

Media Release

The Hon Colin Brooks MP

Minister for Industry and Advanced Manufacturing
Minister for Creative Industries



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AUSTRALIA'S FIRST 3D TAPESTRY COMING TO FOOTSCRAY HOSPITAL

In an Australian-first, a huge three-dimensional tapestry will take pride of place at the new Footscray Hospital, showcasing Victorian creativity and craftsmanship and creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for patients, visitors and staff – thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks and Minister for Health Infrastructure Melissa Horne today visited the Australian Tapestry Workshop in South Melbourne to mark completion of the groundbreaking artwork, titled 'Welcome to Country – now you see me: seeing the invisible'.

Designed by celebrated First Nations artists Maree Clarke (Yorta Yorta/Wamba Wamba/Mutti Mutti/Boonwurrung) and Mitch Mahoney (Boonwurrung/Barkindji), the tapestry is inspired by images of river reeds from the Maribyrnong River.

Backed by the Labor Government and the Tapestry Foundation of Australia, the tapestry has been hand-woven at the Australian Tapestry Workshop in South Melbourne, with 16 Victorian-based weavers, dyeing specialists and support staff dedicating more than 10,000 hours work over 14 months to bring the artists' vision to life.

The tapestry measures a massive 42 square metres, weighs 135 kilograms and uses more than 270 kilometres of wool from farms across Victoria.

Once the new Footscray Hospital opens, this stunning artwork will hang over two levels in the main foyer, creating a welcoming environment for patients, staff and visitors. The tapestry is part of a major three-year arts program for the hospital, led by Footscray Community Arts Centre.

When complete later this year, the new Footscray Hospital will cut wait times, reduce pressure on nearby hospitals and help families get the care they need closer to home.

Delivered by the Victorian Health Building Authority in partnership with Western Health, Plenary Health and Victoria University, major construction of the new Footscray Hospital is expected to be complete in late 2025.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Creative Industries Colin Brooks

"Pieces like this make our hospitals more inviting places to visit and work, and they can have real benefits for health, recovery and healing."

"From the incredible talents of artists Maree Clarke and Mitch Mahoney to the skilled weavers and the farms where the wool was sourced, this is a Victorian work through and through."

Quote attributable to Minister for Health Infrastructure Melissa Horne

"This incredible tapestry is a powerful symbol of how the new Footscray Hospital will combine world-class healthcare with a welcoming, inclusive space that reflects and celebrates community and culture."

Quote attributable Member for Albert Park Nina Taylor

"This tapestry is a stunning showcase of the creativity and craftsmanship happening right here in South Melbourne at the Australian Tapestry Workshop and it's fantastic to see local talent contributing to such an important public space that will serve communities across Melbourne's west."

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Quote attributable to Member for Footscray Katie Hall

"This beautiful, large-scale artwork will help make the new Footscray Hospital a place that truly feels welcoming and connected to our local identity. It's a proud moment for our community to see local stories and culture woven into the fabric of this landmark project."

Quote attributable to Welcome to Country tapestry artist Maree Clarke

"It's so important to think about new ideas to present traditional culture in a contemporary, positive, respectful way that embraces new mediums. It's thrilling to be in the final stages of collaboration and witnessing our design realised through the artistry of the weavers."

Quotes attributable to Welcome to Country tapestry artist Mitch Mahoney

"The weavers are amazing technical wizards of this old craft. The mastery involved in the many hands coming together to create a work that is an expression of two artists' work – it's the ultimate collaboration. To have twelve people create one work that looks like one hand made it is amazing, yet it has a bit of all of them in it."

Quotes attributable to Australian Tapestry Workshop Co-Director and CEO Sophie Travers

"It's exciting to reach this important milestone in the creation of the Welcome to Country tapestry."

Quote attributable to Australian Tapestry Workshop Co-Director and CEO Catherine Jones

"Representing over a year's work by our weavers, it is a beautiful addition to the suite of public hospital tapestries created by the Australian Tapestry Workshop and undoubtedly a landmark public artwork in Melbourne's west."