

# INSIDE GOSSIP

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE KOOLOORA COMMUNITY

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Wishing you a truly wonderful holiday season filled with peace and love!

The past few months have seen the return to the normal modes of service delivery throughout the community sector. After long months of lockdowns, increased safety measures and restrictions, the second half of this year had the perfect conditions for a very busy end of the year. The demand for Kooloora's service has been steady, particularly our food security and the power bills programs. We are already seeing that the increasing costs of living are starting to bite. Unfortunately the raising prices affect the most disadvantaged households first and the most.

We can say that despite the chronic underfunding, Kooloora is well positioned for any challenges that the new year may bring. We are with the community for good or bad. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

This newsletter was printed as courtesy of Randwick Council printing service.



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## Top 10 Christmas poison risks for children

A special Christmas message from Elf on the shelf and NSW Poisons Information Centre; be aware of our top 10 poisoning risks this Christmas.

- 1. Button batteries** - Button Batteries are found in a wide variety of everyday products, and with Christmas cards, gifts, and decorations around, they are even more likely to be found by young children. Button Batteries range in size from as small as a few millimetres, to as large as a 10 cent coin, and are found in all sorts of products including toys, TV remotes, watches, calculators, flashing decorations, flameless candles, reading lights, blood glucose monitors and kitchen scales.
- 2. Alcohol** - A drink at Christmas can be a nice way to celebrate or relax during this holiday season, but it can be harmful to children if ingested. It is not uncommon for a child to mistake an alcoholic drink for apple juice, water or a "lolly" drink, especially after lunch when parents are having a well-earned rest. Alcohol can be more toxic in young children, so make sure to be responsible this festive season and not leave any alcoholic drinks lying around.
- 3. BBQ cleaning products** - Cleaning the BBQ or oven for Christmas lunch can pose several risks as these cleaning products contain strong chemicals that can cause serious burns. When using these products, make sure to wear gloves and consider wearing eye protection to minimise risks.
- 4. Grandpa's medications** - Grandparents will bring their medications and are not used to keeping them locked away from little people, increasing the risk of accidental exposure to a child. Taking a medication that has not been prescribed can cause poisoning, and as little as one tablet of some medicines can be life threatening in a toddler. Remind all visitors to keep medications stored in an area out of reach of children.
- 5. Borax for slime projects** - Making slime can be a fun holiday activity with the kids, however it can involve the use of borax which can be potentially poisonous. To prevent poisonous exposures it is important to keep borax stored out of reach of children. An adult should be the only person to handle the pure borax powder and supervise all slime making activities.
- 6. Sixpence Christmas pudding** - One of the many Christmas traditions is the discovery of a coin in your Christmas pudding to bring good luck, health, wealth and happiness to the recipient. The traditional use of a sixpence coin does not contain copper, however use of a copper containing coin can react with the acids in the fruit pudding causing green discolouration which will ruin the dessert. Another major concern with this dessert is choking on or swallowing the coin, which can cause other health concerns. It is best to warn everyone eating the dessert than coins may be in their piece, and to avoid giving any to children.
- 7. Food poisoning** - With many celebrations during this festive season it is important to consider preparation, storage and cooking methods when serving up your Christmas feast. Whilst food poisoning can occur at any time of the year, there is an increase in incidence during summer as conditions are favourable for bacteria growth. If food is stored, prepared and cooked properly, the risk will be minimal.
- 8. Pool chemicals** - With a warm Christmas day forecast backyard pools are likely to be in full use putting pool maintenance high on the to-do list. Pool maintenance products contain various chemicals many of which can cause irritation, burns or respiratory symptoms if ingested, inhaled or they come in contact with the skin or eyes.
- 9. Science chemistry sets** - Science chemistry sets can be an exciting holiday experiment for a child but certain ingredients can pose poisoning concerns when ingested or handled incorrectly.
- 10. Toy magnets** - Many children's toys contain magnets. Swallowing magnets may cause life threatening damage, particularly when they are attracted to one another across internal tissues such as the bowel. Ideally any magnets in toys should be too large for a child to swallow, and activities involving magnets (and children) should be supervised. To avoid ingestion of magnets, they should be counted on completion of play to ensure none are missing, and stored out of reach of children.

For immediate 24/7 advice on potential poisoning risks, contact the Poisons Centre immediately on 131126.

Source: CPR Kids <https://www.cprkids.com.au/2021/12/07/can-you-guess-the-top-10-christmas-poison-risks/>

## KOOLOORA VACATION CARE

The September / October Vacation Care program operated for nine days from the 26th September to the 7th October, 2022. Our enrolment numbers were fantastic with more than 30 children on most days. Our biggest day was Thursday 6th of October with 44 children on the roll for our Spooks and Spells day. During the two weeks we also enjoyed 4 excursion days with full access to the Randwick Council Bus which is in great thanks to David Seelin who coordinated this for us. We enjoyed excursions to Chifley Park, The Bryan Brown Theatre, Sydney Zoo and Putt Planet plus, our in-centre days which were a lot of fun; Looking after our environment with Aunty Maxine, Sports Carnival, You Can't Stop Us Playing, Spooks and Spells and a Zumba Dance incursion.

