

# Our Place Quarterly Wrap

July 2024



**ourplace**  
Northern Bay

 **Northern Bay**  
College

  
CITY OF GREATER  
**GEELONG**

**MELI**

 **VICTORIA**  
State  
Government | Department  
of Education

 **VICTORIA**  
State  
Government | Families,  
Fairness  
and Housing

'Give it a Go' Sensory Play session.

# Welcome to the Our Place Northern Bay Quarterly Wrap of Term 2, 2024

The past 11 weeks have been a hive of activity at the site, with families actively participating in a variety of on-site services and programs. The introduction of new opportunities such as Yoga Play and the Give it a Go initiative, alongside the Envisage Families program, has seen an increase in community engagement. Established activities like Playgroup, are also recording consistently high attendance numbers.

The success of the Term 2 programs is largely attributed to the collaborative efforts of our partners. We would like to acknowledge and thank partners for their support and time in facilitating activities, reading at Storytime and participating in site activities like our Engagement Blitz.

These partners include:

- Best Start
- Bunnings
- Cloverdale Community House
- Corio Library
- Cultura
- GForce – Parents Next
- Kinship Carers Victoria

- Korayn Birralee
- Meli – Early Help
- Meli – NDIS Early Childhood
- Northern Bay College
- The Gordon Skills & Jobs Centre
- Victoria Police
- Wathaurong

Korayn Birralee has also welcomed a new Centre Manager, Janice Semple, in the last week of Term 2. Janice brings a wealth of experience to the role having managed a service for the past 15 years in Melbourne's West. If you come into Korayn Birralee, make sure you say hello!

The Our Place team encourages you to follow our [Facebook Page \(@ourplacenorthernbay\)](#) to keep up to date with site progress, programs, activities and events happening at Northern Bay or visit [ourplace.org.au/events](https://ourplace.org.au/events). You can also call in to say hello to Bec, Tanya and Karen at the Korayn Birralee Family Centre if you would like to discuss any partnership opportunities.



**Rebecca Hickey**  
Partnership Manager



**Tanya Kane**  
Community Facilitator



**Karen Butterworth**  
Community Facilitator



High-Quality  
Schooling

# Northern Bay College - Wexford Yarning Circle

Article by Ben McCredden, Wexford Campus Principal

## Construction of Wexford Campus Yarning Circle.



The students, families and staff are thrilled with Stage 1 of the Northern Bay College Wexford Yarning Circle. The Yarning Circle has been a collaborative effort between First Nations students, staff and a landscape designer. The students brainstormed the layout and materials of the Yarning Circle, as well as future stages, which will include native plant life, artwork and an information board.

All First Nations students and many families were involved in the official launch of the Yarning Circle early in Term 2. It has already been utilised by many classes for their morning Community Circle, as well as being a lovely place for students to sit and yarn during recess and lunch. We look forward to building on this foundation in future months.



# Babies Playgroup

## A mother playing with her children during Babies Playgroup.



In Term 4 2023, due to high demand and increasing numbers in both the Tuesday and Thursday playgroups, a third playgroup specifically for babies and their families was established in partnership with Meli.

Following discussions on-site with playgroup facilitators, Maternal and Child Nurses and some families, it was identified that there was a need for a specific playgroup that catered for babies and their parents and carers, that provided a supported transition from first time parents group to community activities.

After only a short period of time, this playgroup has now become a safe and welcoming space for parents and carers and their young babies to come together and play and learn in an environment that supports their development through age-appropriate experiences. It is also an opportunity for social connection and for parents and carers to share parenting tips and ideas with others who are in a similar situation.

The onsite Babies Playgroup runs on Friday mornings and continues to grow from strength to strength.

*"Babies Playgroup has been a wonderful opportunity for carers and their children up to 18 months to experience playgroup. Similar to a mother's group, it has also provided much-needed social connection for carers with shared learning around sleep settling, transition to solids and strategies with teething. The highlight was capturing some first steps!"*

Jen, Meli Playgroup Facilitator



Wrap-around  
Health and Wellbeing

# Services Survey

Jen and Hiba from Cultura delivering a professional development session to site staff and partners.



In Term 2, Our Place completed our third Services Survey with partners who deliver services at Korayn Birralee or to families in the area. The Services Survey helps to measure how well services are linking with each other, using warm referrals and engaging in collaborative practices. The learnings from the survey assists in identifying areas of progress and focus areas for improvement.

The survey found that over the past year, Playgroup and Maternal and Child Health were the most referred to services. Playgroup, Parenting Support and the Library were services the respondents were most familiar with. Employment support, Out of Hours School Care (OHSC), School Holiday programs and Disability services were the least familiar to respondents.

**87% of respondents indicated they had undertaken a warm referral in the past 12 months – a 37% increase since 2022.**

**60% of respondents rated the opportunity to be involved in shared professional development and cross collaboration on-site as be 'excellent'.**

Since conducting our first survey in 2021, there has been a number of initiatives put in place across the site to build awareness and share knowledge amongst services including:

- Convening a Site Services Advisory group to build familiarity and connection between services.
- A regular Engagement Blitz to build relationships between services and families.
- Establishment of a warm referral protocol to improve families' trust and engagement with services.
- Shared cross-service information sessions to improve knowledge and practice.
- Increased provision of services for children and families on-site.

