

TO: Griffith Media

DATE: 6 July 2020

SUBJECT: Archaeological report findings - Griffith Base Hospital Redevelopment site

This joint statement is issued by Murrumbidgee Local Health District, Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council and Health Infrastructure.

The \$250 million Griffith Base Hospital redevelopment remains on track after the discovery of Aboriginal artefacts on the Hospital campus in May.

Schematic design consultation is currently underway, and the next stage of construction works is to commence later this year.

An archaeological report has confirmed the discovery of the Aboriginal stone artefacts. Measuring under 3 centimetres in size the artefacts are described as bipolar flakes - a very specific flaking technique used to make stone tools from very small pebbles.

Most of the artefacts were found in gravel – most likely brought onto the Hospital campus for landscaping uses in previous years.

As recommended in the report, an application for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) is being prepared for submission to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) requesting further archaeological excavation to salvage additional artefacts. This will be carried out before redevelopment works are undertaken in the identified locations and in accordance with the AHIP.

Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council will submit an application to the National Parks & Wildlife Service to be the repository for the stone artefacts and to decide how and where the artefacts will be kept.

The Hospital site has been registered on the Aboriginal Heritage Information System.

The stone artefacts were found during archaeological investigations undertaken as part of the planning process for the next stage of the redevelopment project.

This is a very important discovery for the Aboriginal community and the history of Griffith.

The investigations were undertaken in May at several sites across the Hospital campus with representatives of the Griffith Local Aboriginal Land Council (GLALC) in attendance throughout this period.

The report also recommends that an interpretation strategy be developed to explain the significance of the archaeological discovery as it relates to the Aboriginal history of the Griffith region.

About the artefacts found on the Griffith Base Hospital Redevelopment site:

- The archaeological testing uncovered 271 small stone artefacts measuring between 14mm and 28mm. Testing was undertaken at several locations on the Hospital site.
- Most of the artefacts are described as bipolar flakes - a very specific flaking technique used to make stone tools from very small pebbles. The tools were used as cutting and/or scraping implements.
- Stone can be flaked in different ways. This produces distinctive traits which assists to identify stone as either an artefact or a naturally broken stone.
- Most of the artefacts were found in gravel which is thought to have been brought into the Hospital site for landscaping uses in previous years. Those materials may have been mechanically sieved and sorted as part of the production of the gravel aggregate.
- The report found the artefacts brought on site in gravel have 'high social significance'. They are very important to the Aboriginal community and to the history of Griffith.
- Not all of the artefacts were contained within the gravels. Some artefacts, found at a different location to the gravels, appear to be evidence of an Aboriginal campsite once located on the site of the Hospital. This site could be several thousand years' old.
- The artefacts contribute to an understanding of Aboriginal occupation of the region and the nature of Aboriginal tool making.
- Few artefact finds have previously been described in detail in the Griffith area and this is largely due to the few archaeological investigations undertaken.

Further information about the Griffith Base Hospital redevelopment is available [here](https://www.mlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/about-us/griffith-base-hospital-redevelopment).
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