

## **Kaunitz Yeung Architecture unveil the first Aboriginal health clinic in the remote town of Newman, WA**

*It is the first primary healthcare facility of any type to be constructed in Newman delivering a state of the art building that places wellness at the centre of the community while incorporating key sustainability and cultural features.*

### **PRESS RELEASE**

**Western Australia, Friday 31 July 2020:** Sydney based [Kaunitz Yeung Architecture](#) has announced the official opening of the Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Services (PAMS) Newman clinic, the first Aboriginal health clinic in the remote town of Newman, located 1200kms north of Perth. The project has been completed on time and within budget, despite the challenges of covid.

The clinic, which cost \$8 million and was funded by the federal Department of Health, was commissioned by the Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Services (PAMS) to help communities in remote areas access better healthcare. Having an operational centre means that members of the community will no longer have to travel to Perth for treatment but will be able to access the visiting clinicians and allied health professionals who come to the clinic.

The project called for a state-of-the-art regional primary health care facility to be the physical embodiment of the ethos of PAMS and place wellness at the centre of community. Community focused, connected to country, incorporating culture and providing the highest standard of primary health care.

The firm is well known and internationally awarded for their work in remote Aboriginal communities and Director **David Kaunitz** says Newman is the culmination of more than a decade of working and living in remote Aboriginal communities and integrates design, sustainability, clinical and prefabrication techniques from two earlier projects, the Punmu and Parnngurr Aboriginal Health Clinics in the Western Australian Desert, 1800km from Perth, and 500 km from the nearest towns.

Key features of the building include;

- **The use of sustainable materials** - the building has been constructed exclusively with earth from the site, also known as rammed earth, which reduces the embodied energy of the building which would have otherwise been clad in manufactured materials transported from Perth 1400km away or concrete. Rammed earth creates a human and intuitive connection to its place.
- **State of the art insulation** which assists in keeping the heat out - essential for the 40-50 degree Summer temperatures Newman often experiences
- **A 150kW rooftop photovoltaic system delivering the largest solar power rooftop** in the area which will offer a 13% increase in power to the local community as well as

providing 85% of the medical clinic's own electricity (according to Australian Photovoltaic Institute data)

- **A sheltered courtyard** which uses sustainable Australian hardwoods, minimising the heat effect. Downpipes replace spouts which guide the water into a central swale planted with mature Eucalyptus Vitrix, which were already there and remain on site
- **Modular prefabricated on-site infill construction and artwork from the local community** - Kaunitz Yeung advised on the types of art that would suit the fabrication techniques, but the art was chosen by the community represented by the PAMS board, made up of community representatives. The art is transcribed in a time-consuming process by the architects into a drawing that enables fabrication and maintains the integrity of the artwork. The resultant art screens form window protection on most windows and the entry gates. The window screens filter light into the rooms causing changing projections into the room.
- **The landscaping ecologically repairs the degrade site** with endemic species and shades the building. Over 2000 local endemic plants were used to create low maintenance, robust and relevant landscaping.

Speaking of the building, **David Kaunitz** Director and lead architect at Kaunitz Yeung Architecture said, "Good buildings are not possible without great clients. This project is the culmination of all we have learnt from working with Martu communities for the last four years and the communities of the Western Australian Desert for the last decade."

"We take the time to listen to our clients and stakeholders without preconceptions. We do not prejudge their perspectives. By making a genuine effort to incorporate all perspectives, unique architecture is formed, architecture that is contextualised to people, place and culture, architecture with an inherent relevance.

"This project shows what is possible from true collaboration with Aboriginal people. Their generosity and wisdom have taught us so much."

**Robby Chibawe**, CEO of PAMS, said, "The respectful and collaborative approach by Kaunitz Yeung Architecture with the Martu Elders and communities has created a deep sense of ownership and pride in this health centre amongst the local community.

"Designing, creating and delivering a new building on time and within a tight budget is hard enough, let alone in the midst of global pandemic, but David and his team did just that with an abundance of professionalism and care."

Kaunitz Yeung Architecture's projects have received numerous awards in Australia and abroad, among them several European Healthcare Design Awards and Leading European Architects Forum Sustainability Awards, a World Community Architecture Award and 3 x 2018 NSW Architecture Awards for the Biripi Purfleet Aboriginal health clinic.

**ENDS**

**For more information and access to high res imagery, please contact:**

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A selection of imagery can also be downloaded below:

[Image 1](#)

[Image 2](#)

[Image 3](#)

Please Credit Photographer, Robert Frith, Acorn Photography for all images

Available for Interview:

David Kaunitz, Director Kaunitz Yeung Architecture

Robby Chibawe, CEO of the Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Services (PAMS)

Kaunitz Yeung Architecture [www.kaunitzyeung.com](http://www.kaunitzyeung.com)

*Pronunciation:* Kaunitz (Cow-nits) Yeung (Yurrng)