

Yirri – *The Sun*

Title of artwork: Yirri – *The Sun*
Material: Acrylic on canvas
Frame: Floating Tasmanian Oak
Dimensions: 1219 x 914mm
Date: 4 March 2022

My name is Lizzy Stageman. I am a proud Wiradjuri woman and contemporary indigenous artist. I was born and raised in Dubbo, New South Wales, Wiradjuri Country, home to the Thubbagga People.

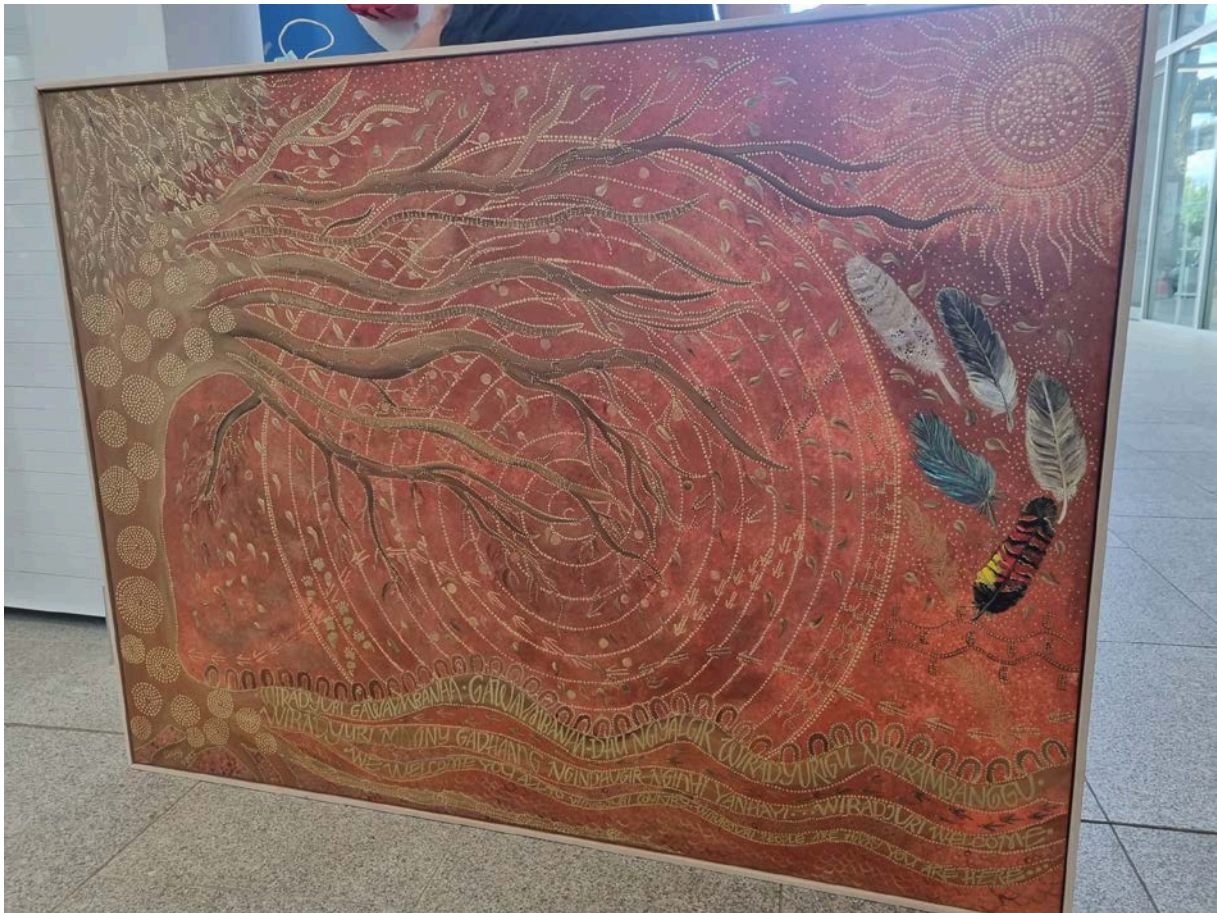
I was invited to submit a concept proposal for an artistic piece of work to be displayed in the primary point of entry to the Dubbo Hospital. I was successful in being chosen to create this piece and have my work exhibited. It is truly an honour. As, I was and my three children were, as well as my brothers and sister, their children and grandchildren were too, born at Dubbo Hospital. A place where many of my life's experiences and memories are held. I take great pride in this opportunity given to me to be a part of history and curated series of commissioned works at the new Hospital. An opportunity so very close to my heart.

