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Northside Hospital Project

Birth Centre Design Roundtable

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Welcome

Helen Leayr – Managing Director, Communication Link

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Welcome Address

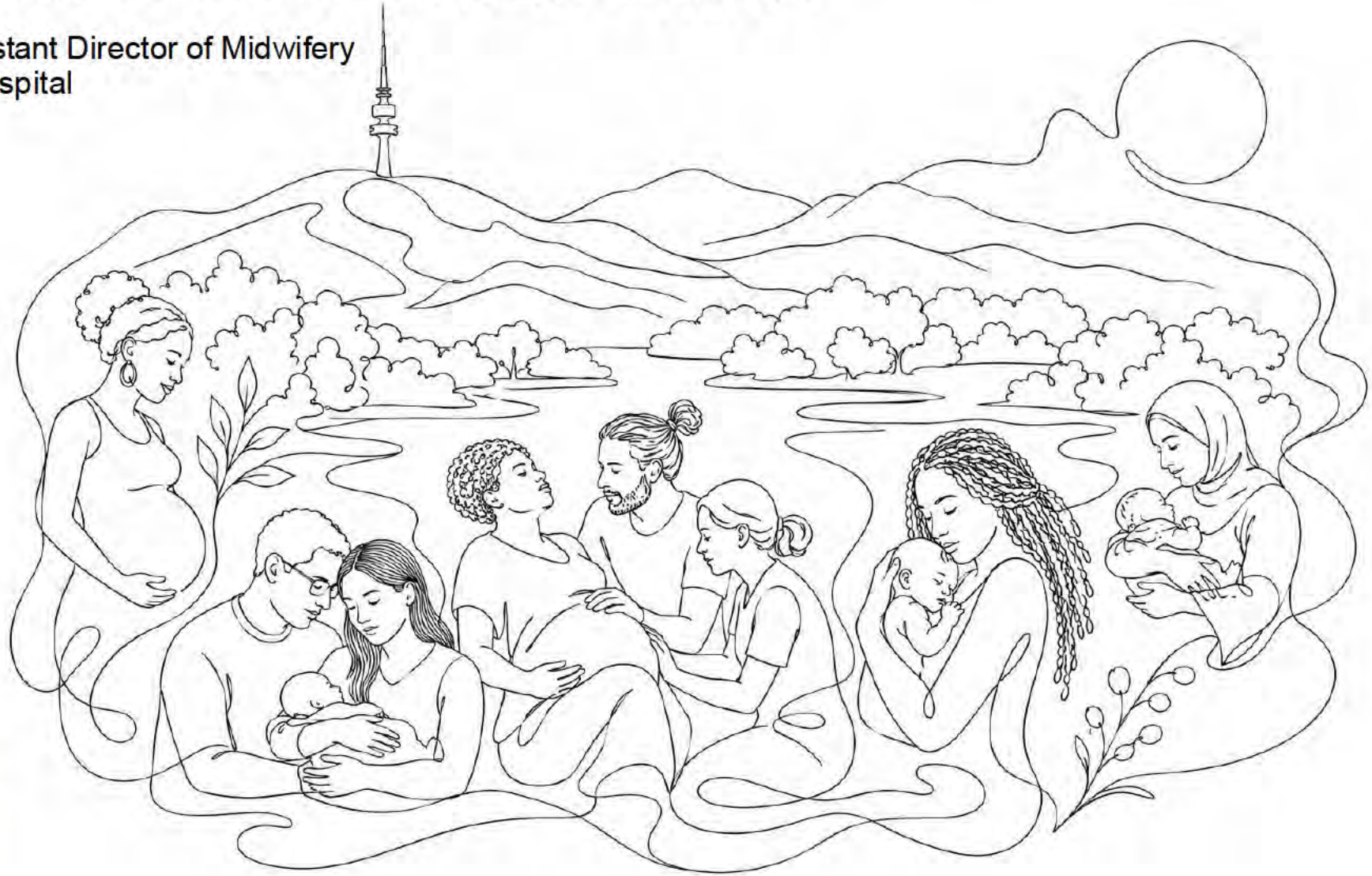
Rachel Stephen-Smith

Minister for Health

ACT Government

From Vision to Reality: Co-Designing a Birth Centre in Canberra's North

Hana Sayers, Assistant Director of Midwifery
North Canberra Hospital



Acknowledgement of Country

Canberra Health Services acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognises any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and contribution to the life of this region.

Artwork credit:
Natalie Bateman (Walbanja-Yuin)
Monga Waratah 2021

What is a Birth Centre?

- A healthcare facility designed to be a maternity care hub that is:
  - Nurturing, home-like and less medicalised
  - For care across the continuum of pregnancy, labour and birth, and postpartum
  - Aligned with the philosophy that pregnancy and birth are normal life events
  - Designed to house a Midwifery Group Practice model of care
  - Supportive of culturally safe and trauma-informed care that is holisitic and woman/person-centred