As I head off on maternity leave and will not be at Kooloora for the January Program, I would like to extend a warm welcome to Chantelle Dallas and Rachel Hewish who joined our team these holidays. Their professionalism and warm nature with our community has been wonderful and we really appreciate their agreeance to continue to support the staff

in January in leadership roles. A big thank you as always to Annette, Nina, Kim and Charm who always work extremely hard to support all children and families. The program would not run as smoothly as it does without their dedication and love of the children and families. Thank you also to Kooloora Community Centre and Randwick Council for their continued support of the vacation care program as together we honour our mission statement :

*"To provide 5 – 14 year olds in the local community with childcare services during the school holidays which are enjoyable, at their interest level and safe."*



-Nicole Arathoon

## Before and After School Care Voucher extended!

Families with children aged 4 to 13 years that attend a primary school in NSW can receive a \$500 voucher per child to reduce the out-of-pocket costs of before and after school care. This includes children who are starting kindergarten in 2023.

A voucher can be:

- redeemed with a before and after school care provider until 31 January 2023 (voucher credit can be used for services until 30 June 2023)
- used on any weekday during the school term, or on days of the week when vacation care is provided during the redemption period.

You can apply for a voucher until 31 January 2023 for each eligible child online or at a [Service NSW Centre](#).

**Note:** If you applied for a voucher for a child from February to September 2022, you cannot apply for another voucher for the same child from December 2022 to 31 January 2023.

### Eligibility:

Your child must be:

- a resident of NSW
- aged between 4 and 13 years
- enrolled in a primary school in NSW
- listed on a valid Medicare card.

**Note:** You can apply for one voucher per child, provided each child meets the eligibility criteria.

### Voucher eligibility

Each voucher must be used:

- towards the cost of childcare for schoolchildren at participating and approved early childhood providers of before and after school care and vacation care
- for out-of-pocket gap fee expenses after the Child Care Subsidy portion has been applied
- for one child only (vouchers are not transferrable to another child or third party)
- in a single transaction with one provider
- by 31 January 2023 (voucher credit can be used for services until 30 June 2023).  
Vouchers cannot be refunded, transferred or redeemed for any activities such as excursions or extra-curricular programs that have a cost associated with them outside of standard fees.

Source: Service NSW

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-basc-voucher>



What better way to end the year than a water gun fight party! The kids (and adults) had so much fun chasing each other with their water blasters. This would not have been possible if it weren't for the generous donation of The Seekers. Their donation abled us to buy toys and food for the children.

As we say goodbye to another year, we would like to say thank you to all the families who supported us this year. It was not always easy but it was always worth it. Seeing the children's smile, actively playing, making new friends, learning to eat a new dish, sharing and caring for one another—these are the highlights of my Monday afternoon. I love seeing the children grow in to unique individuals. Thank you to all the parents who trusted us with their children. I hope to see you all in the new year. —Charm

## Back to School NSW Vouchers

The Back to School NSW Vouchers program will provide 3 x \$50 vouchers, totalling \$150 for each eligible child.

The vouchers can be used:

- towards the cost of school uniforms, shoes, bags, textbooks and stationery
- at registered businesses
- before 30 June 2023.

Applications open in December 2022.

### Parents, guardians and carers

You'll be able to apply for vouchers if your child is:

- a NSW resident
- enrolled in a government or non-government school, or registered for homeschooling, in 2023
- listed on a valid Medicare card.

#### *Eligible items*

Businesses can only accept Back to School NSW Vouchers for the purchase of:

- school uniforms, including shoes, socks, hats and sport uniforms
- school bags
- lunch boxes
- drink bottles
- umbrellas and/or raincoats
- school-prescribed textbooks, books or other reading material
- lesson resources and tools, such as art diaries, major work materials, elective subject resources and protective equipment for science classes
- equipment for school sports and art programs
- stationery, including exercise books, pens and pencils, coloured pencils, crayons, markers, highlighters, erasers, glue, scissors, calculators, geometry sets, pencil cases, rulers, pencil sharpeners.

#### *Ineligible items*

The vouchers **cannot** be:

- redeemed for any other products or services exchanged for cash, gift vouchers or a credit note from the business.

Source: Service NSW website



#### VEGED OUT DATES FOR 2023:

February:	4, 18
March:	4, 18
April:	1, 29
May:	13, 27
June:	10, 24
July:	22
August:	5, 19
September:	2, 16
October:	14, 28
November:	11, 25
December:	9

Thank you to everyone who continuously support Kooloora's Food Program. Thank you to all our volunteers who work tirelessly to provide quality and affordable food to the community.

If you are interested to purchase a bag, please send an email to [koolooracomunity@outlook.com](mailto:koolooracomunity@outlook.com) or call 02 9661 9160.

## EAPA DATES FOR 2023

Our EAPA team's last day to assist clients with their energy bills will be on Tuesday, 20th of December. They will take a short break and will be back on Tuesday, 10 January 2023.

