

Our Place Quarterly Wrap

May 2025



Department of Education



Families, Fairness and Housing



Tori from Leisure Networks' Mini Movers program facilitating school holiday activities

Welcome to the Our Place Northern Bay Quarterly Wrap of Term 1, 2025

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2025!

It's hard to believe that Term 1 have already flown by. The site has continued to thrive, with strong attendance at playgroup sessions, Early Help drop-ins providing vital support to families, increased Toy Library memberships, and high engagement across kindergarten and early years programs. The school year has also begun with a large and enthusiastic group of Prep students who have settled in beautifully and are ready to learn.

We're excited to welcome Kerry Tribe to the Korayn Birralelee Family Centre as the new Lead Educator and Administration Officer (LEAO). Kerry brings a wealth of experience from various roles in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), and we look forward to the contributions she'll make in her new role.

Our governance group recently held its first meeting of the year, reflecting a strong shared commitment to ongoing evaluation and the collection of meaningful data to track the impact of the Our Place approach over time.

Family engagement on site continues to be a real strength, particularly through programs like My Time and Give it a Go. We are proud to share that My Time Corio recently received an award for their outstanding attendance and their commitment to creating a safe and inclusive space. It's also been incredibly rewarding to hear how Give it a Go has positively impacted families—some of these stories are featured in our Story of Impact segment in this edition. Term 1 has showcased the power of collaborative partnerships and innovative approaches.

We hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter, which highlights valuable insights from our partners and, most importantly, the voices of parents in our community.

To stay updated on site progress, programs, activities and events at Northern Bay, we encourage you to follow our [Facebook page \(@OurPlaceNorthernBay\)](#) or visit ourplace.org.au/our-sites/northern-bay.

Feel free to drop by and say hello to Bec, Tanya and Karen at the Korayn Birralelee Family Centre or contact Bec directly at rebecca@ourplace.org.au.

Our Place Northern Bay team



Rebecca Hickey
Partnership Manager



Karen Butterworth
Community Facilitator



Tanya Kane
Community Facilitator



Governance



Welcome to Louise Medler, Our Place Site Partnership Group Chair
Manager — Health Wellbeing and Specialist Services |
Barwon Area, Department of Education

I have recently become involved with the Northern Bay Our Place site partnership group as part of my role with the Department of Education as Manager, Health Wellbeing and Specialist Services, Barwon. I feel very privileged to be learning more about the wonderful work underway through Our Place's partnership with the community, and to be building my understanding of the Our Place, Northern Bay site journey.

I have been working in the Department of Education for the last 10 years, across the region and in central office, in roles that have predominantly focused on supporting students who are at risk of disengaging from school. I have also been lucky enough to spend a bit of time working in the Early Years space, so understand how essential it is that families are supported in a holistic way within their local communities. Prior to this, my background was within the community sector working in family and disability services, and while working alongside families and children who were experiencing many challenges, it was very

evident that strong partnerships are needed to support positive changes, and that the aspirations of community can have a big impact on outcomes for young people.

It has been exciting to see the opening of the Toy Library in term 4 last year, and to hear about the new partnership with The Gordon to pilot an English Conversation course. It has also been incredibly positive hearing about successful transitions into Prep from children who attended Korayn Birralee Kindergarten last year.

I feel very passionate about the need for local communities to drive the responses to issues they are experiencing and that services and supports should be targeted to local needs and issues - there is so much power in community consultation and in working together, and I can see this approach very clearly in the amazing programs and initiatives underway through the work of Our Place. I am very much looking forward to the year ahead.

Louise Medler



Car Safety Expo for families

Mel supporting families through the Car Safety Expo & car seat checks

During the final week of term 1, the Korayn Birralee Community had the opportunity to engage in an informative and interactive session focused on car seat safety. The Meli Early Help team organised an engaging experience for children, allowing them to drive toy cars along a track, explore various road signs, and participate in a colouring activity to better understand the signage we encounter on our roads. Meanwhile, parents and carers were provided with essential information on proper car seat installation, tailored to different ages and stages, and available in multiple languages to reflect our diverse community.

With support from Our Place, this event turned into a space of curiosity and learning, where many questions were asked, such as: "At what age should I transition my child from a rear-facing car seat to a forward facing one?"