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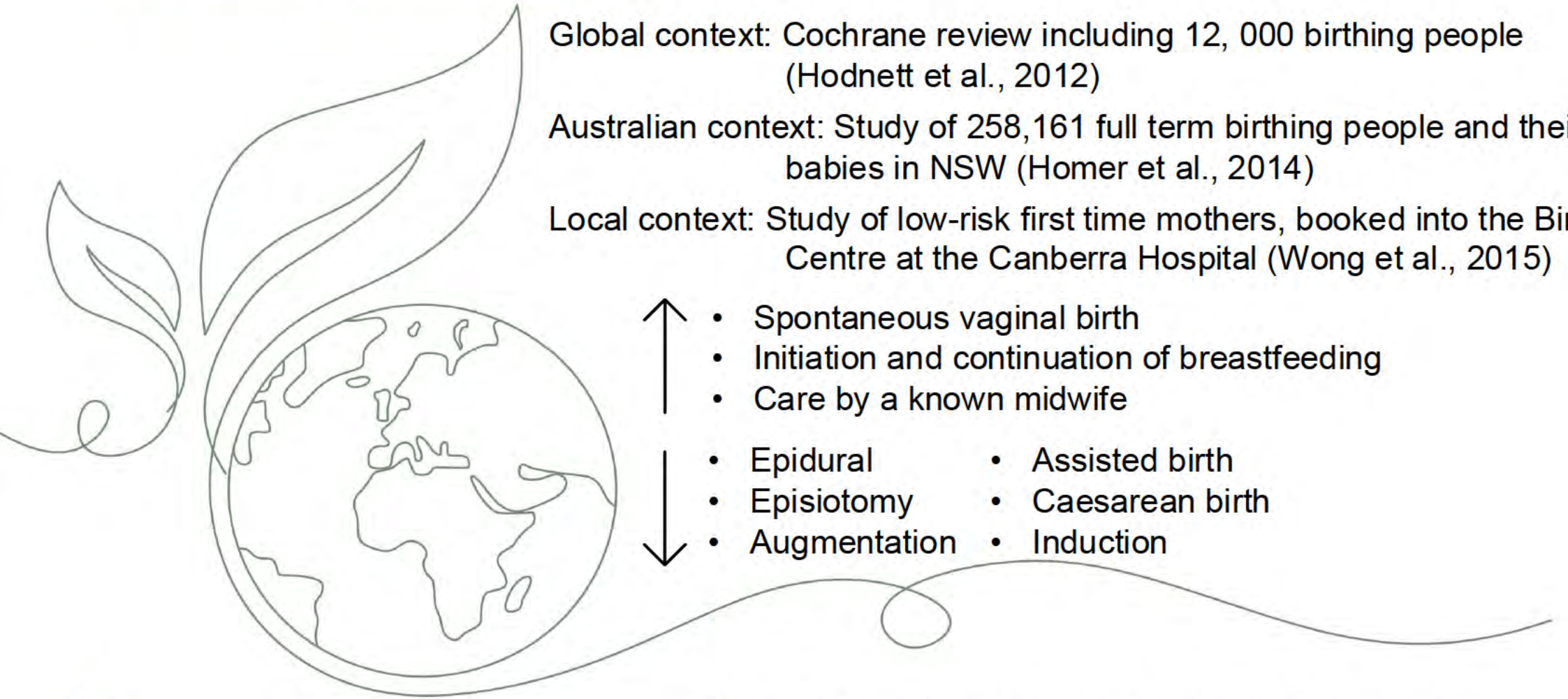
Place of birth and why it matters



Global context: Cochrane review including 12, 000 birthing people (Hodnett et al., 2012)

Australian context: Study of 258,161 full term birthing people and their babies in NSW (Homer et al., 2014)

Local context: Study of low-risk first time mothers, booked into the Birth Centre at the Canberra Hospital (Wong et al., 2015)

- Spontaneous vaginal birth
- Initiation and continuation of breastfeeding
- Care by a known midwife

- Epidural
- Episiotomy
- Augmentation
- Assisted birth
- Caesarean birth
- Induction

~ Benefits to birthing people, safe for the baby and no significant difference in adverse perinatal outcomes ~

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It's not just about outcomes… Experiences matter!

People who give birth in a Birth Centre are more likely to:

- Rate their birth care positively & choose the same setting again (Hodnett et. al, 2012)
- Feel their care was comprehensive and personalised
- Have enhanced self-esteem
- Have a positive relationship with their midwife
- Feel supported to be actively involved in decisions (Alliman & Phillippi, 2016)

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Birth Centres in the ACT

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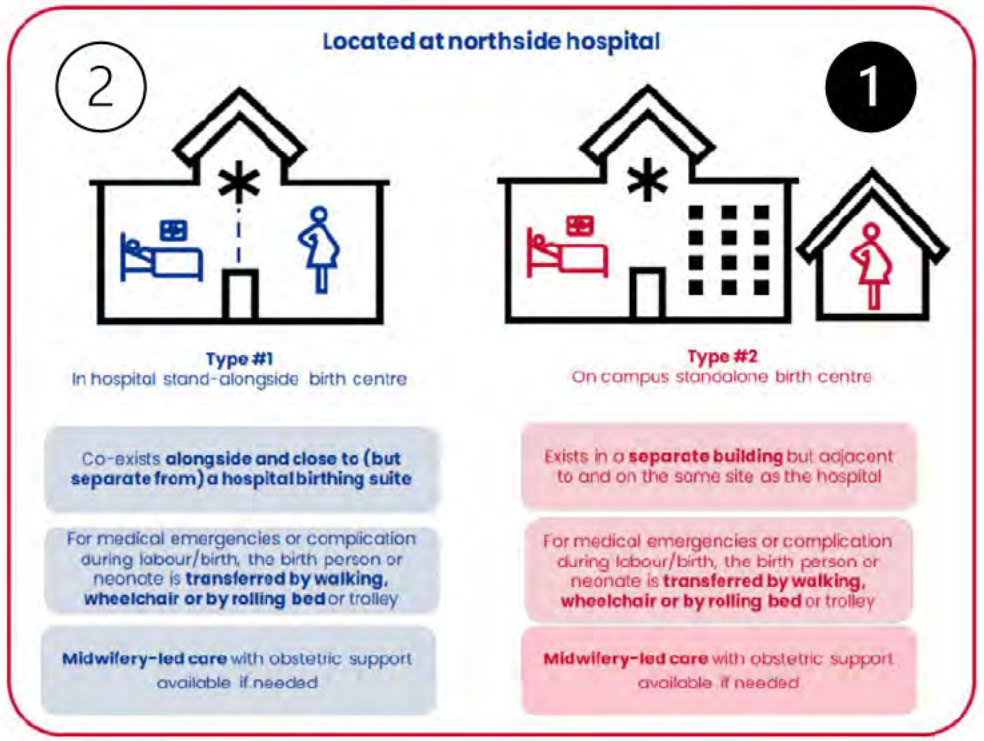
Journey to a new Northside Birth Centre

