

Our Place Quarterly Wrap

October 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

Northern Bay Wexford Campus Assistant Principal Kate with prep students.

Welcome to the Our Place Northern Bay Quarterly Wrap of Term 3, 2024

Term 3 has been a busy period with significant engagement from parents and carers in various on-site programs and activities. We've seen a notable increase in participation in playgroup, 'pop up' play, and social programs.

We hope you enjoy this edition, where we share inspiring stories of parent leadership, highlight literacy initiatives across the site, and celebrate the exciting launch of our new toy library. Additionally, we feature insights from Our Place Director of Strategy, Frances Martin.

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

Seeking Your Feedback on The Quarterly Wrap

With nine editions of The Quarterly Wrap now under our belt, we're eager to hear from you! We want to know if you find this communication tool valuable and if there's any additional content or information you'd like to see.

Please take 2 minutes to click on the link below and complete a brief 4-question survey to help shape future editions of The Wrap.

[TAKE SURVEY HERE](#)



Rebecca Hickey
Partnership Manager



Karen Butterworth
Community Facilitator



Tanya Kane
Community Facilitator



The Glue

Message from Frances Martin, Director of Strategy



All hands-on deck – Frances reading at our weekly Storytime.



How does Our Place support our work?

A key part of the Our Place approach is [‘The Glue’](#) – the role Our Place staff play in bringing people and services together. Our team works behind the scenes to create warm referrals between services, share knowledge and build trust with families. This seamless connection, or ‘glue’, between the community, services and schools help everyone work more effectively and provides better outcomes for children and families.

We also work in long-term partnership with the City of Greater Geelong and the Victorian Government to support and authorise these new ways of working. Through these partnerships, we meet together as senior leaders to share information about the work happening in communities and advocate for change state-wide.

How did it all start, and which other communities are involved?

The Our Place approach is built on international evidence as well as learnings from Doveton College, which opened in 2012. Through our unique philanthropic-government partnership, the Our Place approach is now being adopted in nine Victorian communities for a period of ten years. There are Our Place sites in Carlton, Doveton, Morwell, Frankston North, Mooroopna, Seymour, Clayton South, Robinvale and, of course Corio. Our ambition is to demonstrate that this way of working can shift outcomes for children and families in all communities.

Where can I find out more?

Have a chat with Bec, Tanya or Karen, visit our website at ourplace.org.au, or drop me an email via frances@ourplace.org.au.

Hello Northern Bay!

As a frequent visitor to your wonderful community, I’m excited to contribute to this Quarterly Wrap to share how the Our Place approach at Northern Bay is part of an ambitious state-wide plan to reshape how children and families can be supported to achieve in education.

What is the Our Place approach?

The Our Place approach is built on the belief that integrated schools and early learning centres can enable children and families to thrive. In each site, communities benefit from wrap around support including maternal and child health, playgroups, early learning, schooling, and adult education. These services are overseen by place-based governance committees which enables them to align their work with the specific needs and aspirations of the local community.



Enhancing Language and Literacy Development at Our Place Northern Bay

Koorie Education Support Officer, Meagan, sharing wisdom, culture, language and connection to Country through stories & songs.

Visiting Westall Community Facilitator, Fatima, sharing her culture at a Bilingual Storytime in Thursday Playgroup.



A strategic priority for the Our Place Northern Bay partnership is to increase the participation of children in high-quality activities that promote and support language and literacy development. Here are some of the key initiatives happening across the site:

Language-rich Environment

The Continuity of Learning working group, which includes representatives from Northern Bay College – Wexford Campus P-2 Leadership, Korayn Birralee, Meli Supported Playgroup, and Our Place, has been focusing on creating a language-rich environment. In playgroup and the early years, this includes incidental learning through puzzles, books, and music. Additionally, the group emphasizes the importance of role-modelling and valuing parents as their child's first educator in the home.

