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133 Castlereagh Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

[www.stockland.com](http://www.stockland.com)

## STOCKLAND MERRYLANDS TO CONSTRUCT NEW INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND AT THE CENTRE

Stockland Merrylands reaffirms its standing as a centre designed for the community, as it starts construction on its brand new inclusive playground set to open next month.\*

Built in collaboration with Variety – the Children’s Charity, the playground’s innovative design allows children of all abilities to play together, including those with physical disabilities, vision, hearing and mobility impairments, or spectrum disorders such as autism.

Michelle Thomas, Centre Manager at Stockland Merrylands, said that it was critical to remove the barriers experienced by Australians living with disabilities, so they can have the same access and opportunities that others enjoy.

“We hope this new playground will become a favourite destination for our littlest customers and the community more widely, where all children feel comfortable letting their imaginations run wild and just enjoy playing.

“We see ourselves as a town centre designed for the community, and will continue to evaluate ways in which we can create more curated experiences and add value and convenience to customers’ visits.”

Aptly named ‘Merrylands Global Village’, the playground design celebrates the local community’s multi-culturalism and diversity through a vibrant and engaging space where children are encouraged to interact, role play and play.

Kim Becherand, Inclusive Play Manager at Variety – the Children’s Charity, said working with Stockland Merrylands to deliver the project provides an opportunity to create a truly inclusive playspace that will engage all children and their families and carers in play.

“At Variety we believe that all kids deserve the opportunity to play. This new playspace will push the boundaries of what an inclusive playspace in a shopping centre can be. Working with the project team has created a space where everyone is included, valued and feels they belong.

“The Stockland Merrylands playspace continues Variety’s ongoing partnership with Stockland. We love working together and striving for excellence in design as we create inclusive playspaces for Stockland communities throughout Australia.”

Some features of inclusion in the playspace is a wide directional pathway through the space for easy access, imaginative, sensory and accessible play options for all children, a wide slide for easy access and fencing around the playspace to ensure the safety.

The beautiful artwork covering the new playspace has been specially designed in-centre by twelve young women from the new migrant and refugee community in Merrylands as part of a Stockland sponsored 5-week art workshop managed by fashion label and registered charity The Social Outfit.

Camilla Schippa, CEO of The Social Outfit, said that the aim of the workshops was to deliver creative, responsive experiences that attract and engage young refugees whilst building soft skills to improve employment outcomes and establish community, connection and creative identity.

“Guided by a Social Outfit professional print designer, the young people were encouraged to create individual artworks, referencing their personal style and newly developed artistic techniques. Australian nature and colours were used as the inspiration behind the artworks, and pieces from each of these final artworks were collaged together to create this original collaborative print.

“The Social Outfit is extremely pleased with the outcome, which we hope will bring smiles to the faces of the kids in the play centre and a sense of belonging to their families, knowing that it is based on original artworks by youth from the community.”

The new inclusive playground will be located near Big W.

## ENDS

**\*Stockland play areas operate with a specifically designed Covid-Safe plan which includes regular cleaning and monitoring, as well as availability of hand sanitiser.**

### For media enquiries

**Ashley Chrysler**  
Media Relations Manager  
Stockland  
T +61 (0)290 352 337  
M +61 (0)472 653 297  
[ashley.chrysler@stockland.com.au](mailto:ashley.chrysler@stockland.com.au)

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**About Stockland:** Stockland (ASX: SGP) was founded in 1952 and has grown to become Australia's largest diversified property group – owning, developing and managing a large portfolio of shopping centres, residential communities, logistic centres, business parks, office assets and retirement living villages. Stockland is rated as one of the most sustainable real estate companies in the world by the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index (DJSI). Stockland is also an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality, as recognised by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency [www.stockland.com.au](http://www.stockland.com.au)