

## MEDIA STATEMENT

Thursday, 3 August 2023

### Construction begins on new nature playground at QEII campus

- Smoking ceremony and sod turn mark start of construction for the Greenspace upgrade
- The Greenspace – located at the base of the Kids' Bridge and next to Perth Children's Hospital – will incorporate traditional and contemporary cultural themes and Noongar Dreamtime stories
- \$4 million nature play-space made possible with funding from Perth Children's Hospital Foundation in partnership with Rio Tinto

A new \$4 million nature playground at the QEII Medical Centre (QEIMC) campus has hit a major milestone today, with a traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony and sod turn held to mark the start of construction.

The upgrade to the Greenspace, which is located at the base of the Kids' Bridge next to Perth Children's Hospital, will transform the area into a nature playground incorporating an entertainment space and natural learning precinct.

Designed by Hassell and delivered by local WA construction company CDI Group, the new nature playground will provide an outdoor space where staff, patients and families can unwind and escape from the rigours of hospital treatments and appointments. The project is expected to be complete by late 2023.

Inspired by the healing energy of Country, the Greenspace design is guided by Noongar cultural advisors, Soft Earth, and incorporates traditional and contemporary cultural themes while also paying respect to the history and stories of the Traditional Owners.

The Noongar themes and storylines woven through the design include a discovery path called Koodjal Noorn (two snakes), shelter pods honouring the six Noongar seasons, playground cubbies referencing Noongar mia-mias, an interactive play space incorporating tactile animal totems and a climbing net depicting the web of the trapdoor spider, a unique Noongar story connected to King's Park.

The Greenspace will be split into four zones appreciative of Noongar culture and the local habitat, including:

- a nature play-space providing a sense of fun and normality away from the clinical hospital environment
- a natural learning precinct offering educational opportunities on native flora, fauna, and Noongar culture
- an entertainment space for performers and outdoor events
- a rest and relaxation space for patients, visitors, and staff

The project has been made possible through Perth Children's Hospital Foundation in partnership with Rio Tinto, CDI Group, BGIS, Hassell, Soft Earth cultural advisers, and the QEII Medical Centre Trust.

The QEII MC is the largest medical centre in the southern hemisphere and includes 40 health-related organisations and facilities with approximately 15,000 staff and visitors daily.

**Comments attributable to Rio Tinto Chief Executive Simon Trott:**

"We are proud to be partnering with Perth Children's Hospital Foundation to build a space where patients and their families can take a break from the hospital environment and connect with nature.

"The Greenspace will provide children with an inclusive and accessible play area where they can also learn about local Noongar culture.

"We are delighted to be part of such an important project that recognises the therapeutic benefits of nature play and the role of Indigenous wisdom in improving health and wellbeing outcomes for children."

**Comments attributable to Perth Children's Hospital Foundation Chairman the Hon. Ian Campbell:**

"We are thrilled construction has officially begun on the Greenspace upgrade. This milestone project has been a long-time dream for PCHF, and we're proud to announce works are now underway, due to the incredibly generous support of our partner, Rio Tinto.

"The Greenspace upgrade serves as a natural extension of the award-winning Koolangka Bridge (Kids' Bridge), and will bring staff, patients, families, and visitors closer to the healing power of Country and the rich nature of King's Park.

"We're excited to see this area transform into a world-class, accessible space right on the doorstep of the hospital, for all users of the QEII MC campus to enjoy, whether for play, education, recreation, relaxation, reflection or respite."

**Comments attributable to Soft Earth cultural advisor Barry McGuire:**

"We are honoured to be able to bring our understanding of the healing and cultural practices that lives within the energy of our environment to the upgrade of the Greenspace. We thank Perth Children's Hospital Foundation for the inclusion and seeing the value of our ancestor's knowledge that lives with us today."

**Comments attributable to CDI Group Managing Director Garry Wright:**

"Our CDI family are immensely humbled by the opportunity to be part of the team that is bringing this stunning Greenspace transformation to life.

"We can't wait to see the future benefits of this project to the QEII community, from bringing solace to a child immersed in nature play, to allowing a nurse to take a breath or helping parents reconnect while their children are happily distracted. Our

view is that the project's success and value will far surpass the investment when it succeeds in extracting even one smile out of hardship."

For more information visit [pCHF.org.au/greenspace-upgrade/](https://pCHF.org.au/greenspace-upgrade/)

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**Media Contact:** Sam Mills, Media and Content Manager, PCHF: 0411 241 475 / [samantha.mills@pCHF.org.au](mailto:samantha.mills@pCHF.org.au)

**Note to journalists/editors:** Perth Children's Hospital Foundation is the official fundraiser for the Perth Children's Hospital. As these two organisations are separate entities, please do not shorten Perth Children's Hospital Foundation to PCH Foundation or PCH.

### **About Perth Children's Hospital Foundation – The foundation on the frontline**

Perth Children's Hospital Foundation is the official and largest fundraiser of Perth Children's Hospital. We fuel the fight on the frontline, to help children get well and stay well.

By working closely with those on the frontline, the Foundation has an in-depth understanding of what clinicians, researchers and families need to ensure we make a tangible impact where it counts most. This knowledge guides the solutions we fund, ensuring sick children have access to world-class care through the most advanced equipment and technology, research, expertise and positive patient experiences. Help us fuel the fight on the frontline by donating at [pCHF.org.au/donate](https://pCHF.org.au/donate).