- Advocacy from consumers and professional groups
- 8th February 2023 – THE MOTION
- 2024 – Feasibility study
- May 2025 – Release of the Feasibility study report



HealthConsult

ACT Health

Options for the Northside Birth Centre

Feasibility study report

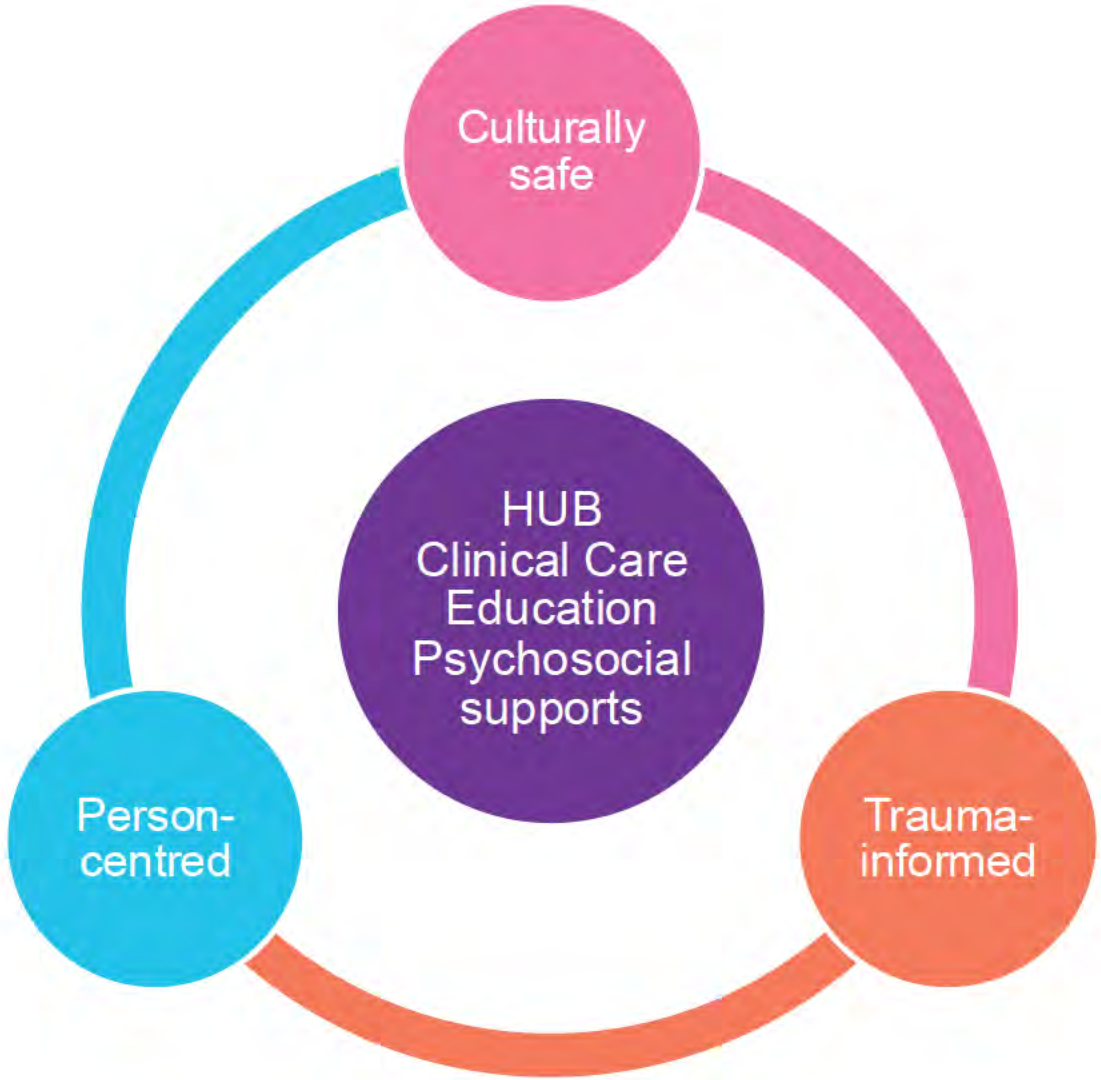
16 October 2024

Better thinking. Better advice. healthconsult.com.au

Design considerations

Voices from the Feasibility Study:

- Respects diversity
- Acknowledges and accommodates past traumas
- Needs and preferences at the forefront
- Separate entrance and facilities
- Homely, non-medical design
- Access to outdoor areas
- Parent education spaces
- Dedicated spaces for bereavement care



Honouring Culture: Safe maternity care for First Nations families

"A birthing place is... around ceremony, it is about cultural interconnectedness... Where we revitalise and renew our traditional practices for mother and babies... Just because we sit in an urban setting doesn't mean we can't bring back those things... *It is a humanistic thing*... It is a connection to country... it's the start of our first ceremony."

