

# Our Place Quarterly Wrap

December 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

Sensory play fun during Children's Week provided by Meli.

# Thank you for an incredible year!

As Term 4 comes to an end, the Our Place team would like to take this opportunity to thank our incredible partners for their continued support and commitment to working groups on site, as well as for contributing to the various programs, activities and services that benefited children and families throughout 2024.

Over the past 12 months, we've witnessed a significant increase in participation across playgroups, school holiday activities and social connection initiatives for parents and carers. This growing engagement reflects the strength of our partnerships and commitment to creating a thriving and supportive community.

Looking ahead to 2025, our focus remains on improving educational outcomes for children through collaboration with our partners. Together, we aim to deliver impactful strategies aligned with our three key site priorities:

1. Children access support for healthy development and wellbeing.
2. Children engage and connect to high-quality learning.
3. Parents and carers are confident, capable, and connected.

We are keen to continue working collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for children and families in the Corio area. If you would like to explore partnership opportunities in 2025, we'd love to hear from you! Feel free to drop by and say hello to Bec, Tanya and Karen at the Korayn Birrale Family Centre or contact Bec directly at [rebecca@ourplace.org.au](mailto:rebecca@ourplace.org.au).

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/events](https://ourplace.org.au/events).

The Our Place team wishes all our partners a safe and restful holiday break and we look forward to reconnecting in 2025!



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**Rebecca Hickey**  
Partnership Manager



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**Karen Butterworth**  
Community Facilitator



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**Tanya Kane**  
Community Facilitator





# Governance



## Introducing David Moar, Site Partnership Group Chair

Manager – Planning and Implementation Branch Barwon Area  
Department of Education

Hello Korayn Birralee and Northern Bay College!

I have been lucky enough to be involved with Our Place since its inception at Northern Bay College in 2019 and have been involved in the planning of the early years space and connection with the Wexford Campus of Northern Bay College.

I have also had a strong connection with the community, having previously worked at the Corio Bay Senior College, of what is now the Goldsworthy Campus.

The journey of Our Place has taken some time to achieve what can be seen today, with many parts needing to come together even before the Our Place team became part of the community. Initial discussion with Northern Bay College and the City of Greater Geelong to first support, plan and build Korayn Birralee took place, with particular attention being paid to how a shared entry to the centre and the school could be achieved.

While the facility was being built, planning was underway to determine what and how it would be delivered on the site, and how the school and Early Years centre could work together to support children in Corio to achieve their potential, while supporting parents and carers. This involved many community, school and agencies consultation, forums and feedback sessions, so we as a Site Partnership Group could focus on delivering what the community wanted and needed.

However all the planning in the world could not predict COVID, so unfortunately our plans to launch the site were put on hold for almost two years. However, over the past two years we have seen the partnerships between the school, early years' service, government departments and community agencies thrive.

We meet regularly to ensure the Our Place partnership is responding to what the community needs and are always seeking feedback to ensure the support provided at the site is aligned with the aspirations of the community and is improving outcomes for children and families.



# Engagement Blitz

## WHAT IS IT?

Each term, for one week, local service providers are invited to set up at the entrances of Korayn Birralee Family Centre and Northern Bay College, Wexford Campus, each morning.

Representatives from Our Place and other local services are on hand to connect with parents and carers, offering informal chats, information, flyers, and answers to questions.

This is a valuable opportunity to learn about services and activities at Our Place Northern Bay and in the wider community, while also promoting networking and collaboration among local services.

## OBJECTIVES




- Build strong relationships and rapport with local community members.
- Help parents and carers become more aware of local services and programs.
- Empower parents and carers to express their needs within the community.
- Expand networking opportunities among local services.
- Boost participation in community programs and services.



## 22 SERVICES INVOLVED

- Barwon Community Legal Service
- Barwon Health - Refugee Health Clinic
- City of Greater Geelong:
  - Best Start
  - CALD Outreach
  - Community Engagement Team
  - Family Day Care
  - Maternal & Child Health
- Cloverdale Community Centre
- Corio Library
- Corio Little Athletics Club
- Cultura
- Envisage
- G- Force
- Leisure Networks
- Meli
- Mental Health & Wellbeing Local
- Migrant Workers Centre
- MyTime
- Norlane ARC
- Orange Door
- Services Australia
- The Gordon Jobs & Skills Centre

## INTERACTIONS

BRIEF (HELLO HOW ARE YOU?)		312
MEANINGFUL (CONVERSATIONS LONGER THAN A FEW MINUTES)		97
PROFESSIONAL (NETWORKING OPPORTUNITY)		69

It is always very valuable to have the space and time to chat with participants and see how the library can suit them. The pacing and relaxed style of the blitz are to our advantage in this regard.

I found the Engagement Blitz to be extremely beneficial in understanding the supports I can provide to my clients. Connecting on this level offers so much core value .

I had some great conversations where I was able to provide information about our services.



