

Arts, Play and  
Discovery  
Curatorial Plan

Sydney Childrens' Hospital  
The Children's Hospital







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Files



Input



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## Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, being the: Burramattagal People from the Dharug Nation at Westmead and the Gadigal and Bidjigal people from the Eora Nation at Randwick. We acknowledge that under all the asphalt and concrete, this is, was and always will be, Aboriginal Land.

We pay our respects to all Elders, past and present. Our children who are our future leaders and all other Aboriginal people, who form the oldest continuous, living culture on the planet. Particularly those from the stolen generations who never made it home.

## Abbreviations

APD: Arts, Play and Discovery

AR: Augmented Reality

AWG: Arts Play and Discovery Working Group, being either the CHW2 or the SCH1/MCCCC Arts Working Group

BYOD: Bring your own device

CHW: The Children's Hospital at Westmead

CHW2: The Children's Hospital at Westmead Stage 2 redevelopment

CYP: Children and young people

HI: Health Infrastructure NSW

SCH: Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick

SCH1/MCCCC: The Sydney Children's Hospital Stage 1 and Minderoo Children's Comprehensive Cancer Centre project

SCHF: Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation

SCHN: Sydney Children's Hospitals Network

VR: Virtual Reality

## Arts, Play and Discovery

The term 'arts, play and discovery' packages together multiple concepts that are inherently related from the perspective of children's experience and development. Arts refers to participatory or receptive creative elements from across all artforms, for which there is substantial supporting literature for impacts on health and wellbeing (including for paediatric health). Play refers to the way in which children interact, explore and entertain themselves and others, whether through structured or unstructured, externally organised or self-devised activity. Appropriate arts programming for children is inextricably linked with the promotion of play and the recognition of the physical, sensory and emotional characteristics and needs of children and young people across different ages. Finally, there are three distinct tiers to the 'discovery' concept. As stated in the SCHN APD Strategy, 'arts and play are a form of research and discovery and promote lifelong learning'— arts and play are communicative tools that passively or explicitly promote learning and development. 'Discovery' may also describe projects that originate with specific educational outcomes. Finally, there is a dimension of 'discovery' that relates to the work of adult researchers and acknowledges the interaction between best practice arts provisioning and successful precincts, the integration of research activity and knowledge into programs that delight and inspire children, and, opportunities for wider communication of the efforts, profile and achievements of the multiple institutions and centres working at each site.

In this document, APD project proposals are distinguished along arts and discovery orientations. Whereas play is deemed to be integral and embedded across all proposals and does not represent a distinct APD project type.

Further details regarding definitions of the APD components as defined in the Health Infrastructure SCHN APD Strategy are included in Appendix 1.

# Executive summary

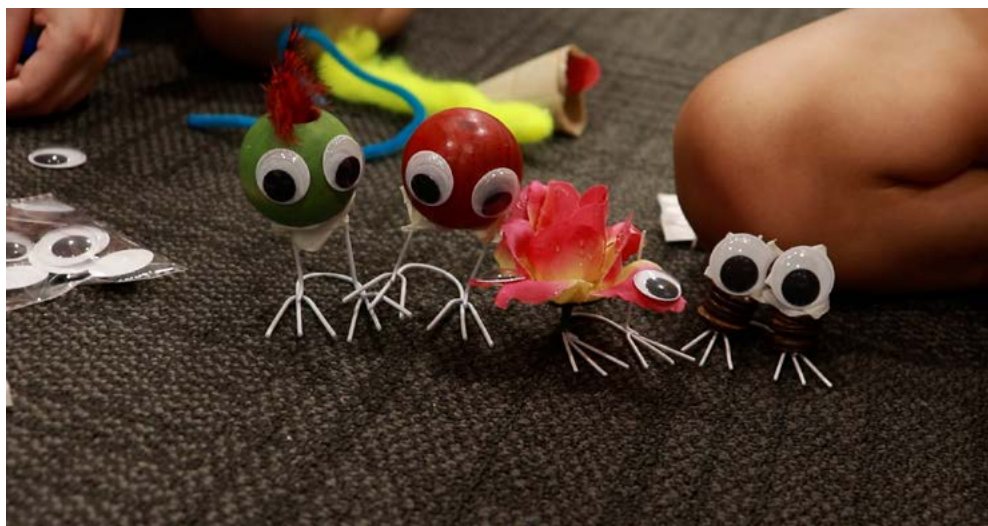
Embarking on the redevelopment of a children’s hospital is a breathtaking experience. There is such a collective enthusiasm and goodwill for this endeavour that the air of excitement and expectation is palpable. Children are our future and so we can only want the best. A new hospital comes with a thirty-year horizon so how can we make sure to grasp this moment to its fullest?

