



FESTIVAL OF
**CONTAGIOUS
IDEAS** 2016



NEW SOUTH WALES
HEALTH INNOVATION
Symposium 2016

Enhancing Patient Experience Through the Arts

Being and Belonging: How art transformed the new Blacktown Hospital Regional Dialysis Centre Western Sydney Local Health District

“My condition doesn't define me. Nor is it the most interesting part of me,” Silia, renal patient.

Being and Belonging is an exciting, engaging, collaborative consumer-led arts project at the Regional Dialysis Centre at Blacktown Hospital which encourages patients to get more involved in their healthcare by expressing their experience through art, and directly influencing their care environment.

The program includes:

- Imagine!, a mixed media project using photography, video and dialysis consumables
- Bubbles Gallery, a dialysis water feature and temporary exhibition space
- Aboriginal welcome painting
- Living Library.

An initial workshop involving about 100 people generated the concepts for the artworks and endorsed the objective of using art to enhance the physical environment, raise awareness of chronic renal disease and improve



quality of life, especially for young adults living with dialysis. Routine and boredom among regular patients was addressed by creating temporary exhibition spaces in the Bubbles Gallery, while Imagine! and Living Library were unique in providing opportunities for different generations to share their stories and experiences - demystifying the long-term dialysis experience for younger adults.

Being and Belonging is unique for its unprecedented level of community engagement. It uses a consumer-led model, quirky and inventive projects conceived through direct patient and community consultation, an ability to engage traditionally difficult-to-reach clients such as young adults and Aboriginal patients, and a capacity to strengthen networks with key community partners.

The program has delivered better patient outcomes by creating a more positive and uplifting physical space which helps reduce tension, address

isolation, alleviate boredom and promote communication. Participation in the young adults support group has significantly increased, which is critical to this group's ongoing physical health and mental well-being.

Acknowledgments

Being & Belonging is a partnership of Western Sydney Local Health District, Health Infrastructure, Health & Arts Research Centre (HARC) Inc. and Blacktown Arts Centre.

