

Future Stories

creating virtual worlds for young people



Future Stories is a research project that examines how virtual reality (VR) can be used to improve the wellbeing of young people in paediatric hospital care. The project is centred around an artist-in-residence approach, where artists work with young people to co-design their own bespoke VR worlds. Once completed, the young people, their families, and health care teams, can explore the world and those created by other participants. The project involves a collaborative, inter-disciplinary partnership between UNSW, CQUniversity and Griffith University, as well as three hospital sites: Queensland Children's Hospital, Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick, and Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service.



Jamie's Dolphin World

Jamie was one of the first co-creators to participate in the Future Stories project when it launched in 2022 at Queensland Children's Hospital. In her world, *Dolphin World*, visitors can eat chips and chocolate cake by the beach, swim with dolphins, and ride the jetski. These were activities she couldn't do in real life, so she created a world in which she could. She based the world on King's Beach in Queensland, where she would often go on holidays. She pioneered an adventurous way of making for the Future Stories project, where she would find every way to break the game. Her daredevil attitude and approach to making a VR world has left behind a lasting legacy in the other Future Stories worlds.



Carter's Moon

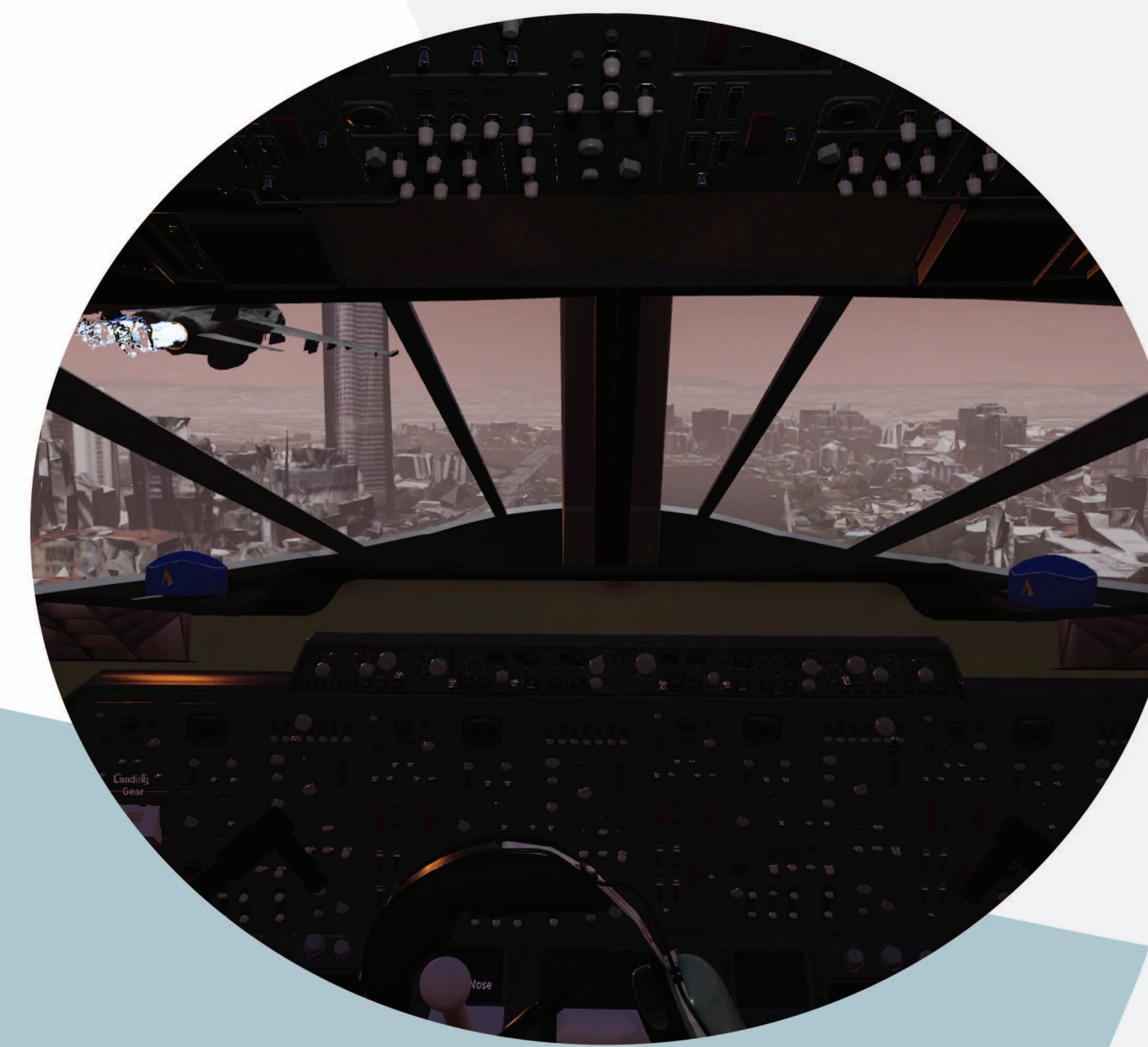
Carter was the first Future Stories artist. He was a trailblazer, an advocate, and a champion for the project. His world, *Carter's Moon* was created in the Future Stories Pilot project in 2019 at Queensland Children's Hospital. Carter designed this virtual reality world as a replica of the 1969 Apollo 11 moon landing. In its creation, we used real photographs from the mission to create topology accurate to the real landing site. He also included a drivable moon buggy, the moon lander itself, and floating photographs of the historic event. Additionally, Carter included Laika the Soviet space dog in his world, so he could play fetch with her on the lunar surface. Carter passed away in 2022, but his world lives on with the support of his family.