For the Sydney Children’s Hospital Network (SCHN), launching into two major children’s hospital redevelopments at once, and putting focus specifically on the Arts, Play and Discovery (APD) components that these redevelopments will contain, is a triple-whammy that leaves us all breathless with hope. How can we do justice to the scope of our communities’ enthusiasm and aspiration for our children’s wellbeing? And what curatorial choices should we be making to ensure that their journey to recovery is as rich and rewarding as it can be?

“From the old hospital to the new hospital it’s going to be much different” Alissa (aged 8)

Happily, the SCHN has already set some firm direction with the adoption of its 2021 APD Strategy (overview in Section One below). By taking up the Reggio Emilia approach to child-directed learning, curiosity and wonder, the strategy makes a clear commitment to play, pedagogy and creativity for the hospitals’ redevelopment. Furthermore, the Reggio Emilia positioning of the environment as the ‘third teacher’, is perfectly in step with SCHN’s priority upon designing the hospitals with a view to Country and on implementing biophilic design wherever possible.

So the heavy lifting in strategic thinking is already well in hand. The business of this APD Curatorial Plan returns therefore, to the question of choice. What are the recommended directions for the APD programs at the Westmead and Randwick projects and how are SCHN resources best spent to ensure the programs’ longevity, creativity and adherence?



Given the collective ownership and aspiration for our hospitals’ future development, this is a question that can’t be answered by a single voice. In order to develop this Curatorial Plan, the authors conducted extensive community and stakeholder engagement and our focus was on listening to lived experience: from hospital staff, visitors, parents and most importantly, children and young people.

- A *Big Voices* committee of children and young people was established and four meetings were held with the hospitals’ development team, designers and executive team
- A series of hands-on art (*Play it Your Way*) workshops were held with current and former patients from SCHN hospitals to elucidate their views on the potential for the APD program
- These processes were documented by children themselves. A short video they created is available [here](#).
- Deep-dive interviews about APD possibilities were held with over twenty-five key internal SCHN stakeholders and also with the SCHN project teams during eight separate workshops

A summary of the key themes from the engagement program is included in the table below (full Engagement Report is included in Appendix 2):

“Sometimes the adults forget about the kids and I think it’s really important that you remind us about the kids and what the kids want”

Engagement Stream	Key Themes
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children want to learn about their own illness, biology and the body. Self-discovery is a key part of discovery.</li> <li>• Nature is inspiring for play and learning.</li> <li>• Digital platforms and media are valued for play and receptive enjoyment. They also inspire social connection between children.</li> <li>• The accessibility of APD projects is important.</li> </ul>
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main entrances are a defining part of the journey for children and for all consumers. Externally and internally these areas must inspire positive emotions, have a sense of scale, magnificence and wonder and in the promotion of discovery.</li> <li>• APD projects should prioritise connection to Aboriginal communities, staff and Aboriginal Health with a focus on opportunities for community co-design.</li> <li>• Support for continued development and expansion of the clinical applications of play.</li> </ul>



As a result of this extensive engagement, the objectives and subsequent proposals that follow in this Curatorial Plan represent a deep process of distillation and refinement. We initially agreed upon some key implementation goals to test anticipated outcomes. To decide among the hundreds and hundreds of APD suggestions and ideas, it was vital to adopt a suitable filtering system. Following global best practice on play, we have recommended the Real Play Coalition's settings on Play Characteristics (Arup & Lego Foundation, 2020) and on the Play Applications for Clinical Settings (Lego Foundation and Cambridge PEDAL 2021) for this purpose. The resultant structure and rationale for this strategic framework can all be found in Section One.