Jody Currie, CEO Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS), quoted in Kildea et al., 2017

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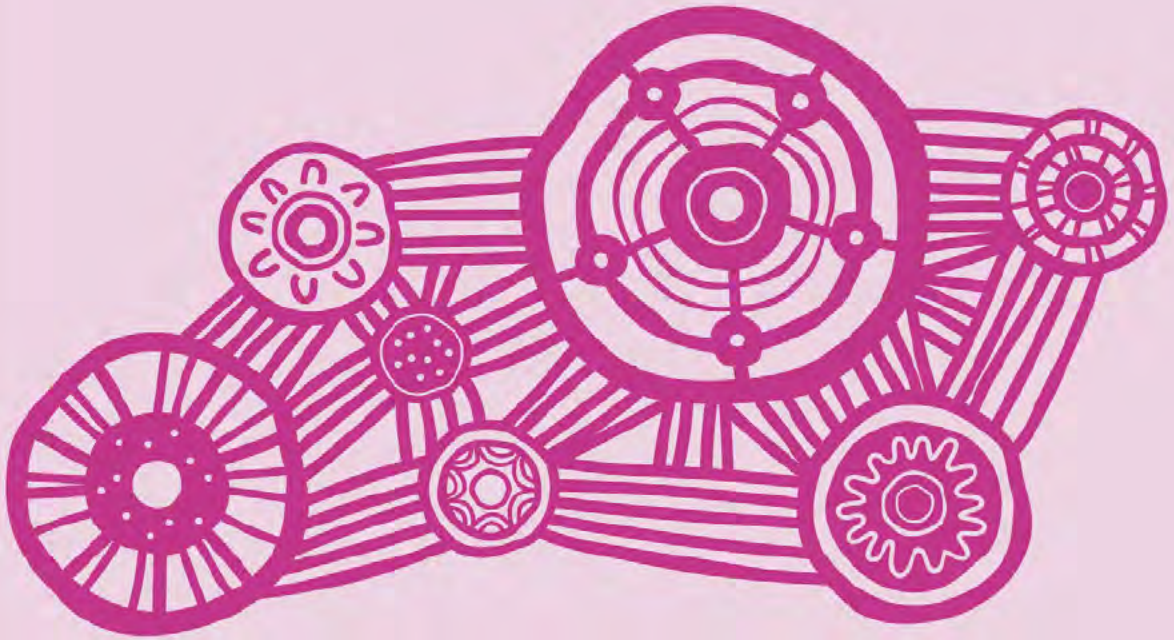

Bobbi Lochyer - Ngarluma, Kariyarra, Nyulnyul, and Yawuru artist

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The bed

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The bed

Water immersion

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Water immersion

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Water immersion

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Shower

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bathroom

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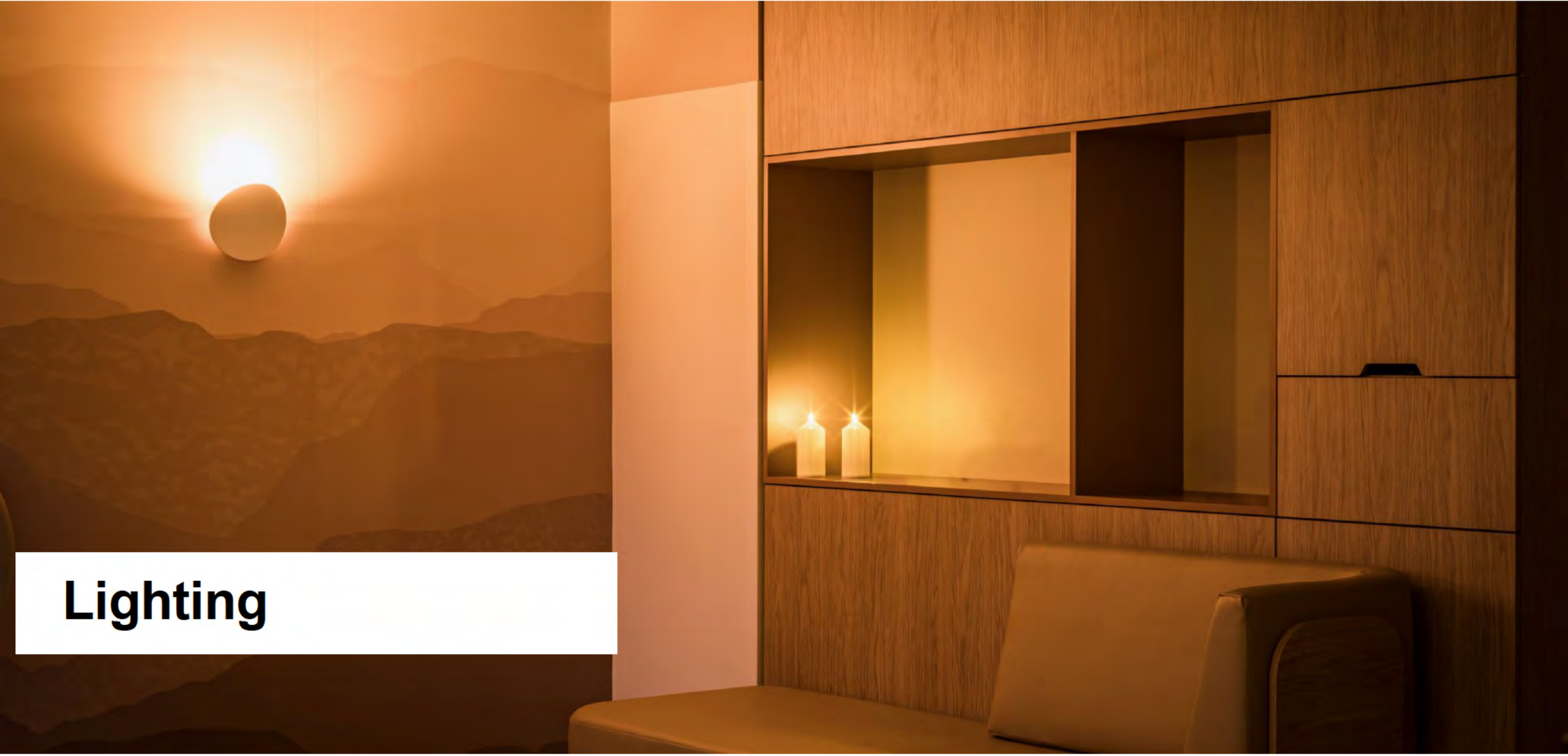