"Think Big!"

Jamie - Future Stories Co-Creator

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Dylan's Concorde World

Dylan knew immediately what he wanted in his virtual world and asked the team to create a replica of a 1970's Concorde so he could fly through a storm and emerge over the Brisbane River. En route, the Concorde is intercepted by a UAP (UFO) and the pilot needs to successfully land the Concorde on Runway 3 at Brisbane airport. The Concorde boasts a technically accurate cockpit and passenger seats complete with a drinks trolley and a pilot's cap that when tapped, allows the player to free fly after safely evacuating out the escape slide.



Harro's Roarsome World

Harro's *Roarsome World* started with an island that was to be home to Fluffy, a friendly, flying, blue, dragon with five legs. In Harro's world, the player has a job which is to locate and retrieve Fluffy's dragon eggs from around the island. This involves climbing trees, entering a cave that belongs to a much less friendly dragon, and flying over the ocean on the back of a Griffin. Once all the eggs are safely back in Fluffy's nest, they hatch, and baby Fluffies emerge.



Max's Escape Room

Max was one of the co-creators from Sydney Children's Hospital Randwick. He has a passion for creating puzzles and games that made his world unique. Inspired by escape rooms, a type of adventure experience where players are 'locked' inside a themed room and must solve a series of puzzles to escape, Max crafted an immersive experience that includes three distinct worlds. The journey begins in a Medieval courtyard, where the player must find a key to open the door to the castle. This door leads the player to a wooden cabin, which shutters amid a relentless snowstorm. This cabin is also filled with puzzles, that the player must figure out to gain access to the final level. Max's vision for this adventurous puzzle world showcases his understanding of VR as a place to create experiential worlds of discovery.