Section Two is where the APD Curatorial Plan's favourite toys and shiny objects are stashed. In this section there are twenty proposals for the SCHN APD Program. Each proposal comprises:

- a curatorial description (often with links to illustrative projects)
- an analysis of the proposal's key drivers
- any additional considerations and requirements
- some indicative images from precedent or reference works
- a mapping of the proposal against our implementation goals and play characteristics / settings
- an indicative costing and allocation of funding / identification of future funding sources

The summary table of the proposals can be found below:

SCH1/MCCCC	CHW2	Network wide
1. SCH1/MCCCC Gadigal / Bidjagal Country - North entry	6. CHW2 Burrumattagal Country	10. SCHN Healing Ceilings
2. SCH1/MCCCC Emergency / Precinct Lighting	7. CHW2 Main entry	11. SCHN Feature Graphics
3. SCH1/MCCCC Western Entry Discovery Piazza	8. CHW2 Mega Zone Level 3	12. SCHN Family Rooms on Country
4. SCH1/MCCCC Western Main entry	9. CHW2 Play / Recreation Room Commissions	13. SCHN Circulation - Lifts and Stairs
5. SCH1/MCCCC Entrance Lobby		14. SCHN Procedure Room Soundscapes
		15. SCHN Acute Procedure Rooms – Interactive Virtual Windows
		16. SCHN Waiting Room Digital Discovery Trails
		17. SCHN Healing Powers - remote interactive control
		18. SCHN Look Nooks
		19. SCHN APD Metaverse
		20. SCHN VR / AR Library



In addition to the core APD program, part of the APD consultant scope was the development of a scoping study for the Discovery Centre at Randick, and with a similar-veined program presence in Westmead. This scoping study is now provided in a separate document, The Discovery Project.

Following the run of APD proposals, Section Two includes some core recommendations for the APD Plan regarding:

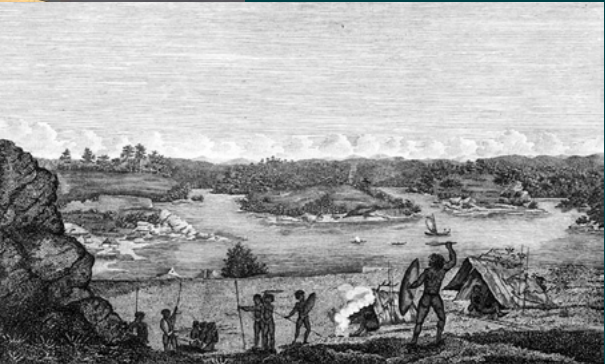
- Arts-driven Envirographics commissions
- SCHN arts acquisitions and collections
- Display of children and young people's artworks and creativity
- Playable furniture
- Paths as play
- Playground inclusions

To conclude Section Two, an overall budget summary is included followed by a summary of the digital framework and components for the APD program.

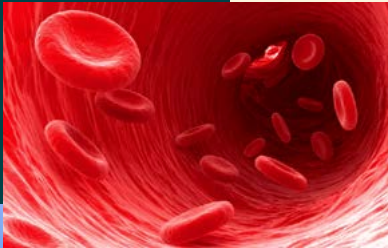
There is a lot to absorb. With such a broad scope and wide application of our communities' aspirations for the APD program at SCHN's hospital redevelopments, the implementation risks running amok like kids on fairy bread. For this reason, the authors have conceived and proposed an APD Curatorial Theme that can be used to guide any of the APD proposals (below). We believe it offers an opportunity to coherently tell the unique story of the places where CHW2 and SCH1/MCCCC will be developed; and importantly it provides a guiding path to excite and inspire children and young people who are making their healing journeys in these places.

# APD Curatorial Theme

While both part of Dharug Country, the lands of the Burramattagal and Gadigal/Bidjigal clan groups are very different in character. Indeed, the stories of these landscapes – from the converging rivers in Western Sydney to the wetlands / sea cliff environment of Eastern Sydney – have provided the drivers for the design of the two new hospital developments for SCHN.

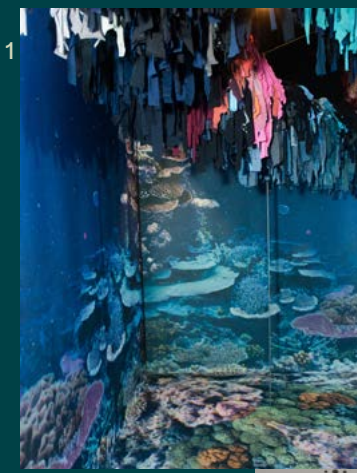


Of course, Country is a much bigger concept than merely landscape. “The term (also) contains complex ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief, cultural practice, material sustenance, family and identity” (Source: IATIS). A journey onto Country at either CHW2 or SCH1/MCCCC implicates a holistic experience of place that is at once remarkable and all-encompassing. For those who are still learning about the scope and potential of this concept of Country, perhaps the word ‘universe’ is a kind of approximation of its all-encompassing scale. Country is a term that can take us from the river’s edge and the sea cliffs, to the bush medicine for our health and into the very dark matter of the universe. For millennia, First Nations people in Australia have been ‘playing Country’ at the core of their existence – through song, story, art and dance.