Lighting

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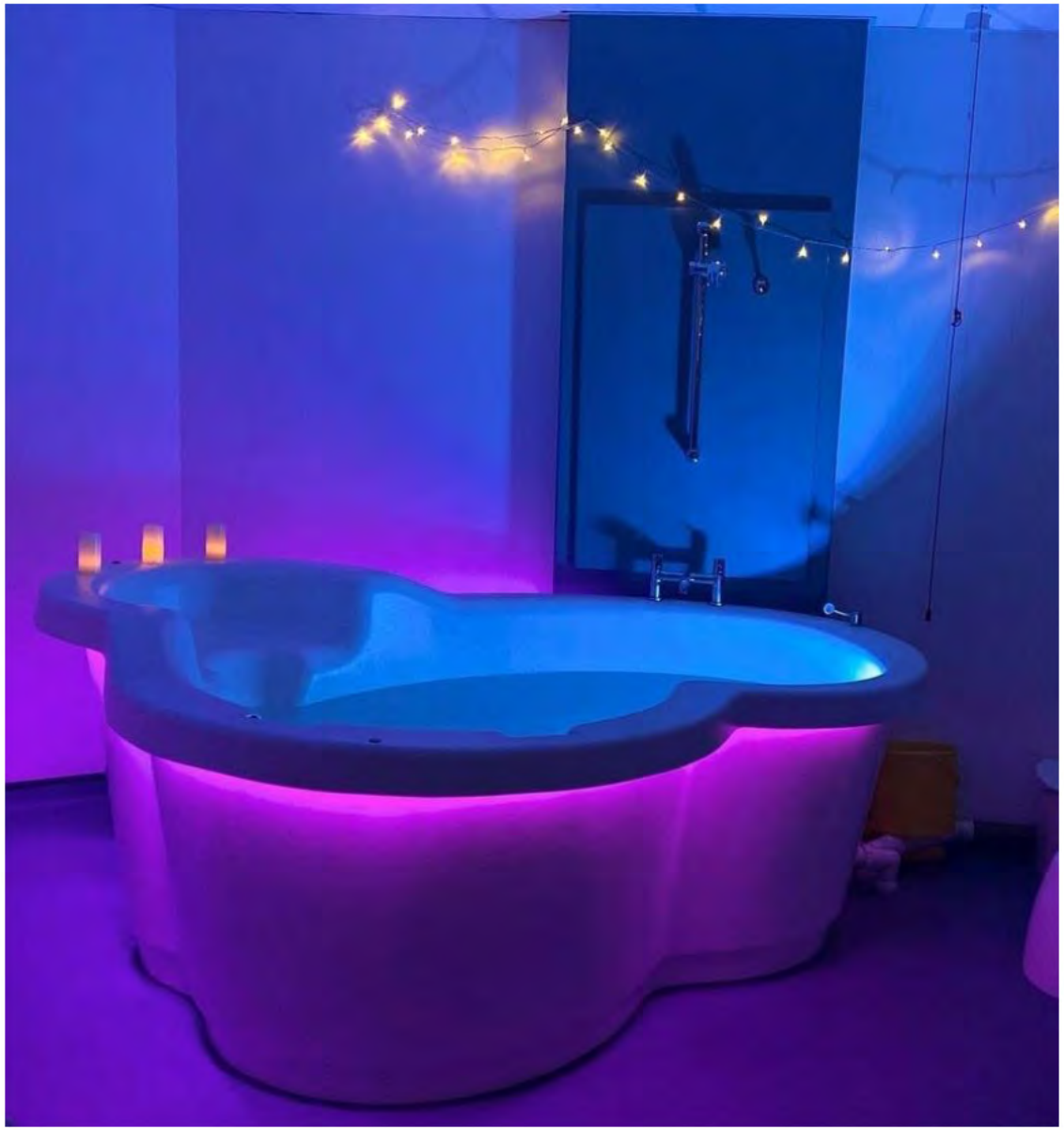

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Windows and natural light

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Décor, furniture and equipment

