

A CREATIVE REMEDY

The Northern Hospital Inpatient Expansion adds an additional 4-levels to the existing hospital creating space for three 32-bed wards accommodating 96 acute inpatient beds, three new operating theatres including one hybrid theatre, a critical care unit, a new Central Sterile Supply Department (CSSD), as well as laying the foundations for future additional expansion.



CLIENT : Department of Health & Human Services (VHBA - Victorian Health Building Authority)
MAIN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY : Kane Constructions
ARCHITECT : Lyons
ENGINEER : Meinhardt Bonacci
CONSTRUCTION VALUE : \$95 million

A major step in meeting Melbourne's increasing demand for quality health infrastructure, the Northern Hospital Inpatient Expansion – Stage 2 project is a \$95 million commitment by the Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA) involving the addition of four new levels above an existing operational hospital and a new infill building connecting the tower to the existing hospital.

Kane Constructions partnered with VHBA to build the project which provides 96 new inpatient beds, three new operating theatres including a hybrid theatre (with built-in imaging capability) and other spaces to meet the hospital's current and future needs. The state-of-the-art facility incorporates the latest technology in the operating theatres, Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD) and inpatient wards.

Part of the existing undercroft beneath the hospital was filled in to create a new front entrance, a commercial kitchen, transit lounge, and other back of house support services.

The new CSSD replaces the former department which has been reconfigured into a new 20 bay recovery space providing an eight bay capacity increase for the hospital. The works also involved extensive upgrades to existing hospital services and infrastructure.

"We were concurrently undertaking major upgrades to the electrical supply and HVAC system for the hospital precinct," said William Gullifer, Senior Project Manager. "There was a huge amount of work being done in parallel and we managed to maintain the operational continuity of the hospital while working around, on top, below and within it, without a single unscheduled major disruption."

The works started in July 2019 and the main tower and infill building works concluded at the end of 2020 with the refurbishment works to the new recovery ward expansion continuing into early 2021. The project

involved almost 600,000 working hours with a peak of 335 workers on multiple workfronts concurrently.

"Managing all those workfronts concurrently was a huge challenge. When the global pandemic was declared, and especially during the Victorian second wave, the Northern Hospital became a central point for dealing with the severe situation in the North. We implemented a range of measures to mitigate COVID-19 risks especially as there were active COVID-19 wards within the hospital. We implemented expanded amenities, staggered meal breaks, temperature checks and additional continuous cleaning," explained William.

Collaboration was key to maintaining a positive working environment despite these challenges. "We maintained good morale through clear and transparent communication," said William. "We scheduled daily toolbox meetings with the workforce each morning to update them on the latest COVID-19 circumstances which instilled confidence in the Kane protocols we were implementing."

Frequent communication with VHBA, the Northern Hospital and the rest of the project team was pivotal. During the delivery Kane raised over 500 RISC forms related to works within or impacting on the existing hospital operation. Kane's existing risk management procedures allowed for a bespoke risk assessment process and a new Kane protocol to be implemented for the project.

"The RISC form process is a highly communicative process. Our approach was embraced by Northern Health and VHBA who worked with us to get the job done," said William. "It was a huge effort by the whole project team to complete such a complex project in a challenging and unprecedented time. It has been great to receive positive feedback from the hospital team, who are really excited about the new facilities and the quality of the build."

Kane has a track record of delivering successful healthcare projects around the country. They are also active in most other sectors of the construction industry and are the recipient of Master Builder of the Year awards. They have the established processes and specialist expertise required to achieve the best results on the most challenging projects.

For more information Kane Constructions, phone 03 8420 1200, email viccontact@kane.com.au, website www.kane.com.au