From our understanding, Aboriginal belief systems do not separate the human body and experience from this concept of Country. In this way, the human body, with all its marvelous travails, is a complex ecosystem and a micro version of Country. Whether we come from a place of knowledge or relative ignorance, a trip to the hospital comes with an unavoidable journey into learning about our own bodies. A journey to hospital is not merely an exercise in physical analysis and treatment. For many people it is an experience with deep emotional, spiritual and communal resonances within their lives. In these environments the human body also offers a site of research, innovation and discovery at extraordinary level of detail – into cell matter and beyond. And similar to Country, this journey of discovery, curiosity and fascination of the human body is one that has also fuelled arts play and discovery forever.



1. Arcadia Earth, Climate Change  
 2. Jason Bruges Studio, *Nature Trail*, Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children  
 3. Fred Tucker with eel  
 4. CCI



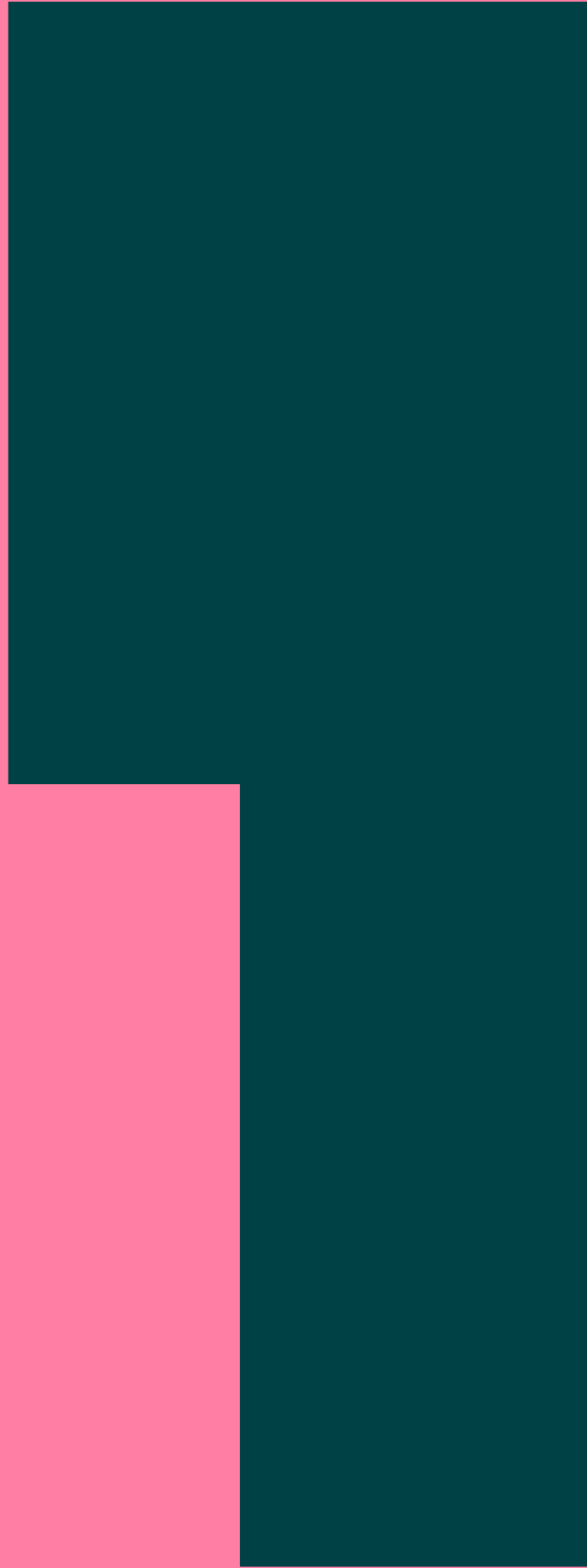
1. Ronnie van Hout, *Quasi*  
 2. Journey through the human body, Corpus Museum.  
 3. Millhouse, *Insect habitat*  
 4. Ronnie van Hout, *Severed Head*  
 5. Ron Mueck, *Bone Chilling*

There is a rich seam of arts play and discovery to be found within this spectrum of life: from dark matter to cell matter.