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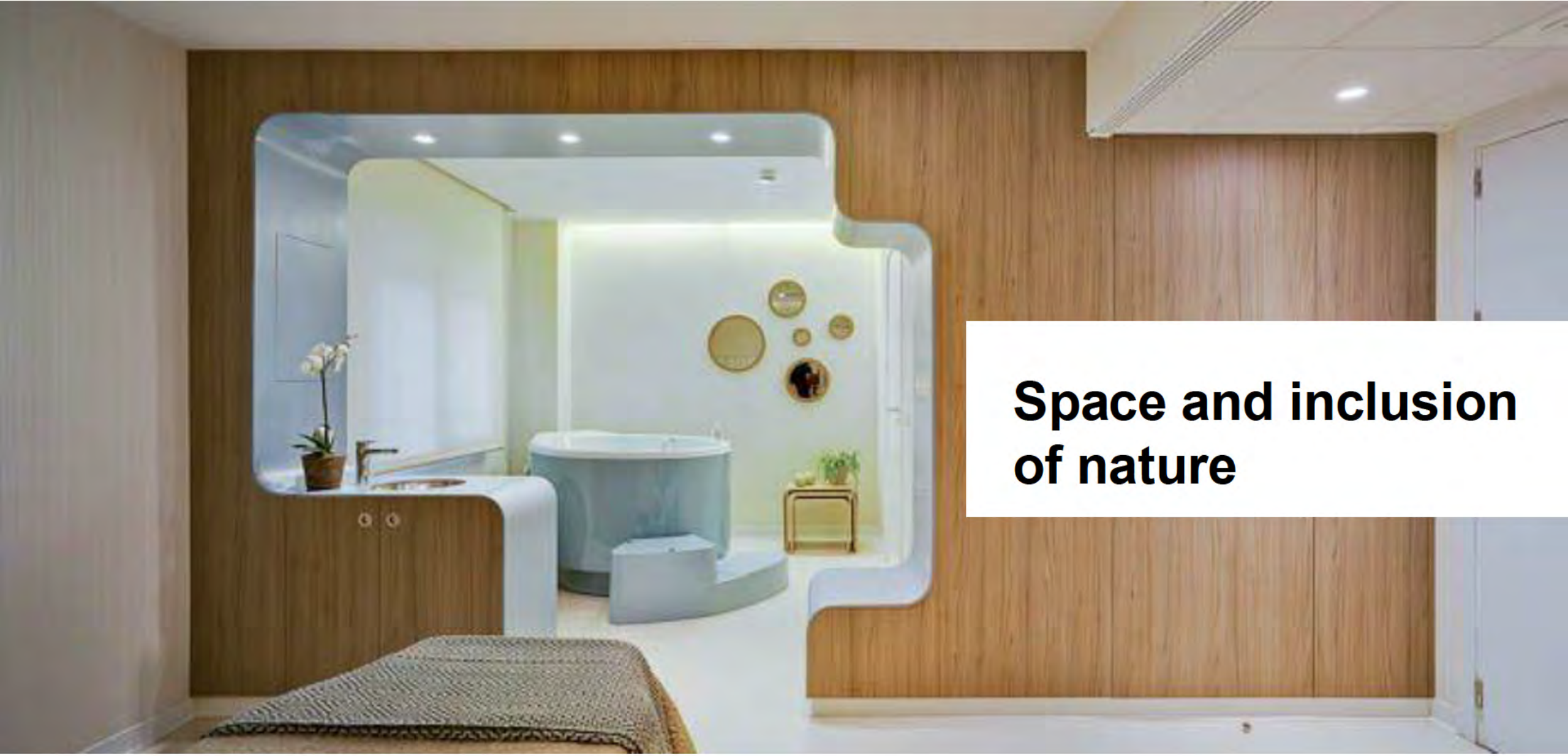

Space and inclusion of nature

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Community spaces

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Thank you

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Project Update

Hayley Bell

Executive Group Manager, iCBR

ACT Government

The journey so far..

- **Legislative Assembly motion:** March 2023
- **Feasibility study delivered:** September 2024
- **Engaged a broad range of stakeholders:** clinicians, midwives, Aboriginal health, community, GPs, universities
- **Connected with the community:** petition (3,000+ signatures), focus groups, cultural advisory input
- **Demand, workforce and cost modelling:** projected 937 low-risk births per year by 2050

