

The NSW Government has committed \$750 million to the redevelopment of RPA to deliver a new hospital building and refurbishment of existing spaces. This is the most significant investment in RPA's 140-year history to support the world-leading services provided at RPA



## Connecting with Country

To embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander worldviews into the RPA Hospital Redevelopment's fabric a Connecting with Country framework has been developed.

The framework provides the Redevelopment team with practical steps and recommendations to help highlight the unique culture and history of the area.

The Government Architect's **Connecting with Country Draft framework** is a framework for developing connections with Country that can inform planning, design, and delivery of built environment projects in NSW.

The ambition of the framework is that everyone who is involved in delivering government projects will adopt the following commitment:

**Through our projects, we commit to helping support the health and wellbeing of Country by valuing, respecting, and being guided by Aboriginal people, who know that if we care for Country - it will care for us.**

The commitment to improving health and wellbeing of Country is also to help realise NSW Government's long-term strategic goals:

- Reduce the impacts of natural events such as fire, drought, and flooding through sustainable land and water use practices;
- Value and respect Aboriginal cultural knowledge with Aboriginal people co-leading design and development of all NSW infrastructure projects;
- Ensure Country is cared for appropriately and sensitive sites are protected by Aboriginal people having access to their homelands to continue their cultural practices.

The RPA Hospital Redevelopment is committed in contributing to achieving these goals via our project that will:

- Protect the health and wellbeing of Country and therefore Aboriginal communities, and by extensional communities noting a health land leads to healthy outcomes;
- Embed Aboriginal knowledge into the design and planning of our project to make the campus a better place for all its patients, carers, staff, visitors and the community.

## Connecting with Country and the RPA Hospital Redevelopment

Sydney Local Health District has a strong commitment to building services and programs to improve Aboriginal access to healthcare, strengthening partnerships with Government and non-government organisations in both health and non-health sectors, significantly expanding and enhancing the District's Aboriginal workforce, and providing high quality mandatory and voluntary Aboriginal cultural education.

To ensure the RPA Redevelopment links to and enhances current programs and initiatives, the Redevelopment Team has been developing RPA Hospital Redevelopment's Connecting with Country framework for the RPA Redevelopment. The framework is designed to help form, design and deliver the project with respect to Connecting with Country principles.

Key in developing the framework is collaboration and engagement with local Aboriginal groups through ongoing consultation. Consultation has included one-to-one interviews with key people within the community, and sessions with Aboriginal staff from RPA and the District. The feedback from these sessions has informed and enhanced the redevelopment team's stories, awareness of sites and themes from local Aboriginal history and culture which is informing the framework.

Thirteen design themes have been identified in the framework for integration in the RPA Hospital Redevelopment, these include:

- Acknowledging a Proud History
- Language Integration
- A Travelling Place
- Storytelling and Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property
- Country, Wellbeing and Health
- The Physical Activating the Spiritual
- Respecting Cultural Protocols
- Building Trust with Community
- Caring for Country
- Ongoing Engagement
- Social and Cultural Inclusivity
- Ongoing Partnerships

As the project moves forward preparing the campus for construction and completes planning for the redevelopment, the Connecting with Country framework will be used to support the integrating of the design themes and ensure opportunities for co-design and further engagement continue throughout the life of the project.

For further information on Connecting with Country or the RPA Hospital Redevelopment please contact the project team.

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## Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and the RPA Redevelopment

The redevelopment team has carried out an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage assessment to manage local Aboriginal cultural heritage values through collaboration and engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders and communities.

In September 2021, a field investigation was conducted with the Sydney Local Health District, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Lands Council (Metropolitan LALC), with several comments made regarding the need for designated land for a cultural garden, a smoking ceremony to be completed prior to ground disturbing works and that Metropolitan LALC is present during ground disturbing works.

Consultation with the community was also undertaken throughout September – October 2021. Those consulted with provided their knowledge on the area and on the proposed redevelopment with responses identifying areas of high cultural significance.

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*We at KYWG believe that the study area is highly significant to our people, we utilised the area for many years and the natural resources available. Aboriginal people have walked and cared for this land for many years and continue to pass on their cultural knowledge by word of mouth.*

*The area is known to be a swampy area which would have provided a pharmacy of medicines and an abundance of resources for Aboriginal people. The water ways are of importance, Black Wattle creek once provide a fresh water source along with Johnston's Creek. These water ways are givers of life and highly significant to us, they are a part of the creation stories and have deep meaning.*

**Kamilaroi Yankuntjatjara Working Group – February 2022**

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## Key recommendations

Through deep engagement and co-design with locally connected Indigenous stakeholders, a set of key recommendations have been put forward to guide the progress of Connecting with Country for the RPA Hospital Redevelopment:

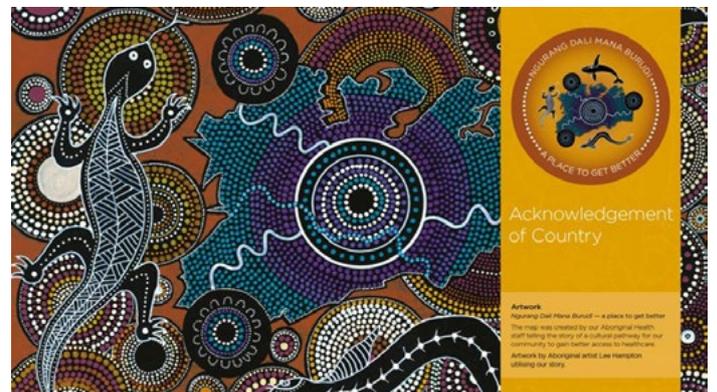
- 1** Commit to ongoing engagement with the local Aboriginal community
- 2** Implement a co-design process with community following an upcoming Creative Thinking Workshop
- 3** Enhance cultural competency across the design teams and individuals involved in the project
- 4** Implement cultural awareness, cultural safety and anti-racism training for RPA staff to ensure positive design and social outcomes for the project
- 5** Increase awareness of, and protection for, cultural values and Aboriginal knowledge (culture and heritage as well as intellectual property)
- 6** Empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients to include a Connection with Country as part of their health and healing journey.

## The vision

Ngurang Dali Mana Burudi — a place to get better, is the Sydney Local Health District's (SLHD) view of the whole community including health services, Aboriginal communities, families, individuals and organisations that work in partnership.

The vision for RPA Hospital requires a whole of system transformation to create a healthier more sustainable and resilient future. This future is based on implementing the principles of value-based care and integrating care: focused on outcomes, patient experience, clinician engagement, equity, efficiency and effectiveness.

It is through collaborating with partners through advanced technologies, research, integration and trialling new value based models of care that RPA Hospital will integrate and transform healthcare provision, improve health outcomes, and improve health, equity, and wellness.



## How can I contact the project team?

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact our project team at the details below.

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