For SCHN, we have the opportunity to embed this thinking into the whole APD program. Each APD commission touch point can help build this narrative for our visitors, patients, carers and working communities as they journey through the hospitals on either Burramattagal or Gadigal/Bidigal Country. We are indebted to First Nations artists, Dharug custodians and local Gadigal community members for capturing the complexity of our curatorial theme into one short phrase in the Sydney language:

*Naya ngurra*  
 (I am Country / Country is me)

# SECTION



Strategic  
Summary



# SCHN APD strategy principles and objectives

This plan has been developed within the strategic context established by the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network Arts, Play and Discovery Strategy produced by Health Infrastructure NSW. This strategy establishes five principles and three objectives areas that underpin arts, play and discovery in the context of infrastructure, operations and clinical models of care.

## APD Principles

Principle	Description
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts, play and discovery in health is a means to enhance individual and community wellbeing through self-directed and guided experiences.</li> <li>The development of these experiences should be patient-centred and encompass a broad range of forms &amp; practices.</li> <li>These should provide equity of access, leading the way in disability services and beyond.</li> </ul>
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts, play and discovery are realised through balancing HI investment with innovative partnerships and third-party contributions working together to deliver activated programs.</li> <li>Patient and family centred programs enable diverse opportunities for patient, family and staff involvement and self-expression.</li> </ul>
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts, play and discovery in health design is integrated with architecture, interiors, landscape, wayfinding and retail, enabling spaces for wellbeing with a sense of wonder. These spaces facilitate relationships between consumers and social cohesion through participatory experiences and activated social environments, in areas of high visibility, easily accessible in central circulation zones.</li> </ul>
Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Places of curiosity and empowerment for peer-to-peer support create a sense of belonging and safety, with a commitment to inclusion and diversity.</li> <li>Children and young people are active shapers, managers and negotiators of their experience in hospital.</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arts, play and discovery infrastructure commits to lifecycle planning of facilities and cultural assets, responsive to their geographical and environmental footprint.</li> </ul>

## APD Objectives

Principle	Description
Stewardship	<p>Enhance patient and staff wellbeing through arts, play and discovery as a holistic treatment option, an inter-disciplinary Model of Care, administered centrally.</p> <p>Supported by a commitment to continued research and quality improvement.</p>
Connection	<p>Create restorative spaces for meaningful human connection with a focus on culturally safe environments for Aboriginal families.</p> <p>A coordinated approach to arts, play and discovery with a dedicated 'ward' acting as a central nervous system to support creative spaces in clinical areas and provide patients and staff with calm, welcoming environments, and opportunities for refocusing and self-expression.</p>
Lifelong Learning	<p>Lead developmentally appropriate programs through arts, play and discovery to foster compassion, humour, adventure, curiosity and creativity.</p> <p>Programs continue to evolve based on changing Models of Care, best practices research and resource capability.</p>

# APD curatorial plan

This curatorial plan establishes an implementation framework with three components: overarching goals for APD projects, a set of play characteristics that APD project proposals should demonstrate and, a set of play applications which describe the multiple practical clinical roles that APD projects may serve beyond their innate experiential value.

When developing the APD projects in this document, play is considered to be inherent within all proposals. Whereas a distinction is made between discovery and arts-related projects. The play characteristics and play applications therefore form a matrix of informing criteria for all APD projects.

## Implementation goals

Building on the existing tenets of the SCHN APD Strategy, this curatorial plan sets out six implementation goals which describe the desired outcomes for the APD projects proposed.

- **Best Practice:** Establish best practice models for Children and Young People (CYP) programs nationally.
- **Research & Innovation:** Ignite curiosity, creativity and learning wonder in CYP by drawing on the knowledges/research of the precinct.
- **Place Specific:** Respect, acknowledge and be led by each hospital's unique Country and Culture, its First Nations people, and its diverse communities.
- **Connection & Transcendence:** Connect CYP to multiple and diverse worlds, both real and imagined.
- **Accessibility:** Recognise, respect and amplify the voices of CYP's lived experience of all ages and abilities.
- **Agency:** Enable CYP to creatively contribute to hospital culture and shape it.

# Play characteristics

The characteristics of play described below are taken from Reclaiming Play in Cities, a 2020 report produced for the Real Play Coalition by Arup and the Lego Foundation. The report considers play in relation to built environments, providing a relevant perspective for play thinking within the capital projects for both hospitals.