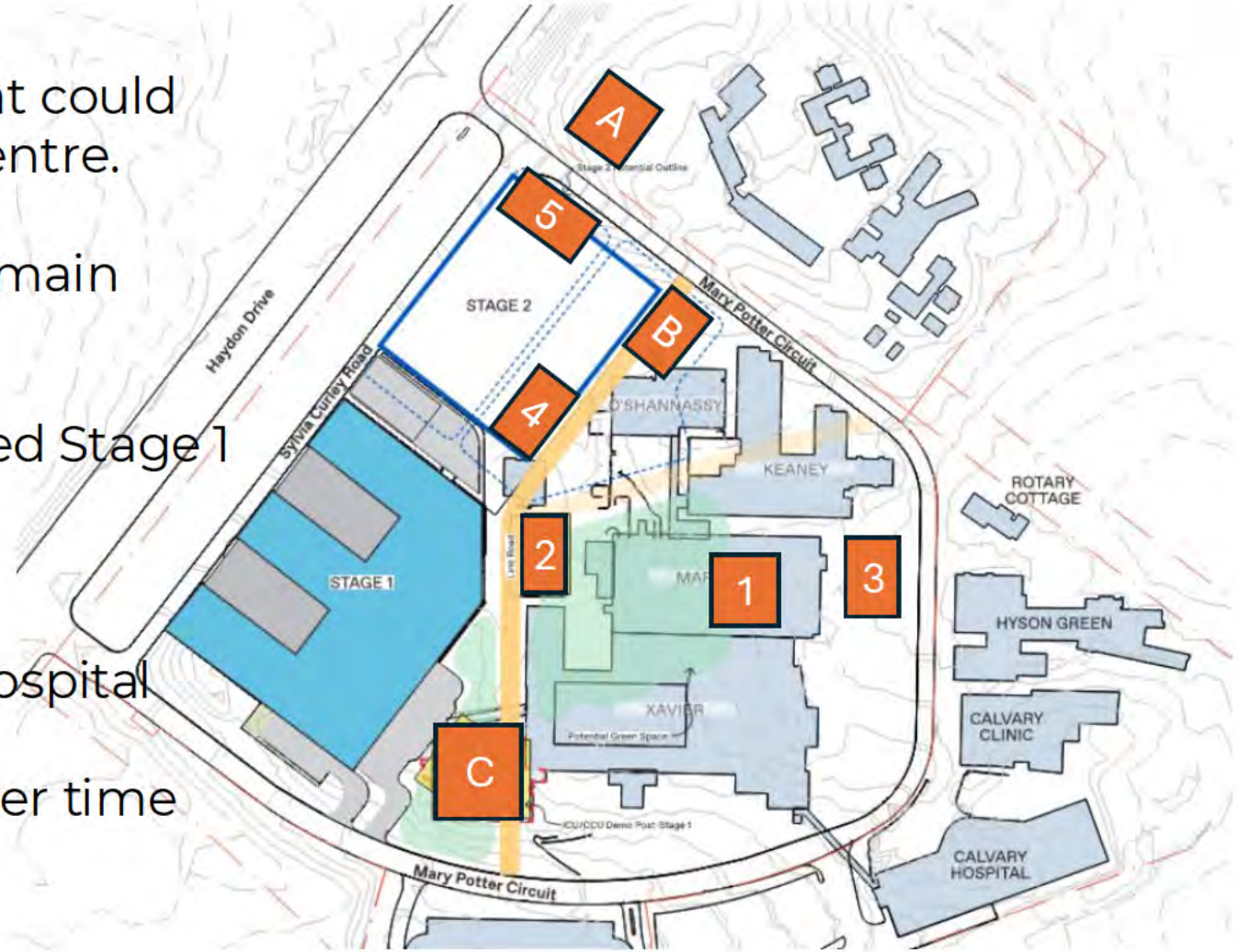
Feasibility study outcomes

Feasibility study assessed three options:

1. Freestanding (separate from hospital): *Not supported*
2. Stand alongside (within main hospital): *Supported*
3. Stand alone Birth Centre (connected to hospital): *Supported*

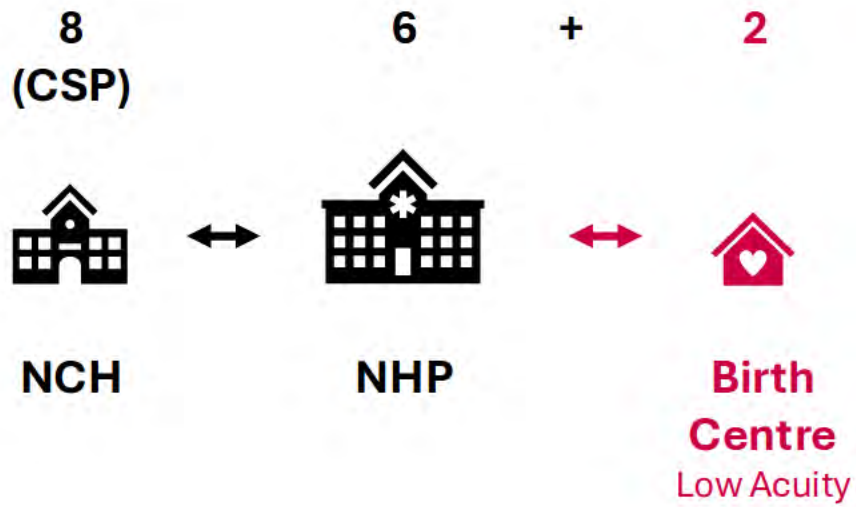
Birth Centre

- Considered zones on the campus that could accommodate a stand alone Birth Centre.
- Feasibility study required transfer to main hospital without ambulance.
- Stand alongside identified as preferred Stage 1 approach
    - Enables earlier delivery
    - Maintains safe integration with hospital services
    - Supports staged development over time