We can still continue to assist during the January school holidays but all assessments will be done over the phone as the centre is closed for Vacation Care. If you need assistance with your bill, please send a copy of your bill to us via email along with a copy of your photo ID and your mobile number.

If your bill is due, please call your energy provider and let them know you are getting help from Kooloora so they can extend your due date.

For more information, please check our website [www.kooloora.org](http://www.kooloora.org)

If you are finding it difficult to put food on your table, we have donated fruits and veggies and cooked meals throughout the week.

During this time of uncertainty, we would like to give priority to vulnerable members of the community who are having a hard time getting access to basic food supply. If you know someone who might need food and could not go to the grocery, please let us know.

If you are interested to receive a text reminder from us, please call us or come to the centre and give your name and mobile number. You may reach Kooloora on 0481 756 759 or email [koolooracomunity@outlook.com](mailto:koolooracomunity@outlook.com)



# Annual General Meeting and Kooloora Christmas Party 2022

We crowned this year with our Annual General Meeting and with the inevitable tasty lunch for our end of the year celebration. Auntie Maxine opened the day with Welcome to Country speech.

Representatives from Randwick Council and from the Department of Communities and Justice were in attendance. Mayor Dylan Parker spoke to the guests and marked the significance of Kooloora for the community.

Our President Geoff Cook conveyed the meeting and our Management Committee was confirmed for this year. We thank Randwick Council and the Community Development Team for the funding for this event and for their ongoing support.





In the past year myself and community members have worked on mulching the garden due to the excessive amounts of rain. This has been thanks to a local arborist who has donated in kind mulch and logs for seating.



We are using sustainable practices in regards to building better soil for the raised beds. Wasted resources (e.g cardboard) from Kooloora as well as available green resources already in the garden are used for laying garden beds. This is a process and can be taught to anyone who wants to work in the garden.



I was fortunate to gain approval for a small grant from Randwick Council's Community Creative funding.

For 6 months from October 2022-March 2023 "Creating Spaces" is a monthly creative activity in the garden. The most recent activity has been coiled basket weaving using natural fibres from the garden. We have also been making fencing utilising materials from fallen branches and sticks in the garden.



We have linked with Community Greening very recently and are looking forward to their assistance with our efforts in local LAHC's properties where sustainable Community Gardens are situated in Bilga Cres Malabar.



I am a member of the Woodturners and this helps with accessing tools/equipment necessary for making plant ID signage from recycled/repurposed wood.

By Angela Nashaat

## Kingsford Legal Centre outreach at Kooloora

Kingsford Legal Centre (KLC) is a free community legal service that helps people in the Kooloora community. KLC gives free legal help to people who live, work or study in the Randwick and Botany Bay local government areas in NSW.

A KLC lawyer comes to Kooloora every fortnight on a Tuesday between 1pm – 3pm during school terms. KLC can provide legal advice on things like fines, debts, domestic violence, housing problems, victim's compensation, criminal law, employment law, discrimination law, and many other things. If you need help with something that KLC can't do, then the lawyer will help you find another service that can help you.

KLC's lawyers and students have helped many people at Kooloora with a range of legal issues. For example, we advised a client at the Centre about how to recover towing fees from a motor vehicle accident. The client had another car crash into her vehicle from behind and was given an invoice for a large amount of money to have her car towed to a car repair company. We gave the client advice and helped her draft a letter of demand to the other party in the matter, demanding that they pay the cost of the towing fees.

To get help from KLC you can just drop into Kooloora every second Tuesday from 1-3pm (during school terms). You can also book an appointment to see a KLC lawyer at Kooloora or at KLC's office by calling KLC on 02 9385 9566, or email [legal@unsw.edu.au](mailto:legal@unsw.edu.au).

Important Notice: KLC Centre will be closed from the afternoon of the 20th December until 2nd of January 2023. If you need legal advice during this time, please give LAW Access a call on 1300 888 529.

## Centrelink public holiday closures, reporting and payment arrangements

Centrelink is closed during the following dates:

- Monday 26 December 2022
- Tuesday 27 December 2022
- Wednesday 28 December 2022.
- Monday 2 January 2023.

You can use your Centrelink online account through myGov to:

- Report your income.
- View your reporting dates for the next 12 weeks.
- Change some of your appointments.
- Apply for an advance payment.
- Request a document.

You can also use Express Plus mobile apps and phone self-service.

You can still report your income to Centrelink, even when they are closed. However, if you do this on a public holiday Centrelink will pay you after the public holiday.

You can view your reporting dates 12 weeks in advance online. You can do this in your Centrelink online account through myGov or the Express Plus Centrelink app.

If you don't have one, you can create a myGov account. You can still report your income to Centrelink, even when they are closed.

See also: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/public-holiday-reporting>

## Kooloora's Christmas Closure



The last day of office will be on 21st of December 2022.

Programs and services will resume on Monday, Monday, 30 January 2023.

Vacation Care will be from 03-20 January 2023

Please check our website for any changes in schedule during the holidays.