Principle	Description
Joyful	Joy is at the heart of play, both in terms of enjoying a task for its own sake and the momentary thrill of surprise, insight, or success after overcoming challenges. Research shows how curiosity and positive experiences are linked to learning.
Meaningful	Play that builds on a child's own sense of meaning, knowledge and experience helps them connect their past and make new things relevant, in order for them to grow and learn.
Iterative	Play that encourages active experimentation in a risk-free way, builds on cause and effect and experiential learning processes. Children engage in trying out possibilities and testing hypotheses, which aids imagination, creativity and problem-solving.
Actively Engaging	Active, minds-on thinking, where a child is fully absorbed and focused. Children persist more with self-directed efforts and increase the means of discovery, cognitive and physical development.
Socially Interactive	Social interaction in play allows children to collaborate, communicate their thoughts and feelings, and understand other perspectives as they develop their social skills.

# Play applications

The following play applications in clinical settings are adapted from Play interventions for paediatric patients in hospital: a scoping review (Gjærde et al, 2021), a wide-ranging systematic review of 297 original articles on play interventions in hospital contexts. The project was conducted by the Cambridge Play in Education, Development and Learning (PEDAL) group with funding support from the Lego Foundation.

- **Distraction:** the use of play to distract children during procedures and diagnostic tests.
- **Support:** as opposed to distraction, which is during the procedure, support refers to the use of play prior to more complex procedures, tests or surgeries. This includes structured play with preparational characteristics, including a pretend journey or digital tour that is informative of what is going to happen.
- **Education:** play can be used as a tool for teaching children about their disease, treatment or management of symptoms or for promotion of medication adherence.
- **Recovery:** this includes the use of play interventions post medical or surgical treatment, including as a mode of rehabilitation or exercise.
- **Adaptation:** going beyond immediate distraction from a specific clinical service that is simultaneously happening, this refers to the role of play as a recreational or diversional activity. This can include activities directly designed to help the child or young person to cope with the experience of illness and hospitalisation.

## APD CURATORIAL PLAN SUMMARY

APD Strategy	PRINCIPLES				
	Participation	Collaboration	Integration	Connection	Sustainability
	UNDERLYING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES				
	Stewardship	Connection	Lifelong learning		
APD Curatorial Plan	IMPLEMENTATION GOALS				
	<b>Best Practice</b> Establish best practice models for Children and Young People (CYP) programs nationally				
	<b>Research &amp; Innovation</b> Ignite curiosity, creativity and learning wonder in CYP by drawing on the knowledges/research of the precinct				
	<b>Place Specific</b> Respect, acknowledge and be led by each hospital's unique Country and Culture, its First Nations people, and its diverse communities.				
	<b>Connection &amp; Transcendence</b> Connect CYP to multiple and diverse worlds, both real and imagined				
	<b>Accessibility</b> Recognise, respect and amplify the voices of CYP's lived experience of all ages and abilities.				
	<b>Agency</b> Enable CYP to creatively contribute to hospital culture and shape it.				
	PLAY CHARACTERISTICS				
	Joyful 	Meaningful 	Iterative 	Actively Engaging 	Socially Interactive 
	PLAY APPLICATIONS				
Distraction	Support	Education	Recovery	Adaptation	
PROJECT CONCEPTS					
<i>Naya ngurra (I am Country / Country is me)</i>					
<b>Discovery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CHW2 Mega Zone Level 3</li> <li>• SCH1/MCCCC Western Entry Discovery Piazza</li> <li>• SCHN APD Metaverse</li> <li>• SCHN Healing Powers- - Remote Interactive Control</li> <li>• SCHN VR/AR Library</li> <li>• SCHN Waiting Room Digital Discovery Trails</li> <li>• Discovery Centre (SCH1/MCCCC)</li> </ul>		<b>Arts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SCH1/MCCCC Western Main entry</li> <li>• SCH1/MCCCC Gadigal / Bidigal Country - North entry</li> <li>• SCH1/MCCCC Emergency / Precinct Lighting</li> <li>• CHW2 Main entry</li> <li>• CHW2 Burramattagal Country</li> <li>• CHW2 Play / Recreation Room Commissions</li> <li>• SCHN Circulation - Lifts and Stairs</li> <li>• SCHN The Look Nooks</li> <li>• SCHN Family Room Country</li> <li>• SCHN Healing Ceilings</li> <li>• SCHN Procedure Room - Sonic Soundscapes</li> <li>• SCHN Acute Procedure Rooms</li> <li>• SCHN Feature Graphics</li> </ul>			