

The power of Arts, Play and Discovery

The Sydney Children's Hospitals Network (SCHN) has committed to an Arts, Play and Discovery (APD) strategy, which sets out a plan for the layout of art and engagement in the two new hospital buildings at the Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick, and The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

In hospitals, art, play and discovery elements can provide a sense of warm welcome, of comfort, respite, ritual and life-force uplift in a clinical environment.

The SCHN strives to use art and play to build the collective well-being of patients, families, staff, researchers and volunteers who visit our hospitals. Discovery is also an important part of the strategy as it promotes lifelong learning through curiosity and creative thinking.

The program will extend beyond creating artwork, by working with clinicians to incorporate the concepts into working methods. The strategy supports the Network's mission of transforming kids' health and continues the hospital's reputation as a place of healing and growth.

About the strategy

Our vision is to promote:

- **Stewardship:** Enhance patient and staff wellbeing through arts, play and discovery as a holistic treatment option.
- **Connection:** Create restorative spaces for meaningful human connection, with a focus on culturally safe environments for Aboriginal families.
- **Lifelong learning:** Lead developmentally appropriate programs through arts, play and discovery to foster engagement, curiosity, critical and creative thinking.



Children taking part in 'Play It Your Way' Workshop

How we created the strategy

The aim of this strategy is to successfully integrate art and play elements into the new hospital design and healthcare delivery.

To create a meaningful strategy, the SCHN consulted with more than 2,000 staff and families since February 2020 using online surveys, clinical meetings, one-on-one conversations and workshops.

Aboriginal consultation was undertaken to ensure that the strategy celebrates the local indigenous culture and incorporates cultural safety, engagement and inclusivity.

What are our next steps?

Cultural consultancy company City People has been appointed as the arts consultant to work with the hospital communities and develop and implement a curatorial plan for arts, play and digital opportunities integrated into public, clinical and non-clinical spaces across the new facilities.

Specialist play advisor Toy Diplomacy is also assisting in delivering this plan to position play and creativity within the hospital and to navigate preparedness, social change, recovery, empowerment and resilience.

The plan is to guide the creation of both permanent and temporary art and cultural spaces, as well as spaces for discovery and curiosity, which will help create a vibrant, healing and welcoming environment for all.

Both hospital communities will have the opportunity to be a part of this exciting plan, so look out for more information on how you can be involved or visit the SCHN website sch.n.health.nsw.gov.au or the project's website westmeadkidsredevelopment.health.nsw.gov.au to get the latest news.