# Q & A with the Continuity of Learning Working Group

The Continuity of Learning working group was first established in May 2022. Comprised of staff from Our Place, Northern Bay College, Korayn Birralee and the Meli Early Help team, the group meets twice each term to collaborate and share insights.

The group's work aligns with the objectives outlined in the Our Place Site Implementation Plan, which focuses on:

- Enhancing continuity in learning environments for children.

- Building professional practice bridges to ensure consistent pedagogy between early learning settings and primary school.

In term 4 2022, we asked the members of the working group a set of questions to gather their perspectives on the work happening in this space. Now two years later, the group is revisiting these questions to reflect on progress.

**Meg Cole, Prep Learning Community Leader - Wexford Campus**

**Carol Lymer, P-2 Learning Community Leader - Wexford Campus**



*What is some of the common ground you have identified in the Early Learning and school setting through being part of the COL working group?*

Building an environment where the language and space is consistent throughout the site. Students are building establishing routines and structures that will support them when moving from the Early Learning setting into a school setting. An example of this is the use of the Berry Street tools; brain breaks, focus plans, mindfulness, ready to learn scales, etc.

*What is one practical outcome that has occurred from being part of the COL working group?*

A shared understanding of the work that is taking place across both settings. It is through this partnership that we are able to share and celebrate the amazing work that is happening across the site.

*What are some of the benefits identified for children because of the COL working group?*

Students have shown great readiness when attending school visits and transition sessions. It is obvious that school learning behaviours have been a focus in the Early Learning classrooms. Teachers also found scheduled Early Learning visits extremely purposeful as they were able to connect and communicate with Early Learning staff to gain a deeper understanding about the children and their environment.

*Moving forward in 2025 what do you see as priorities for the group to work on for the site?*

The continuity of assessment is still an area that we can build upon and consolidate into 2025. It is a big space that continues to evolve. It would be extremely beneficial to work together to ensure our assessment practices align and compliment what is currently happening in both the Early Learning and school settings.



**Janice Semple, Centre Manager -  
Korayn Birralee Family Centre**

**Marlies Spendier -  
Family Services Early Help Worker**



*What is some of the common ground you have identified in the Early Learning and school setting through being part of the COL working group?*

Working together in partnership to mentor, learn from each other and achieve the same goals within the group and how we can use this information to achieve for the service.

*What is one practical outcome that has occurred from being part of the COL working group?*

Working collaboratively together to achieve the best outcomes for the children, staff and stakeholders.

*What are some of the benefits identified for children because of the COL working group?*

Working and sharing ideas with everyone who is involved within the working group and exploring shared themes and how we can combine these into everyone's teaching practices.

*Moving forward in 2025 what do you see as priorities for the group to work on for the site?*

To integrate practical tools and suggestions from the teachers in the school and Long Day Care staff and explore these tools within the group e.g. numeracy activities, STEM activities. Also involve the other educators / families from the service to be involved in the COL working group, and invite other professionals as guest speakers.

*What is some of the common ground you have identified in the Early Learning and school setting through being part of the COL working group?*

The empathy and care we have for the families and the understanding of the adversities and challenges the families face every day. That all of the learning goals and experiences; numeracy, literacy and emotional development can be modified for the benefit of young babies right through to primary age, and that we can all contribute in our separate programs to address the same goals and outcomes for children and families.

*What is one practical outcome that has occurred from being part of the COL working group?*

To be able to speak with young families about the long day care, kindergarten and school with more confidence while understanding the programs and knowing the people who work in those spaces.

*What are some of the benefits identified for children because of the COL working group?*

The children being exposed to teaching practices from early years through to school. For example, while reading a book pointing and giving intentional meaning, saying "this is a letter, this is a word, this is a picture."

*Moving forward in 2025 what do you see as priorities for the group to work on for the site?*

Keep sharing the wins and the outcomes as they drive the passion for the COL working group.



# Children's Week 2024 – Happy Healthy Kids Day

Hayley from Wathaurong facilitating cultural activities



Edible Art Session



In line with this year's Children's Week theme – 'Children have the right to a clean and safe environment', Happy Healthy Kids Day was organised as an onsite event to celebrate children in the context of their local community.

With assistance from a City of Greater Geelong Children's Week grant, we were able to provide a music and movement experience facilitated by Larissa's Imaginarium Project, as well as an Edible Art activity provided by Firefly Wellbeing.

Alongside this, services from the area provided activities such as a sensory garden, ochre painting, mindful colouring, badge making, games and giveaways around water safety, a pop-up library, a quiet area for babies and much more. Whilst engaging with children was the priority, organisations were also able to speak to families about the services they offer, as well as network with other service providers in the space.

Our Place would like to give particular thanks to Meli Family Services, Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative, GForce ParentsNext, Barwon Water, Corio Library, the City of Greater Geelong and Northern Bay College for their active participation and collaborative efforts in making the day the success that it was.

