



Erica Drummond, Maria Gallinger, Gemma Irvin, Eliza Blight and Shallmae Lao are hard at work on the Griffith Base Hospital redevelopment. Picture by Cai Holroyd

NEW HEIGHTS

Women at forefront as new Base Hospital grows in stature

BY CAI HOLROYD

THE Griffith Base Hospital re-development project is putting women at the forefront of construction, with more women than ever in both management positions, and trade jobs - including one who has been able to return to her hometown after years away. After years of working in Melbourne construction, Eliza Blight was thrilled to be able to return to Griffith as a project engineer.

"I've worked in construction for nine years now, I started off in Melbourne working for a larger-scale commercial builder in 2014 as an undergraduate," she said. She worked and studied all the way to a Master's degree in construction management, working on a wide range of projects including work on a radio and TV station, multi-storey apartment complexes and even dabbling in civil engineering - but this is the first time she's



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Eliza Blight

been tasked with building a hospital.

"I luckily got a call from someone I used to work with, he let me know that this project was on ... he always

remembered that I was from Griffith, and teed that up so I've been here ever since. It's been about 14 months."

"It's been good to come home and be with my fam-

ily ... I'd always wanted to relocate to the country but the work I'd done was very city-based. I never thought a project like this would come up in my hometown." The hospital redevelopment is estimated to provide around 110 direct jobs, as well as indirect employment surrounding the major project.

Ms Blight said she would definitely recommend taking up a trade to young women wondering about their options. "This is probably the

largest amount of women I've observed on a project, and this isn't the largest project I've worked on ... in terms of trades, there's a lot more in electrical, plumbing, mechanical," she said.

"I think there's definitely merits to working in trade. There's a lot of opportunities there, and from what I understand, some trades are very well-paid. If I was to do it again, I'd think about that as well, not just a management perspective."

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