



## Sod turn marks start of construction

Construction on the \$30 million Wentworth Health Service Redevelopment is now underway with the first sod turned on 28 November with community representatives, health service staff, and members of the project team from the Far West Local Health District and Health Infrastructure in attendance.

The sod turn event follows the completion of the planning and design stages of the project, planning approval and the contractor tender process.

Denise McCallum, General Manager for Remote Health Services, Far West Local Health District, spoke at the sod turn even about the benefits the new health service for the Wentworth community.

“Today’s sod turn marks the start of construction for this \$30 million project, which will see a new hospital be built here, adjacent to the existing hospital and raised above the flood levee to overlook the beautiful Darling River,” she said.

“The new Wentworth Health Service will deliver enhanced health services which are welcoming and culturally appropriate for the entire community. It will provide health care which is high-quality, contemporary and accessible”.

Health Infrastructure Executive Director Rural and Regional, Amanda Bock, said the new hospital will replace the current facility which is over 80 years old, transforming health services and facilities in the region to meet the needs of the community now and into the future.

“The Wentworth Health Service Redevelopment will be equipped with the latest, fit-for-purpose facilities, including dedicated staff areas so they can continue to provide high-quality care to the Wentworth community,” Ms Bock said.

*Pictured above: Gert Halbgebauer (Health Infrastructure), Denise McCallum (FWLHD), Pam Tucker (FWLHD Board member), David Rix (HPAC) and Uncle Brian Hunt (Barkindji Elder).*

## Successful contractor announced

HPAC Pty Ltd. was announced as the main works contractor for the new facility following a competitive tender process.

The redevelopment will provide a significant boost to the local economy and is estimated to support around 50 direct jobs during construction, with the potential for supporting many more indirect jobs over the life of the project.

All current services at Wentworth Health Service will continue to operate during construction. Every effort will be made to minimise disruption and the community will be informed of any planned changes.



*Daniel Linklater (Wentworth Mayor), Denise McCallum (FWLHD), Gert Halbgebauer (Health Infrastructure), Ken Ross (General Manager, Wentworth Shire Council) at the sod turn.*

## Sustainability in design

Environmental Sustainability Design (ESD) is a key part of construction of the Wentworth Health Service Redevelopment, with the project team following Health Infrastructure's ESD framework to achieve its sustainability initiatives.

Some of the ESD measures which will be delivered in the new facility include:

- Full electrification of the hospital
- Installation of solar panels on the roof
- Installation of a 15,000 litre rainwater tank to facilitate rainwater harvesting
- Future proofing for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging.

More information will be provided about these initiatives as construction progresses.



## About the Redevelopment

The NSW Government has committed \$30 million to providing comprehensive, accessible, culturally welcoming and consumer friendly health care services to support the needs of the entire Wentworth community.

The new Wentworth Health Service includes:

- A 19-bed Inpatient Unit
- Primary Ambulatory Care (Community Health Services)
- A new Urgent Care Centre
- A palliative care suite, which includes an inpatient room with a private terrace and an adjacent family lounge with views to the river
- A dedicated space for families which opens to a central, shared courtyard
- A gym with access to an outdoor courtyard



## Aboriginal cultural cleansing ceremony prepares hospital site

A cultural ceremony and land cleansing was held on 11 October 2023 on the Wentworth hospital site as part of an Aboriginal tradition used to regenerate Country and prepare the land as a safe and welcoming place before construction commences.

Led by Far West Local Health District with Aboriginal Elders and knowledge holders on Barkandji Country, the event included a traditional smoking ceremony, as well as didgeridoo, song, poem recital and dance performances and was attended by staff, visitors and community members.

Barkandji Elder, Aunty Clair Bates said cultural burning is an ancient fire practice which has been used by Aboriginal people for over 60,000 years.

“Cleansing the land is an integral part of our connection with Country to restore and rejuvenate the land spiritually, and today’s ceremony signifies that this hospital will be a healthy and safe place where the whole community can come to be healed,” Aunty Clair Bates said.

“We have worked closely with the project team on the design of this important new health facility to make it a place welcoming to all.

“The Aboriginal Advisory Group has helped inform the design of the new hospital and we are delighted to see that the main entry plays homage to the red river gums (scar trees) located along the rivers and the landscaping design includes a sensory garden for palliative care with an adjacent yarning circle. The planting around the new hospital and in the gardens will also include medicinal and bush tucker plants.”

The existing Wentworth hospital site will be transformed as part of the \$30 million Wentworth Health Service redevelopment to enhance health services and facilities for the region.

Chief Executive Far West LHD, Brad Astill said connection to Country was a key element in the design, reflected by the inpatient unit rooms overlooking the Darling River, offering a therapeutic environment for patients, and their families, as they receive treatment and care.

“The Wentworth community is one step closer to gaining its new health facility, with the land being prepared in readiness for construction planned to start later this year,” Mr Astill said.

“Today’s event is important to recognise, respect and continue traditional Aboriginal practices and acknowledge the continuing connection to land, culture and community.

“We want this new, modern hospital to be a culturally safe and welcoming place that supports the health needs of the entire Wentworth community.”

The new hospital design has been shaped by locals, clinicians and health staff who have participated in the working groups and consultation sessions during the planning and design process.

Embedding community stories is equally important to shaping landscape and architectural designs. Supported by the Arts Working Group, a focus on the history of the health service and the inclusion of young people through visual arts displays, are being proposed throughout the new building, ensuring the new service reflects the Wentworth community – past and future.

“We are excited to be working with the Arts Working Group, the District’s Aboriginal Health and Community Relations Department, health staff and the broader community to look at how we can best reflect and celebrate the unique stories, heritage and culture from across the region in the new health service,” Mr Astill said.

To watch the highlights of the ceremony, please visit [Wentworth Health Service Redevelopment Cultural Cleansing Ceremony, 11 October 2023 - YouTube](#)



*Barkandji Dancers*



*Back row: Gert Halbgebauer, Tim O'Neill, Denise McCallum, Brad Astill, Corina Kemp  
Seated: Uncle Brian Hunt, Aunty Clair Bates, Rebecca Crawford, Aunty Rhonda Hines, Aunty Jenny Bates*



*Smoking ceremony*

## Next steps

The Wentworth Health Service Redevelopment has now reached construction stage with work to commence in January 2024.

Site signage and shade cloth will be erected on site shortly.

The community will be kept informed with regular updates and work notifications throughout the construction phase.

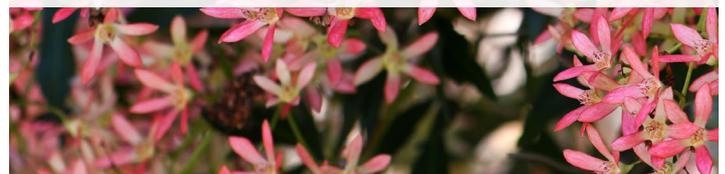
Construction is expected to be completed in 2025.

Once the new hospital is fully operational, the existing hospital will be demolished. This will enable the construction of a new ambulance drop-off bay, and further landscaped areas for patients and their families.



**The project team  
wishes you a happy  
holiday season.**

**See you in 2024!**



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE REDEVELOPMENT:

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