

Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program



Project Update – April 2023

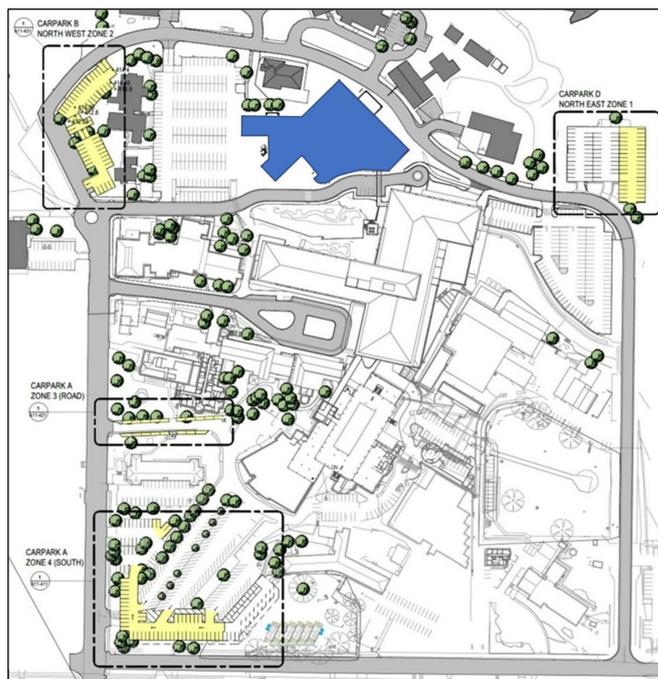
Early works start for new mental health unit

Work has started to prepare the site for a new mental health unit at the Tamworth Hospital campus.

The 37-bed facility will replace the existing Banksia Mental Health Unit with a modern and contemporary facility physically connected to the hospital.

Building contractor A W Edwards has been awarded the contract for the project's early works, which involves adding new parking spaces in four zones around the hospital. This will create more parking spaces for visitors and staff than the number that will be removed to build the new unit.

A W Edwards has experience managing health facility construction projects and knows how to minimise disruption to patients, visitors and staff.



This site plan shows new car parking spaces (shaded yellow) that will be created around the Tamworth Hospital campus, replacing spaces removed to make way for the new mental health unit (shown in blue). The aerial photo (left) shows what the hospital site looks like now.

Once finished, the new facility will provide services for children, adolescents, adults and older people. The new facility will include:

- Child and Adolescent Community Mental Health Services
- Four adolescent inpatient beds
- 20-bed adult pod, as well as five adult high acuity beds
- Eight-bed older persons' pod

The new mental health unit is being delivered as part of the NSW Government's \$700 million State-wide Mental Health Infrastructure Program, an initiative designed to support the delivery of mental health care reform across the state.



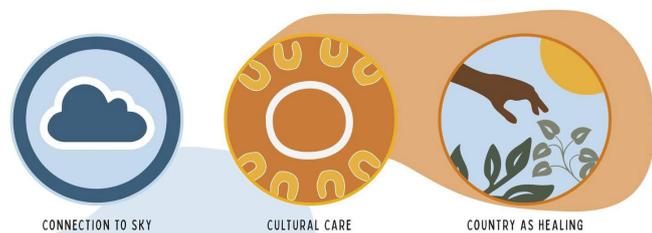
Main construction works are expected to start in the middle of this year.

Taking it to the community

The Tamworth Mental Health Unit project team was out and about in the community in January, sharing updated concept plans with staff and the community. A pop-up information session was held at Tamworth Square Shopping Centre (top image), while plans were also on display at the main entrance to Tamworth Hospital (bottom).



New unit will have strong connections to Country



The NSW Government is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people through active engagement to design and deliver culturally appropriate and welcoming health facilities which acknowledge and promote the continuous caring and connection to Country.

Several "Connecting with Country" workshops have been run with representatives of the Kamilaroi and Gomeri people to ensure their views are reflected in the design of the new mental health unit. Through this process, key themes have emerged as priorities:

- Connection to Sky
- Cultural Care
- Country as Healing.

Connection to Sky has resulted in the unit's design incorporating the tones and colours of sunrise and sunset, as well as views of the mountains beyond and their connected skyline. This will create a sense of place and enable people to know where they are on Country. Openness will be created within the unit with spaces open to sky and large windows.

Cultural care relates to creating safe and welcoming family spaces, as well as culturally informed signage to help people find their way around the site.

Country as Healing can be executed in design by consumers actively creating and maintaining garden spaces.



Renae's role to support the move

Change management specialist Renae Blanch (pictured) has joined the Tamworth Mental Health Unit project team to support transition of staff, consumers and carers to the new facility.



"Change can be both exciting and at times challenging, so I encourage people to make sure they're involved in the process," Renae said.

"Take the time to understand the change, and don't be afraid to ask lots of questions."

Renae will be working with key stakeholders on changes to models of care, policies and procedures, systems and technology, job roles and responsibilities.

She has previously worked as a social worker and clinical coordinator for mental health services within the Hunter New England Local Health District.