The story behind the artwork has a unique depth of meaning, expressed through the choice of colours and the symbols used. Artistically created to be both visually appealing to the eye and play an important role in sharing the Wiradjuri culture to all that visit the hospital. It was integral for the design of the artwork to offer a sense of a warm welcome to and from the Thubbagga People, for all language groups seeking care at the Hospital on Wiradjuri lands.

I chose the name Yirri – meaning *The Sun* in Wiradjuri language for the title of my artwork and the story behind it. I felt this title best represented this piece and reflected the sense of feeling of warmth that I instantly received when beginning to create the artwork. I wished to bring that same sense of warmth throughout the entire piece and its story.

To acknowledge the traditional lands that we walk on, I have chosen to use an earthy red hue for the background of the artwork. Combined with a further presented colour palette of earth-like tones including burnt brown umber and yellow ochre, mixed with a metallic palette of gold, silver, bronze and copper to compliment the other artworks featured in the curated art collection, that will be showcased at the new Hospital.





The symbols used throughout the artwork represent sixteen significant totems to the Wiradjuri people. Throughout the tree branches, painted tracks of markings and left trails from Australian native animals including the Brush and Ring Tail Possum and the Goannas that find their refuge in our trees are shown. Amongst the large tree roots that stretch across the artwork and as such into our riverbeds, totem symbols for the fish, as well as Yellow Belly fish and the fish traps are used in conjunction with the painted symbol of journey, representing the journey of this life source. Also, represented throughout the artwork are symbols of the Red and Brown Kangaroo, an Echidna and Sand Goanna, these are depicted by the tracks they make in the sand. The feathered totems are distinctively featured by their individual feathers. Represented in the artwork is an Owl, the Wedgetail Eagle and an Eagle Hawk, as well as a Pigeon, The Black Cockatoo and the feather and tracks of an Emu.

The large round symbol of intricate painted dots, positioned in the centre of the artwork, creates a meaningful focal point and is symbolic to the artistic story told. This displayed symbol in aboriginal culture is the meaning for campsite, a special meeting place and or place of rest. This symbolic meaning is of great importance to the Hospital and its connection with its people and community.

The incorporation of the iconic Bila Tree, full of native fruits is an important food source for the Wiradjuri people and was a significant totem to be included in the artwork. The Bila Tree is painted to show the fruits and leaves falling from the branches and making their journey to Country to allow for new growth, giving the feeling of hope and new beginnings. The painted circles of intricate dots at the base and trunk of the tree, symbolise 'place' and the many animals, as well as the before mentioned Goanna that find refuge in our trees. Along the top of the tree roots the "n"-shaped symbols are

presented, these symbols in Aboriginal culture are meaning of a standing individual. The use of this symbol throughout the artwork is representation of the many people that will visit the hospital. The various intricate painted dots in metallic gold shown throughout, represent the footsteps of all the NSW health professionals that the Hospital provides in order to care for its people. The branches of the Bila Tree are presented in a particular way, they're shown to be reaching out like open arms, welcoming everyone to utilise all the services that the Hospital provides.

Presented in the far-right top corner of the artwork is 'Yirri' meaning *The Sun* in Wiradjuri language. The painted position of the sun is reflective of the natural light source that shines down on the hospital and its people that visit, bringing warmth and comfort to all.

In creating this artwork, I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. I pay my respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

I wish to give special thanks to Aunty Marg Walker, a local respected Elder for her welcome to Country. This is represented proudly in gold writing along the tree roots of the artwork and is my personal representation of the roots that are firmly grounded in all of us on Wiradjuri Land.

Lizzy Stageman