Following the information session, a registered car installer from Urban Auto and Tyres visited to provide on-site car seat safety checks. Thirty-five vehicles participated, receiving guidance on how to ensure the correct installation and safety of car seats for children. Additionally, the Early Help team will support those families by arranging for the team at Urban Auto and Tyres to install car seats and facilitated the purchase of booster seats for families in need.

This initiative was an excellent opportunity for our community to come together and prioritise the safety and well-being of our youngest members.

The Meli Early Help Team is always looking for ways to be responsive to local community needs and already have some amazing support, activities and programs scheduled for Term 2 including Yoga Play and Paediatric First Aid for parents and carers.

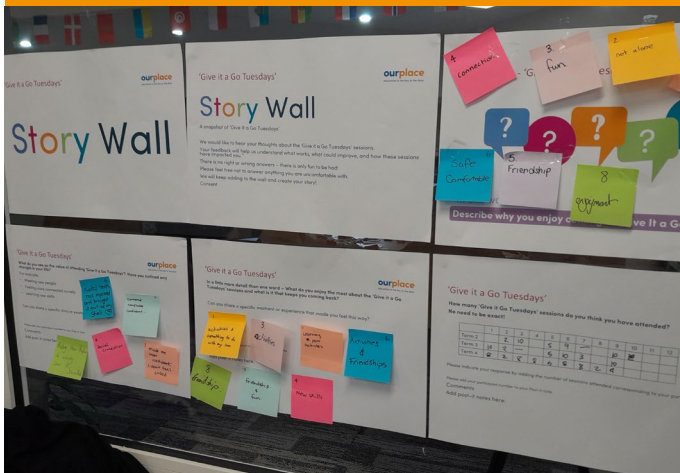


Article by: [Melanie Welland](#),
Meli Family Services Early Help Worker



Story of Impact: 'Give it a Go Tuesdays' focus group insights

Give it a Go feedback Story Wall



Give it a Go session in action



The Our Place Evaluation Team recently conducted a focus group with participants of Tuesday's Give it a Go sessions.

These sessions provide a relaxed and inclusive space where participants can learn new skills, engage in creative activities, and build connections. The focus group aimed to explore participants' engagement and experiences, the personal value of the sessions, and their awareness of other onsite opportunities.

Key Insights

The focus group included 10 parents/carers, revealing the following key findings:

- 90% of participants had children attending programs at the site.
- 80% attended sessions regularly.
- 70% reported enhanced social connections.
- 40% formed new relationships with other parents.
- 20% gained new confidence.
- 10% experienced improved mental health.
- 20% built relationships with their children's educators.
- 10% connected with people from different cultures.

Awareness of Onsite Services & Opportunities

When asked about their awareness and use of other onsite services:

- 50% had accessed five or more onsite opportunities.
- 20% had accessed two or fewer opportunities.
- 20% participated in Early Years programs.
- 40% engaging in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services.
- 40% attended parenting or family support services alongside Early Years programs.

Participants Story

One participant, who had attended Give it a Go from the beginning but took a term off to focus on studying, shared how the program helped build their confidence. With encouragement from Our Place staff, they are now preparing to take the next step—enrolling in full-time Education Support studies in 2025.



Learning, Laughter and Language at Our Place with The Gordon

Teacher Fran and a Learn English student

Over six wonderful weeks, a group of remarkable women were brought together through a special mixed-level Learn English pilot program delivered by The Gordon at Korayn Birralelee Family Centre. The group included mums from Afghanistan, Southern India, Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar — some with their little ones in tow! Babies and toddlers played with toys and activities while their mums focused on building their English skills with an English language teacher.

The group met twice a week for two-hour sessions in a warm and welcoming space. They worked on reading, writing, speaking, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary — and even had homework for those who wanted it! Whether a beginner or more advanced, everyone found something to learn.

Of course, it wasn't always easy. There were some challenges that teachers don't normally see in a classroom, like managing the noise and distractions from children. We also had different English levels in the group, and students sometimes missed classes. But the positives far outweighed the tricky bits.

The classroom was full of energy, laughter and support. Students were engaged, learning activities were tailored to meet everyone's needs, and special guest speaker sessions added even more value. Many students left with not just better English, but with new confidence and information about parenting, further English study and job opportunities.