Key Word Sign

Key Word Sign has been introduced in the Early Years space through professional development opportunities. This form of communication helps facilitate the development of speech and language, and promotes social interaction skills such as looking, listening, sharing, and turn-taking.

Early Literacy Focus

The focus on early literacy continues through various initiatives, including:

- **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library:** Kinder children at Korayn Birralee Family Centre are part of the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library book gifting program, supported through School Readiness Funding. This initiative ensures that all children have access to books.
- **123Read2Me:** Young people across the site have access to free books through the children's book charity 123Read2Me. Maternal Child Health nurses regularly hand out free books to families, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to develop a love for reading.
- **Weekly Storytime Sessions:** Featuring guest readers such as the school KESO, NBC leadership, student leaders, Meli, Corio Library, and the City of Greater Geelong.
- **Bilingual Storytime:** Promoting language diversity.
- **National Simultaneous Storytime:** Encouraging nationwide participation in reading.
- **Celebrations of Indigenous Literacy Day and Book Week:** Highlighting the importance of literacy in different cultures.



Toy Library to Launch in Term 4

New Toy Library volunteers Colleen and Kylie working to get all the toys ready.



Northern Bay College Student Leaders assisting with set up.



We are thrilled to announce a new partnership with Toy Well, Northern Bay College - Wexford Campus and Korayn Birralee, to open a Toy Library on site in term 4.

About Toy Well

Toy Well establishes volunteer-run, free toy lending services for children and families who may be experiencing social disadvantage, with funding support from the Department of Education, the Trawalla Foundation and the Besen Family Foundation. Toy Well partners with place-based organisations to locate toy libraries in locations that have a direct relationship with a primary school.

Toy Well Toy Libraries aim to:

- Provide more opportunities for children and their parents to engage in high-quality play-based learning at home, enhancing children's social, physical, cognitive and emotional skills, and improving school readiness.
- Educate parents about the importance of play-based learning for young children.
- Create a safe and enjoyable environment for families to meet, form friendships and develop support networks.

- Offer volunteer and work opportunities for parents to oversee the toy library.
- Serve as an entry point for families to engage with other social services co-located with the toy library.

To learn more about Toy Well and its operations, visit www.toywell.org.au.

Strategic Alignment and Volunteer Opportunities

The establishment of the Toy Library aligns with many of the strategic priorities of the Our Place partnership and will benefit families and children across the site.

We have recruited our first five Toy Library volunteers, who will undergo training in early October. The Toy Library is planned to open by the end of October 2024, operating on Tuesdays and Thursdays when Playgroup is in session.

We are keen to recruit more volunteers to ensure the toy library remains sustainable and accessible to families each week. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Tanya at tanya@ourplace.org.au.



Engagement Blitz: Supporting Families and Building Connections

Terri (Envisage), Nat (Leisure Networks), Tracey, Eh Blu and Maryam (Barwon Health Refugee Nursing Service) all taking part in the Term 3 Engagement Blitz.



Each term, Our Place facilitates an Engagement Blitz, bringing together service providers to support family engagement on site. This initiative aligns with our partnership's priority around 'Providing supporting families to assist them in their role as parents/carers'.

This year, the Engagement Blitz opportunities have been planned around the Our Place Elements - High-quality Early Learning; High-quality Schooling; Wrap-around Health and Wellbeing; Engagement and Enrichment for Children; and Adult Engagement and Learning.

The goal was to assist services to connect with families and showcase available community resources. It also provided an opportunity for services to connect with each other. The added benefit of introducing service providers to one another has been the creation of valuable connections and opportunities. Feedback from service providers has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Engagement Blitz has given us an opportunity to know more about what are the available services that the local communities are offering for the local people. This also created networking opportunities within different organisations and getting to know more about local services and sharing ideas."

Eh Blu, Barwon Health North

"Thank you so much for this opportunity, I met with so many lovely migrant people who have shown interest in my role and the work we are doing. Expectations were highly met with this pop-up stall."