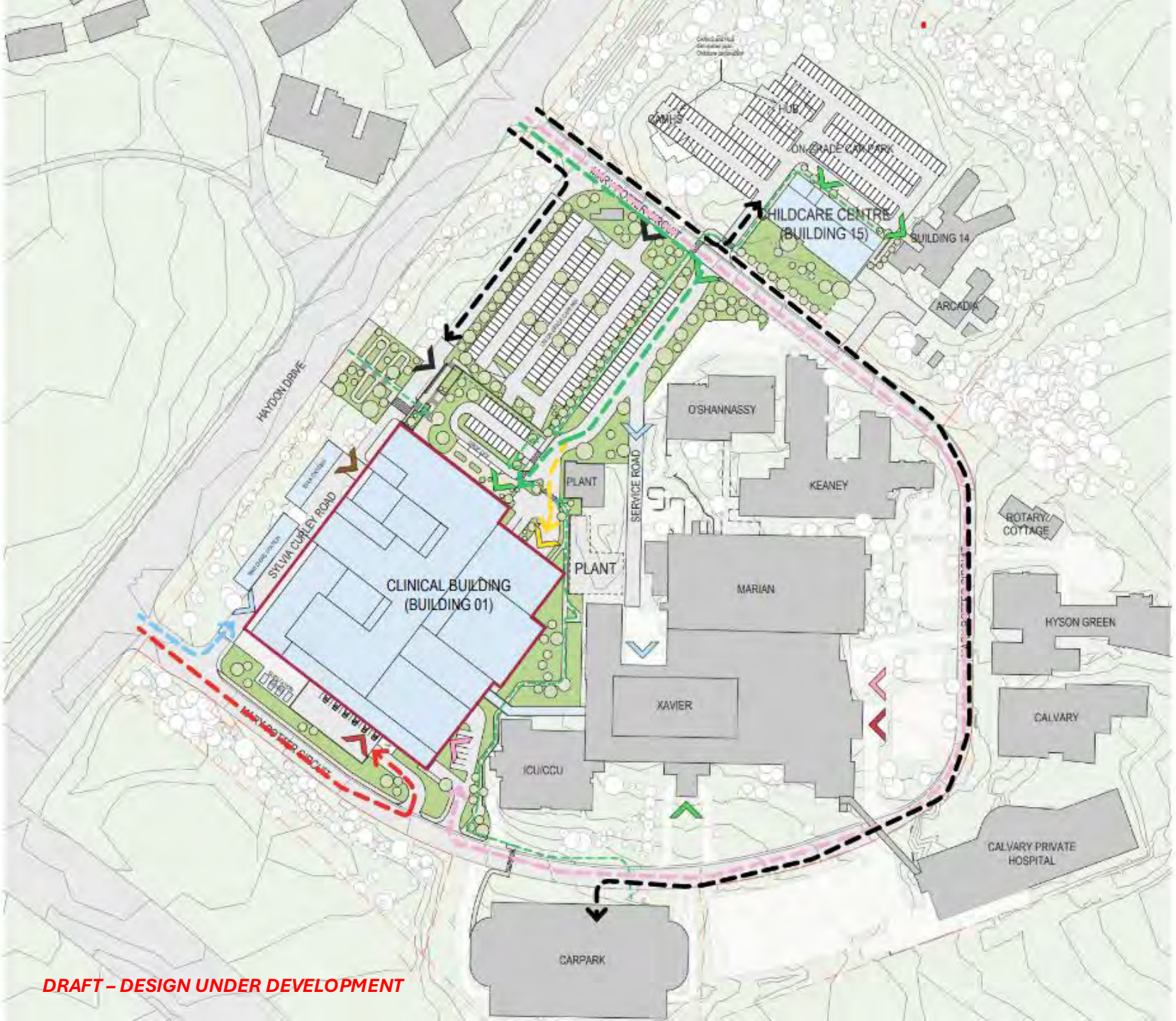
Birthing suite requirements

- **Future requirements:** The Clinical Services Plan (CSP) projects **6 suites by 2031** and **8 suites by 2041**.
- **Birth Centre proposal:** The Birth Centre is planned to include **2 low acuity suites (midwifery led)**.
- **Overall capacity:** Aligned to projected demand (up to 8 birthing suites).



Stage 1 Site Development Plan

- PUBLIC ENTRY
- AMBULANCES ENTRY
- AMBULANT ED ENTRY
- BIRTHING CENTRE ENTRY
- MORTUARY ENTRY
- LOGISTICS ENTRY
- CARPARK ENTRY



DRAFT – DESIGN UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Level 1 – Birthing Centre

Level 5 - Maternity

Design aspirations

Early consultation highlighted the following considerations:

- Home like, non clinical environment
- Separate entry and arrival experience
- Comfortable spaces, lighting and furnishings
- Dedicated spaces for family and support people
- Connection to outdoor areas and nature
- Support for natural birth within a safe, integrated setting
- Trauma informed, person centred design
- Co-designed with workforce and community
- Strong focus on cultural safety and Birthing on Country

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Roundtable Rotations

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Activity Stations

Station	Theme	
1	Creating the Birth Centre Environment (Look, Feel & Identity)	What physical design features and functions are essential to create a birth centre environment that feels safe, calm, and distinctly different from a hospital setting?
2	Designing for Labour, Birth & Movement	How should the physical space and infrastructure support safe, flexible, and empowering labour and birth experiences?
3	Supporting Families & Support People	How should the birth centre be designed to meet the needs of partners, families, and support people?
4	Cultural Safety, Inclusivity & Dignity in Design	How can the physical environment of the birth centre actively support cultural safety, inclusivity, and respect for all families?
5	Flow, Function & Continuity of the Birth Journey	How should the layout and infrastructure of the birth centre support a smooth, safe, and continuous journey from arrival through to discharge?
6	**Lunch**	

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Prioritisation

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Prioritisation

- **5 green dots** → *Must Haves*
- **3 yellow dots** → *Nice to Haves*
- **3 red dots** → *Concerns / Needs Careful Design*

Next Steps

- Today's feedback will be captured in a listening report that will be shared with all participants today
- Insights will inform initial design work and next phases
- Ongoing engagement:
  - There will be further opportunities for engagement
  - Details to be confirmed as work progress

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Thank you

info.northsidehospitalproject@act.gov.au

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