Well done to all the mums and little ones — and thank you to Our Place for providing such a fantastic space to learn and grow!

Article by: [Fran Conron, EAL Teacher](#)



Student reflections

“As a new immigrant with two children, I faced lots of challenges in understanding the accent of the people here. So, I planned to do this short-term English class through The Gordon. My teacher Fran taught me lots of information such as verb tenses, articles, vocab, phonetics and much more. Other than English, my teacher also taught me about career development, resume preparation, self-knowledge development and some life lessons too. Now I feel very confident, and I hope I can speak, write and understand much better than before. My soulful thanks to my teacher, The Gordon and Our Place, Korayn Birralelee Family Centre.”

Parent 1

“I came to Australia from Afghanistan in 2013. I decided to do this course because I want to learn English. In just six weeks, I learnt many things. It helped me a little bit more to explain myself when speaking and how to use a pen when writing. I enjoyed the class because it was close to my house, and I liked my teacher and the classroom. I thought the course was a little bit too short and I want to learn more. Some weeks were hard to attend because I had an appointment or my child was sick. If the course runs again, I would like the time to be a little bit longer and to do more writing.”

Parent 2



MyTime at Korayn Birralee: Peer Support for Parents, Building Connections

Parent participant Kylea engaging in the program

Since launching at the Korayn Birralee Family Centre in 2023, MyTime has become a valued source of peer support for local parents and carers.

MyTime is for parents and carers of children under the age of 18 who need a higher level of care than other children. This might be because of disability, chronic medical condition, or other additional needs including developmental delay. MyTime offers a safe, inclusive space to connect, share experiences, and access support and resources.

Sessions are led by a trained facilitator who guides discussions and link families to local services. While adults engage in conversations and group activities, a MyTime Play Leader engages preschool-aged children in meaningful play.

Starting with one group in the Geelong region, MyTime partnered with Our Place Northern Bay to launch a second group in Corio. Over three years, the Corio group has grown to an average of 10 participants weekly.

MyTime staff have helped raise awareness of the program by presenting at the Site Services Advisory Group and attending Site Engagement Blitzes, where they connect directly with families.

In Term 4, 2025, MyTime Corio received the Ace Award from Down Syndrome Victoria, recognising strong attendance and commitment to the program.

MyTime continues to grow as a trusted resource, helping families feel supported and connected.

To find out more about MyTime go to www.mytime.net.au or contact dianneh@dsav.asn.au.



"MyTime, Corio accredits its success to the strong, research based program it offers. The partnership with Our Place has ensured that we are given every opportunity to connect with a range of services that serve the community. The support from Our Place through promotion and recommendations has unquestionably contributed to our success."

Dianne Hickey - Facilitator

What's on in Term 2, 2025

Programs and services operating from Korayn Birralee Family Centre.

To keep up to date with programs and events go to:

www.ourplace.org.au/events/#northern-bay

www.facebook.com/OurPlaceNorthernBay

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
High-quality Early Learning and Schooling	Long Day Care, Kindergarten and School All day, on-site				
		Toy Library 9am - 10:30am Parent Pathways 9am - 10am Foyer (29 Apr - 27 May) Meli Playgroup – Dari Bicultural Support 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room		Toy Library 9am - 10:30am Storytime 9:10am - 9:30am Community Lounge Meli Playgroup – Karen Bicultural Support 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room	Meli Babies Playgroup 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room Toy Library 10:15am - 11:45am
	Chat with Corina – Group and Individual Karen Support 9am - 12pm Community Lounge Baby Yoga 10am - 11am Multipurpose Room (19 May - 16 Jun)	Give it a Go – Social Connection 1:30pm - 2:30pm Community Lounge	My Time Parent and Carers Group 9am - 11am Community Lounge (30 Apr - 25 Jun)	Coffee and Chat with Ben and Janice 9am - 9:30am Community Lounge (Fortnightly) Carers Connect 9:15am - 10:15am Community Lounge (Fortnightly)	
Wrap-around Health and Wellbeing	Early Help Family Support Consulting Rooms				
	Maternal and Child Health 8:30am - 4:30pm Consulting Rooms				
			Barwon Health Immunisation Clinic 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room		