Faiza, Migrant Workers Resource Centre

"I really enjoyed the networking conversations with Mental Health & Local Wellbeing and MELI. It was great to discuss ways we can interact together to break down the barriers of exercise. From this, we are looking to discuss further program opportunities we can partner with to support this."

Nat, Leisure Network

During the week, 111 parents and carers and 35 children (who participated in the City of Greater Geelong 'have your say' promotion) connected with services, and 31 professional network opportunities were identified.

We look forward to our Term 4 Engagement Blitz, which will focus on the Our Place Element of High-Quality Schooling.



Parent Leadership: Empowering Voices and Building Community

Parents Faiza and Dorthi sharing their skills and knowledge with others during Tuesday's 'Give it a Go' session.



Since the inception of Give it a Go earlier this year, we have witnessed an organic connection forming among parents and carers. Give it a Go offers parents and carers the chance to try new activities each week and meet others in a friendly, welcoming and supportive environment and socialise together. Conversations are flowing, friendships are forming and confidence in parenting capacity is building.

Through these rich discussions, we are learning more about the parents and carers such as their likes, hobbies, interests and skill sets. As a result of these incidental discussions, several parents have volunteered their skills and facilitated sessions, including henna painting, Zumba classes, flower dough sculpting and key chain making. These activities not only allow parents and carers to try new skills but also provide opportunities to learn

about different cultures, traditions and the diverse countries our families come from. Some activities are new to families, sparking genuine interest, keen discussions and questions from participants. We have witnessed connections, laughter, genuine support, and rich learning opportunities in this wonderful program.

The benefits of community coming together and supporting one another have been widespread. We continue to see parents and carers sharing ideas, offering support and connecting on many levels. Several parents have already offered their skills for our Term 4 Give it a Go sessions.

We hope that the benefits of stepping up and volunteering will lead to further opportunities for growth and development within our community here at Our Place.



Engaging School Holiday Activities: A Year in Review

Children having fun during the Reclink School Holiday Soccer Program.



Over the past 12 months, Our Place, in partnership with Meli Early Help, has been providing two free school holiday activities during each term break to engage children and families. This initiative was developed out of feedback from parents and carers who expressed the challenges they faced during school holidays when regular programs like playgroup, kindergarten and social connection activities were on hold. They were often looking for opportunities to connect and for low-cost or free activities to occupy their children.

Recognising this need, Our Place and Meli Early Help saw an opportunity to align these activities with key site priorities, ensuring children had access to programs that promote and support their physical, social and emotional development.

In collaboration with Firefly Wellbeing, AFL Victoria, Urban Upcycle and Reclink, we have successfully conducted eight school holiday activities, attracting 103 children and their parents/carers.

The sessions included a variety of activities, including:

- Bubble Art
- Football Clinic
- Messy Play
- Mindful Art
- Pop-up Play
- Soccer Clinic
- Upcycled Art

These activities not only provided a platform for children and families to connect and engage in recreational and craft activities but also allowed Our Place and Meli to reach new families who had not previously participated in other site programs and activities.

The feedback from participants has been positive. Parents and carers appreciated the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities with their children during the school holidays. Moving forward, we will continue to explore ways to collaborate with partners to offer supportive and engaging experiences for families during term breaks.

What's on in Term 4

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				
		Meli Playgroup – Dari Bicultural Support 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room	Pop Up Play 2:30pm – 3:15pm Multipurpose Room	Storytime 9:10am - 9:30am Community Lounge	Meli Babies Playgroup 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room
Adult Engagement and Learning	Chat with Corina – Group and Individual Karen Support 9am - 12pm Community Lounge	Give it a Go – Social Connection 9am - 10am Community Lounge	My Time Parent and Carers Group 9am - 11am Community Lounge (9 Oct – 4 Dec)		School Families Coffee and Chat 9am - 9:30am Community Lounge (Fortnightly)
	Yoga Play 10am - 11am Multipurpose Room		English Conversation 9am - 9:30am Toy Library Space		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		