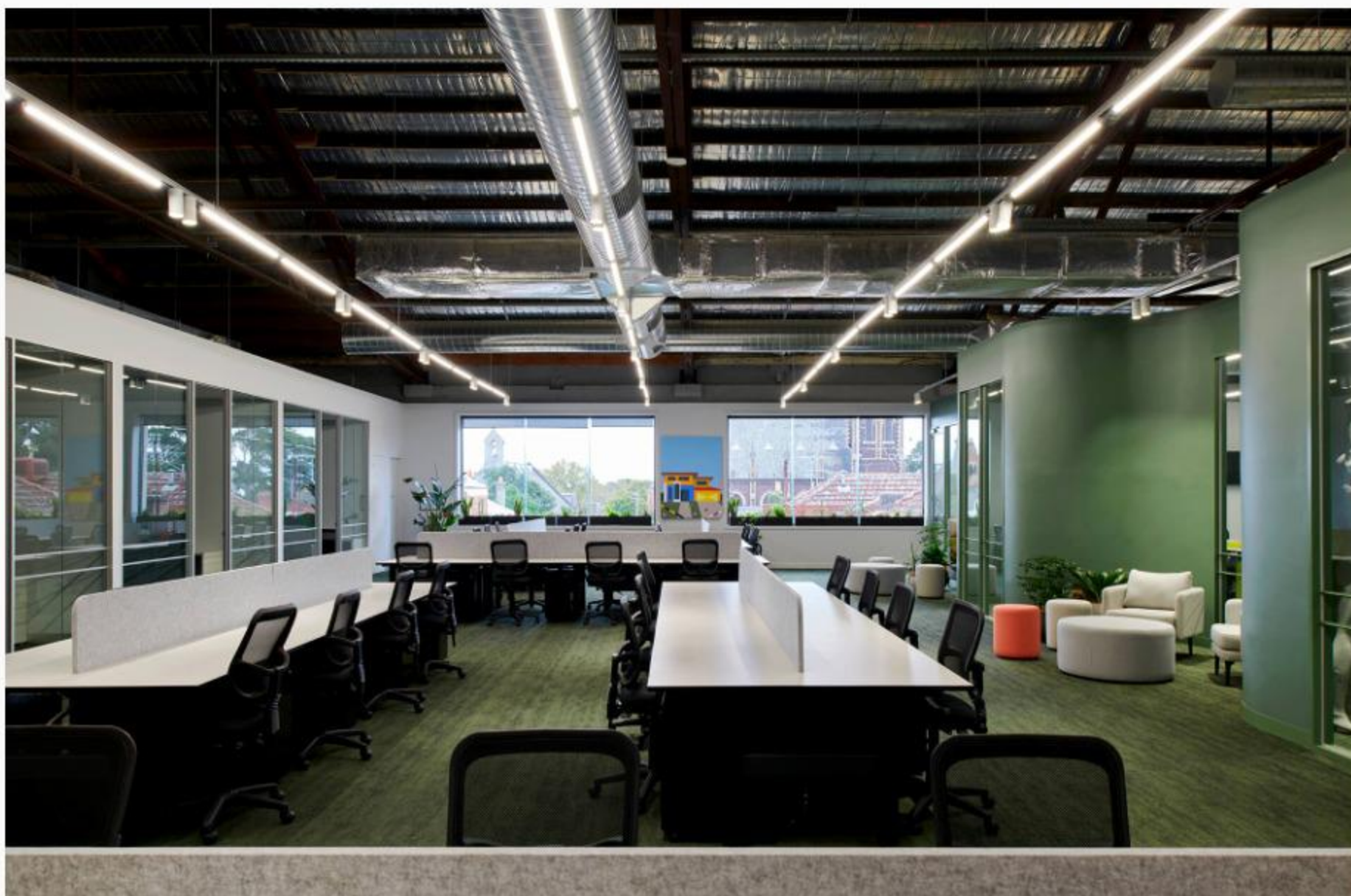
NOVEMBER 14, 2019 TEXT ANTONIO GRANIERO PHOTOS THOMAS BROOKE

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**MELBOURNE** – Melbourne-based social enterprise Our Community Group has opened a landmark co-working space in North Melbourne. Designed by Studio Tate, the space – called Our Community House – hosts 60 employees with over 180 co-working desks available by application for not-for-profit organisations, government, philanthropic and corporate grant-makers, and other businesses.

Located in the former National Union of Workers headquarters, this workspace is conceived as a physical manifestation of the group's digital footprint. To encourage conversation and collaboration, the building was redesigned with intelligent planning.



A large number of amenities – from solar heating and cooling efficiencies to waste management systems – are distributed in four main zones. The visual impact of concrete columns in the front of the building and exposed trusses and high-pitched ceiling of the rear was softened through the use of bold blocks of colour that define zones and wayfinding. Within each of the zones, there is a generous mix of private offices, open plan workstations and breakout settings that can be customized according to the tenant's requirements.

'Transformation was the central theme of our design narrative,' continues Hopkins. 'With limited resources, not-for-profits and social start-ups often work in less than desirable conditions, so the "house" was an opportunity to demonstrate how intelligent design can positively impact communication, productivity and wellbeing in this sector.'

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**Location** [552 Victoria St, North Melbourne VIC 3051, Australia](#)

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