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SYMBOLIC ABORIGINAL WELCOME ARTWORK SELECTED FOR TWEED VALLEY HOSPITAL

A prominent artwork celebrating Aboriginal custodianship and timeless connection to land and water, will welcome patients, visitors, and staff to the new \$723.3 million Tweed Valley Hospital.

Health Infrastructure Executive Director, Rural and Regional Amanda Bock said Aboriginal artist Frances Belle Parker, has been selected for a major public art commission, which will help create a vibrant, welcoming, and culturally safe environment for all hospital visitors, in particular our Aboriginal community members.

“Located at the main entrance of the new hospital, the colourful glass artwork will present an attractive and inclusive space right from the main entrance, a theme that will be carried through all levels of the hospital and the surrounding grounds,” Ms Bock said.

“Natural light will filter through five freestanding glass panels, casting projections of colour, and at night the artwork will be illuminated to provide a calming presence for patients, visitors and staff.”

Frances Belle Parker’s artwork, “The Path We Take” was selected for its originality and connection to the hospital site, portraying the local coastline and elements of Bundjalung Dreaming Stories of Gudgin and the Three Brothers.

A proud Yaegl artist from Maclean, Frances said her artwork is a homage to the Bundjalung country on which the new Tweed Valley Hospital stands, as well as the coastline and landscape, which is the caretaker of the creation stories for the area.

“Within my designs that map Country, are many elements and symbols of great significance,” Frances Belle Parker said.

“Everybody has a journey, and it is the many paths that we have taken throughout our lives which help pave the way for our next destination.

“The colours used symbolise earth, particularly red which is found in the land around the hospital, as well as the waterways that flow across the land, while the linework represents connections, journeys, travel, wind and pathways.

“There is a real sense of movement, which signifies growth and healing.”

Health Infrastructure Arts Program Director Brigette Uren said Frances’ artwork was selected from four Indigenous artists by a panel comprising representatives from the Tweed

Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council, the Northern NSW Local Health District, and the project architects.

“The announcement of the artist for this significant Aboriginal artwork comes ahead of National Reconciliation Week, which acknowledges the importance of listening to and learning from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, partners, and community members as we plan and design culturally safe health facilities across NSW,” Ms Uren said.

“The new Tweed Valley Hospital development is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the culture and history of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region and engaging artwork like Frances’ will enable the community to learn more about the region’s rich history, people and their stories.”

Frances Belle Parker’s artwork has been designed in collaboration with creative team *Collide*.

The Arts in Health Program is being delivered by Health Infrastructure in partnership with Local Health Districts, artists, and communities.

The construction of the \$723.3 million Tweed Valley Hospital main hospital building is nearing completion with commissioning to follow in late 2023.



Above: Artist Frances Belle Parker, and the concept design of her artwork “The Path We Take”