Future Stories

co-created worlds



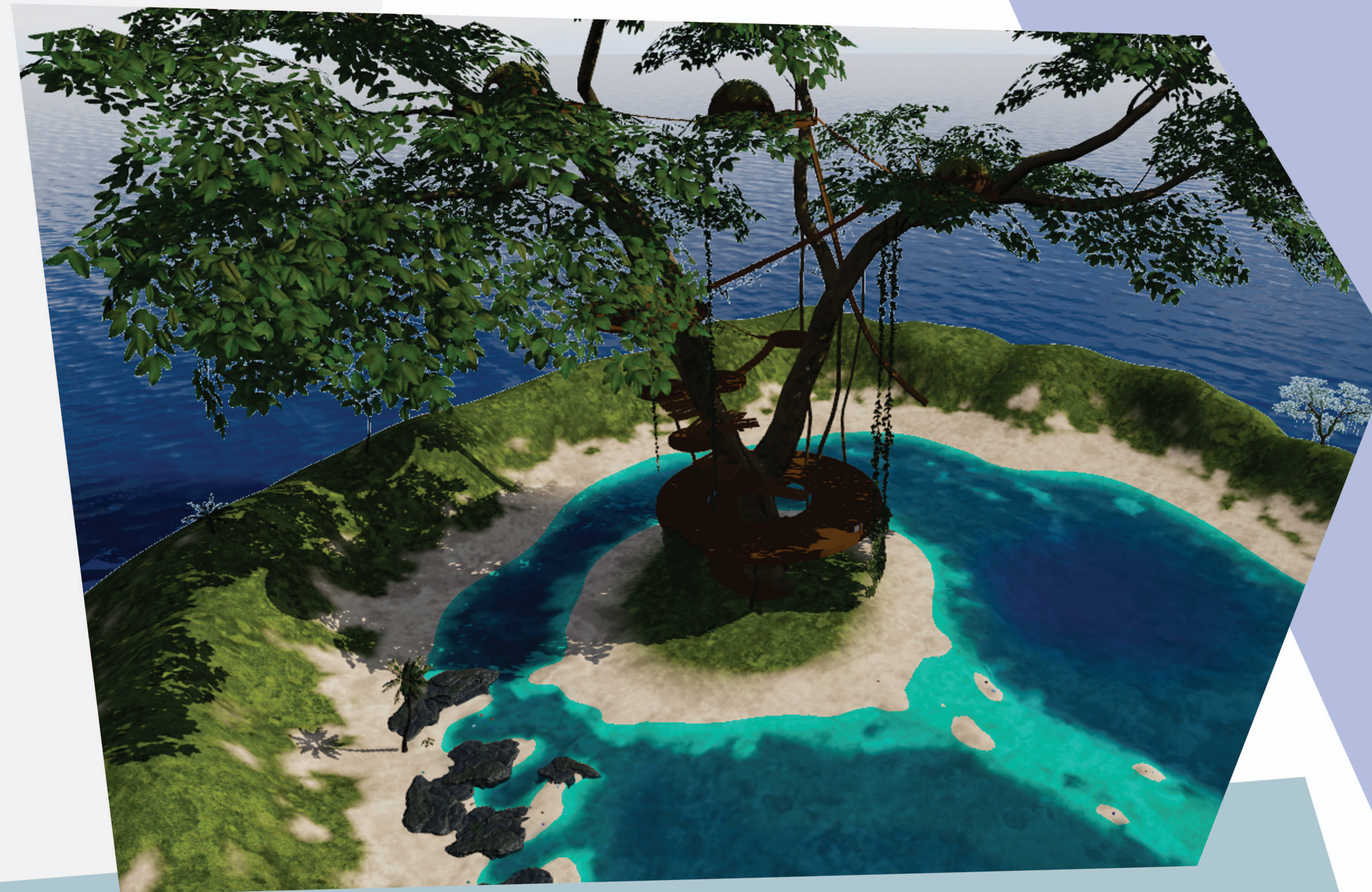
Ella's Island

Ella was the first participant in the Future Stories project at Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service. She was also the first co-creator to make a foyer level. In Future Stories, we use foyer levels as a starting space for visitors to learn how to use the controls and navigate the worlds. Ella created her foyer level as an island on the Great Barrier Reef. She added her own boat with a unique registration, a sunken pirate ship, and a bear-shaped balloon tied to the top of a tree. She also included her own swing and carved her name into one of the palm trees. Another feature of the world is the crocodile cake party taking place on the shores of the atoll. Here, visitors can put on a party hat and celebrate with the crocs.



Maya's Cat Cafe

Maya's *Cat Cafe* is one of the few Future Stories worlds directly inspired by a real place. Drawing from her own visit to a cat cafe in Osaka, Japan, Maya recreated the unique charm of this cafe where visitors can enjoy their coffee or tea surrounded by friendly cats. Because this experience left such a lasting impression on her, she wanted to share it with others through this virtual world. In Maya's *Cat Cafe*, players are greeted by a variety of playful cats as soon as they step inside. They can relax with a warm cup of coffee and a slice of cake while spending time with the furry companions. Upstairs, visitors find a quiet space to read Japanese graphic novels and manga.



Shay's Treehouse

Shay had a unique idea for her Future Stories world. As she enjoys sports and climbing, she wanted her world to be filled with activities. What better place for these activities to take place than in a giant treehouse above a sheltered cove. This treehouse has many platforms and huts, where visitors can find unique experiences. In one hut, visitors can find a ball pit, and in another, fishing rods. At the top of the treehouse, Shay created a giant slide in which players can use to slip down into the ocean below. Shay also made sure there are plenty of vines and climbing points to navigate around the treehouse. There are even rock pools and fish in the cove below!

