



Hospital care closer to home for kids

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With more major public hospitals in the metropolitan area now providing specialist paediatric services, the right hospital care for your child may be closer than you realise.

The recent openings of Fiona Stanley Hospital in Murdoch and St John of God Midland Public Hospital combined with expanded paediatric care at Joondalup Health Campus, Armadale/Kelmscott Memorial Hospital, Rockingham General Hospital and Peel Health Campus mean that many more families can receive the care they need in their own community without travelling into the city centre.

All these hospitals have improved and boosted resources to deliver specialised child-focused care for ill children, leaving Princess Margaret Hospital – soon to be replaced by the Perth Children’s Hospital – to provide specialist and intensive care for the sickest children.

Children requiring such specialist care provided can be transferred quickly and smoothly from their local hospital.

At the **Joondalup Health Campus**, a \$15 million, 37-bed ward is now being redeveloped with a focus on top-level paediatric care in an environment designed to comfort young children.

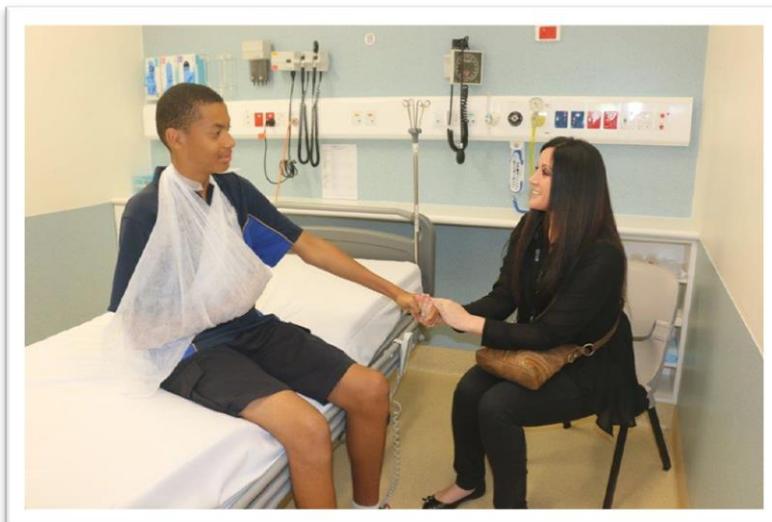


Image: Natalia (mum) reassuring her son Dakota – Joondalup Health Campus

Its Head of Paediatrics, Professor Desiree Silva has praised the aesthetics of the design, saying: “It’s important that the new kids’ ward does not look like a standard ward.

“What we’re trying to achieve is top-level paediatric care, but in an area that looks like a mixture of Scitech and Underwater World.”

When the project is completed soon Joondalup will be able to perform more surgical procedures for conditions such as gastroenterology and ear, nose and throat complaints – cutting waiting times for elective surgery treatment at PMH.

Meanwhile, as a sign of demand for children’s services in the southern suburbs, the paediatric department at **Fiona Stanley Hospital** saw 22,600 children in its first 11 months of operation.

Fiona Stanley Hospital staff are pleased that local parents are bringing their children to FSH rather than making the longer trip to PMH.

“The investment in the state-of-the-art facilities at FSH and the passionate paediatric staff who work here has demonstrated our commitment to caring for our children in our local community,” FSH’s Nurse Manager of Children’s Emergency Department Matt Szabo said. “Our emergency department even has a separate children’s entry that keeps them away from adult patients and provides a calmer emergency environment.

“Much hard work and dedication has gone into providing an environment for children and families that is both comfortable and friendly. Most importantly, the passion shown by the medical and nursing staff is the real stand out at FSH.

“Our staff pride themselves on providing family-centred care, while offering a service that is very much a shared journey for children, parents and staff,” he said.



Image: Vanessa Clayden (Consultant Emergency Physician) and Matt Szabo (Nurse Manager, Children’s Emergency Department) – Fiona Stanley Hospital

In the north-eastern suburbs, **St John of God Midland Public Hospital's** 12-bed children's ward provides general medical and surgical inpatient care.

At the centre of the ward is a colourful play area for patients, their siblings and family members to enjoy while an adolescent area provides a space for older children to spend time during their hospital stay.

In the Emergency Department, children aged under 16 years are assessed and treated in a separate four-bed paediatric area or the main emergency department, depending on their symptoms.

Children's Ward Nurse Manager, Karen Robertson, said: "The ward's bright, friendly environment helps children and their families to feel relaxed during what can be a stressful time in their lives.

"We also engage fully with the family in all care decisions to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child," she said.

The hospital also has a railway themed playground inspired by the strong local connection to the railway industry that adds a dimension of fun for children visiting the hospital.



Image: Karen Robertson – Children's Ward Nurse Manager – St John of God Midland Public Hospital

Meanwhile, over at **Armadale** its 10-bed children's ward admits more than 1700 patients each year.

The hospital now has five paediatricians, four registrars and one intern who ensure reduced waiting times for children.

It's Head of Paediatrics Dr Colin Derrick said: "I really enjoy working in the Armadale Paediatric department. I have worked here for nearly 6 years and while I have worked on three different continents in several different settings I enjoy this job the most.



Image: Dr Colin Derrick – Head of Paediatrics – Armadale Health Service

“We have an ethos that children in the emergency department should not wait long hours before admission and we all work towards speedy transfers to the ward.

“About 2500 babies are born at this hospital each year and it houses a dedicated unit for sick newborns and preterm babies from 35 weeks gestation.

“It makes such a difference to new mums to be able to recover from childbirth in the same hospital as their newborn. And if mum is released before her baby, she will be able to attend her local hospital to visit her child rather than travel the long distance to another hospital,” he said.