Our Place over the next 12 months will continue to work with partners on being responsive to local needs and explore ways in which to build a service system which is coordinated and effective in line with our strategic priorities.



# Give it a Go

**Kristy from Wathaurong having a yarn with parent Dorthi.**



**Texture painting activity facilitated by Bunnings.**



## Give it a Go

Term 2 saw the introduction of our Give it a Go sessions, inspired by a similar concept from a community group in Western Australia.

Over the past year we have seen a decline in participation by parents and carers in the Tuesday Cuppa and Chat session. This session, open to all parents and carers, was a casual group run weekly where parents and carers were invited to join an Our Place staff member and other parents and carers for a chat and to socially connect.

The decline in participation prompted reflection on why the Cuppa and Chat sessions were not attracting more attendees, as well as new attendees. Several factors were identified, including uncertainty about attendance, social discomfort and the lack of a clear purpose for attending. Hence Give it a Go was introduced.

Each Tuesday, parents and carers are invited to participate in a new activity. These activities are supported by Our Place and delivered by community partners or parents from the site. This term Wathaurong, Corio Library, Meli, Bunnings and a site parent have all facilitated an activity.

## Benefits of Give it a Go:

**Conversation starters:** The structured activities provide natural conversation starters.

**Inclusivity:** By removing language barriers, the program becomes more accessible to all parents and carers.

**Interest-based engagement:** Offering a variety of activities ensures there's something of interest for everyone.

**Purposeful participation:** Participants engage with a purpose, whether through crafting, games or self-care.

A total of 73 parents and carers attended across the term, including 22 new participants who hadn't previously engaged in on-site activities.

We are excited to offer this program again for Term 3. If there are service providers who would like the opportunity to offer an activity and share information about their services with parents and carers, please contact Karen from Our Place at [karen@ourplace.org.au](mailto:karen@ourplace.org.au).



Engagement  
and Enrichment

# Yoga Play

Yoga Play mothers and children enjoying learning poses.



In Term 2, Yoga Play was delivered by Firefly Wellbeing on-site for four weeks. Supported by Meli, the initiative aimed to engage parents and carers in not only a program that encouraged physical wellbeing, but also an opportunity to participate in activities that promoted sharing and discussion about mindfulness and the parenting journey.

*“Each Monday in May we held a Yoga Play session which was an opportunity for our parents to come together and try yoga with their children. Some children chose to join in, some chose to climb on their mother’s back, it was delightful. Some comments from parents were “I feel better” and “I would come every week.”*

Jen, Early Help Practitioner

Over the four weeks, there was consistent attendance of between 8 and 13 mothers, with four of these being new to activities on the site.

## Feedback from participants: What did you enjoy most about the program?

*“The yoga and being in a safe space where I don’t have to stress about what my son is doing.”*

*“The structure, vibe and flow - how welcoming, encouraging and useful this has been.”*

*“Being able to stretch out, and learn something different.”*

*“Thank you to all the local families and service providers who supported our Yoga Play sessions in May. What a joy to see all the families play and explore through a range of mindful activities and yoga sequences. Yoga is such an adaptable, positive and inclusive form of exercise which promotes holistic wellbeing. From us at Firefly Wellbeing, thank you for your continued support.”*

Charlotte, Firefly Wellbeing

# What's on in Term 3

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](http://www.ourplace.org.au/events/#northern-bay)

[www.facebook.com/OurPlaceNorthernBay](https://www.facebook.com/OurPlaceNorthernBay)

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
High-quality Early Learning and Schooling	<b>Long Day Care, Kindergarten and School</b> All day, on-site				
		<b>Meli Playgroup – Dari Bicultural Support</b> 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room		<b>Storytime</b> 9:10am - 9:30am Community Lounge  <b>Meli Playgroup – Karen Bicultural Support</b> 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room	<b>Meli Babies Playgroup</b> 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room
Adult Engagement and Learning	<b>Chat with Corina – Group and Individual Karen Support</b> 9am - 12pm Community Lounge	<b>Give it a Go – Social Connection</b> 9am - 10am Community Lounge	<b>My Time Parent and Carers Group</b> 9am - 11am Community Lounge (17 Jul – 11 Sep)  <b>English Conversation</b> 9am - 9:30am Toy Library Space		<b>School Families Coffee and Chat</b> 9am - 9:30am Community Lounge (Fortnightly)  <b>Carers Connect</b> 9:15am - 10:15am Community Lounge (Fortnightly)
	<b>Early Help Family Support</b> Consulting Rooms				
Wrap-around Health and Wellbeing	<b>Maternal and Child Health</b> 8:30am - 4:30pm Consulting Rooms				
			<b>Barwon Health Immunisation Clinic</b> 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room	<b>Envisage Children's Therapy Services</b> 9:30am - 11am Meeting Room (8 Aug - 5 Sep)	