



What Matters to Me

**An exhibition of First Nations
children's artworks**

Presented by the Women's & Children's
Hospital Foundation, Arts in Health Program

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In 2023, when there have been important discussions about a First Nations Voice to Parliament, our Arts in Health Program created an opportunity for young First Nations children to have 'their voice' heard, inside the state's specialist children's health facility, the Women's and Children's Hospital.

What Matters to Me is an exhibition of children's artworks celebrating their creativity, their ideas, their voice. Primary school aged children from selected schools across the state, including Central Yorke School (Maitland), Amata Anangu School (APY Lands), Avenues College (Adelaide) and Hospital School SA, created paintings and wrote messages on what is important to them. This exhibition empowers the young artists, providing them with a presence, their own voice, to creatively express their thoughts on *What Matters to Me*.

*"What Matters to me: Family and friends. And hunting for fish."
Jay Jay, aged 10*

The Arts in Health Program creates an interactive and vibrant hospital environment to improve the health and wellbeing of patients, their families and staff at the Women's and Children's Hospital. The program focuses on encouraging creativity, providing moments of calm in a busy health environment, and easing the distress of patients and their families.

"As an Aboriginal person coming into the hospital environment can be pretty scary and overwhelming. Any way we can use Aboriginal art to welcome families, to help them feel connected and safe, is a good thing."

Catherine Leane, Manager Strategic Partnerships, Aboriginal Health Division, Women's and Children's Health Network

Amata Anangu School is one of nine schools in the far northwest corner of South Australia in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands. Located approximately 500kms southwest of Alice Springs and just south of the Northern Territory border, Amata is approximately 1400km by road from Adelaide. Nestled in the western Musgrave Ranges, the Amata Community has a general store, a health clinic, a school and a world famous Art Centre. Tjala Arts.

Central Yorke School. Located in Maitland and Point Pearce on Central Yorke Peninsula in South Australia on Narungga country, the Birth to Year 12 Central Yorke School was created in 2017 following the amalgamation of Maitland Area School, Point Pearce Aboriginal School and the Maitland Preschool centre. The school has a strong connection with the Narungga community and includes early learning centres, a school farm, performing arts centre, focussed sports programs, and specialist areas for Design & Technology, and Visual Arts.

In a corridor gallery for all to see, the exhibition provides a way for First Nations children to connect with other children and especially supports those young patients who may be far from home or in an unfamiliar place. For the young patients of the Hospital, the exhibition allows them to connect to their peers, and for the staff and clinical teams, the paintings provide an insight into what is important for First Nation children, highlighting the role of art in First Nations culture.

*"What matters to me: Playing basketball with my Dad."
Armali, aged 5*

By including images from young people living in regional and remote areas as well as from Adelaide, we know this exhibition will help the whole Hospital Community make links to home and to Country and help form connections with culture.

In discussions with students from Central Yorke school on Narungga Country on what matters to them, 9-year-old Kym answered, "Family".

When asked – "just one word?" he replied:
"One word can make a big difference."

What Matters to Me celebrates First Nations children, hearing their voices through their artworks and recognising their insights for the future.

Avenues College is a Birth to Year 12 public school located in Adelaide on Kaurna Country. Around a quarter of the school population is Aboriginal and through the Wiltja Boarding program, the school also hosts students from remote Aboriginal communities. The staff, including a large Aboriginal Education team, foster a culturally supportive environment that promotes academic growth, social inclusion, and positive wellbeing, working in partnership with the Aboriginal students, families, and communities towards a stronger future.

Hospital School SA. Providing education for children with acute, chronic or mental health needs, Hospital School SA has three campuses located within hospitals in South Australia: Women's and Children's Hospital, Flinders Medical Centre and Lyell McEwin Hospital. Hospital School SA provides educational programs, focusing on personalised learning through targeted teaching for students and young people from both the public and private schooling sectors. The teaching program includes both classroom and on-ward learning, as well as support to outpatients and siblings unable to attend their own school.