A special mention must also be made to our NBC year 7 and 8 student leaders who helped out on the day by welcoming people into the space, handing out stickers, free books and fruit cups and seeking feedback from participants on what they most enjoyed about the day. In turn, this question was also asked of the students.

*"My favorite was definitely giving back to the community and seeing the smiles on the kids and parents faces and how you guys have given us this amazing opportunity and we thank you so much."*

Student Leader





# Meet our Toy Library Volunteers

The Toy Library at Our Place Northern Bay, located within the Korayn Birrale Family Centre, is now open and has been running throughout Term 4.

This wonderful initiative wouldn't be possible without the dedication of our amazing volunteers. We were curious to learn what inspired them to get involved, what they hope to gain from the experience, and how they view the Toy Library's benefits for the community

**Kylie**



*Why did you decide to become a Toy Library Volunteer and what do you hope to get out of the experience?*

To give back to the community and also to do something for myself.

*What are the benefits of the Toy Library for our community?*

It is an inexpensive way for families to be able to loan toys they would maybe not purchase due to the child outgrowing or losing interest quickly and it also allows the children to explore a variety of toys that helps with their fine and gross motor skills.

**Sharon**



*Why did you decide to become a Toy Library Volunteer and what do you hope to get out of the experience?*

I was looking for a way to use my skills as a former early childhood educator to help the community and local families understand the importance of play.

*What are the benefits of the Toy Library for our community?*

The library offers all families the opportunity for their young children to have access to quality educational toys that provide a fun way for them to share their sense of wonder and joy with their parents/caregivers. It also provides volunteers a way to be involved in their local community as well as develop skills they may use in future endeavours.



Colleen



Alana



*Why did you decide to become a Toy Library Volunteer and what do you hope to get out of the experience?*

After being in childcare for 25 years and now retired, I was missing the interaction with children and parents.

*What are the benefits of the Toy Library for our community?*

The Toy Library gives parents and children the opportunity to explore new and different toys, without the cost.

*Why did you decide to become a Toy Library Volunteer and what do you hope to get out of the experience?*

Volunteering at the Toy Library enables me to bring my child along and provides a great opportunity for him to socialise and learn the value of community involvement. I am also enjoying the opportunity to socialise and give back to my local community in a small way.

*What are the benefits of the Toy Library for our community?*

The Toy Library is a great opportunity for local parents/carers to access developmentally appropriate toys for children. It prevents excess toys going to landfill and enables all children to have access to quality toys which may otherwise be unaffordable for some families. The Toy Library is also a great base for social connection for families and opens up referral pathways to other services and activities with the centre and local community.



# Join us at Korayn Birralelee Family Centre

## Consult Room spaces available for hire



### Key Benefits

- **Integrated Health and Wellbeing Services:** Join a site already offering essential services like maternal and child health, allied health and family wellbeing through the school platform.
- **Streamlined, Family-Centered Approach:** At Korayn Birralelee Family Centre services work together to coordinate and support each family's journey, ensuring they feel valued and respected.
- **Warm Referrals and Trusted Connections:** Our warm referral protocols enable smooth connections across services, increasing families' confidence and access to the support they need.
- **Available Spaces:** Korayn Birralelee has fully furnished consultation rooms available for both short and long-term hire, providing an ideal environment for service providers looking to connect with families.



Our Place, in partnership with the Korayn Birralelee Family Centre (managed by the City of Greater Geelong), is eager to increase service offerings at the site. A key feature of the Our Place approach is the provision on site of 'Wrap-around Health and Wellbeing Services'.

We invite service providers to join this vibrant, integrated community hub, offering a unique opportunity to enhance health and wellbeing support for local families. Our shared aim is to achieve meaningful outcomes for children, families and the broader community where they feel welcome, safe and supported.

### Why deliver services at Korayn Birralelee Family Centre

Operating within an integrated site allows for valuable relationship-building with families and other providers, collaborative networking, and meaningful family engagement. Together, we can offer direct, responsive services for families.

To learn more or arrange a tour of the consultation spaces, please contact Janice Semple, Korayn Birralelee Family Centre Manager at [janice.semple@geelongcity.vic.gov.au](mailto:janice.semple@geelongcity.vic.gov.au).



# What's on in Term 1, 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](http://www.ourplace.org.au/events/#northern-bay)

[www.facebook.com/OurPlaceNorthernBay](http://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>Pop Up Play</b> 2pm – 3pm 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 (5 Feb – 2 Apr)		<b>School Families Coffee and Chat</b> 9am - 9:30am Community Lounge (Fortnightly)
					<b>Carers Connect</b> 9:15am - 10:15am Community Lounge (Fortnightly)
Wrap-around Health and Wellbeing	<b>Early Help Family Support</b> Consulting Rooms				
	<b>Maternal and Child Health</b> 8:30am - 4:30pm Consulting Rooms				
			<b>Barwon Health Immunisation Clinic</b> 9:30am - 11:30am Multipurpose Room		