



Media Release

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Sorry Day commemorated at the Women's

The Royal Women's Hospital has continued its journey of healing between the hospital and the Aboriginal community through a Sorry Day commemoration ceremony.

"We are here today to reaffirm our commitment to righting the wrongs of the past and continuing along the path of reconciliation," the Chief Executive of the Women's, Dale Fisher, told the gathering.

The Women's has been working toward reconciliation for more than a decade. Saying Sorry to the Aboriginal community for the hospital's past practices and policies that included the removal of Aboriginal babies from their mothers was a necessary action to progress the journey of healing. Other symbolic but also meaningful initiatives include the location of the Women's Aboriginal Women's Health Business Unit in a visible and accessible part of the hospital, flying the Aboriginal flag in front of the hospital as a welcome to our indigenous community and beginning all public events with an Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the Land.

"We have also provided training, information, advice and support to staff to identify Aboriginal people using our services; we work with the Aboriginal community, we celebrate NAIDOC Day and commemorate Sorry Day. We have established the hospital's Reconciliation Working Party – a formal committee with responsibility for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of our reconciliation efforts," Ms Fisher said.

"We trust we are slowly gaining the trust of the Aboriginal community. The signs of this are promising as our figures show that more Aboriginal women are choosing the Women's for their care. Between 2008 and 2009 there was a 21 percent increase in the number of Aboriginal women admitted to the Women's, and a 40 percent increase in the number of Aboriginal women attending outpatient appointments.

"I am committed to making sure that the Women's continues to find better ways of welcoming and caring for Aboriginal women and their families, and that ultimately there exists true confidence in the Aboriginal community that the Women's is a safe place for them."

The Sorry Day acknowledgement began with a Smoking Ceremony and Welcome to Country by Aunty Di Kerr, and concluded as Lisa Maza entertained the crowd of staff, visitors and patients.

Caption: From left: Aunty Di Kerr, Dale Fisher, Lisa Maza.

For more information or interview requests, contact Robyn Anns, Media Manager, the Royal Women's Hospital, on 03 8345 2953, 0419 128 400.