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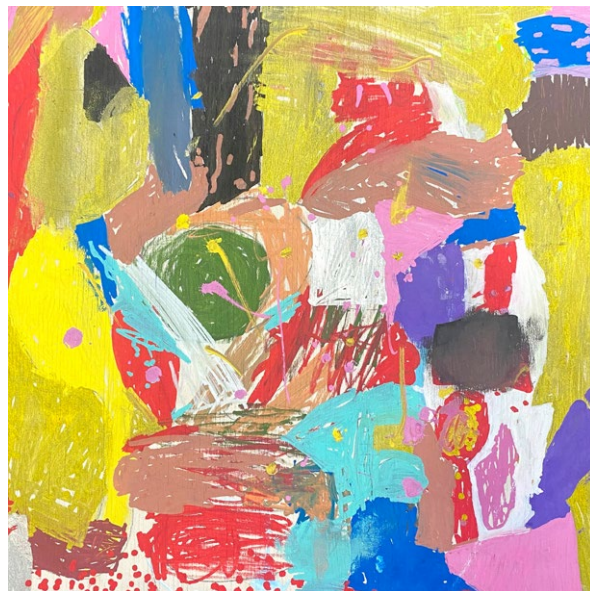
Family & Friends

Keeley, age 9



Playing basketball with my dad

Amarli, age 5



My painting is all about being Aboriginal. It is also about spending time with my family. I also chose to use bright colours to stand out and I used Aboriginal colours to tell them I am proud.

Pheonix, age 6

Family and living on Country

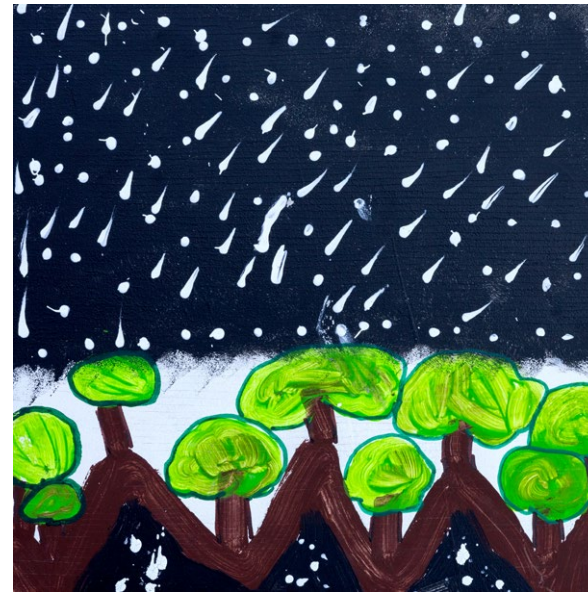
Delaney, age 13





**The movie
Ghostbusters (Ecto 1)**

Edward, age 8



Playing sport

Phyllis, age 9

My painting is about being proud of being Aboriginal. I also did it about my family because they are very special to me. I also love travelling to different places as well.

Harry, age 8



This Aboriginal painting is about me and my culture. I love being deadly like the other Nunga kids at school. I am also very cool at trying to be the best at my work

Tama, age 5



Children of primary school age across the state have been invited to submit a painting and write messages on what is important to them.

Presented by the Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation's Arts in Health Program, the exhibition supports the wellbeing of young patients while empowering young artists, providing them with a presence, their own voice, to creatively express their thoughts on 'what matters to me'. In the main corridor gallery, the exhibition allows First Nations children to share their experience with the hospital community through their art.



The Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation Arts in Health Program creates an interactive and vibrant hospital environment to improve the health and wellbeing of women, children and families under the care of the Women's and Children's Health Network. Through art, play and music, we encourage curiosity and creativity and reduce the stress of being in hospital.

Our Arts in Health Exhibition Program provides a space away from the stresses of treatment to distract,

entertain and inspire. The artworks displayed in the exhibition spaces come from a range of sources – internally from hospital staff, patients (women and children) and their families, through specific Arts in Health projects and externally from local artists and art collectives.

This exhibition was planned and exhibited on the lands of the Kurna People, we pay our respects to the Kurna Elders past and present and to the Elders of the lands this brochure reaches.

This exhibition runs 16 October 2023 – 31 January 2024

Learn more here: wchfoundation.org.au/arts-in-health/whatmatterstone

Image Front Cover: *Being Aboriginal*, Telika, age 11

Image Top: *Playing footy*, Simon, age 11

For more information contact:

Lauren Simeoni, Arts Coordinator, Women's & Children's Hospital Foundation
T 08 8464 7900 | artsinhealth@wchfoundation.org.au | wchfoundation.org.au
55 King William Road | North Adelaide | SA 5006

 @wchfoundation

 @artsinhealth_wchf