



ANNUAL REPORT 2024





Kooloorra & Soldiers Settlement
Community Centres Inc.
ABN 12 466 032 742

Kooloorra Community Centre receives its core funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and is supported by NSW Land and Housing Corporation. Kooloorra Community Centre also receives significant support from Randwick City Council.

Kooloorra is a grass roots organisation addressing the needs of people living in Randwick City Council's South Ward.

Our programs reflect strong working relationships with our partners: Department of Communities and Justice, Randwick City Council, The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Prince of Wales Community Health, Housing NSW, Second Bite, Kingsford Legal Centre, Sydney Children's Hospital, Playgroups NSW and others to support the community through professional services and targeted programs.

These programs include Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme, Supported Playgroup, Vacation Care, Kids Zone, Fruit and Veg Coop, Gentle Exercises, Second Bite, Fitness for Seniors, Kingsford Legal Centre free legal advice etc. Kooloorra communities rely on these partnerships to provide a comprehensive, inclusive and relevant service operating from a premise of sound social justice principles.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Boo Teong Khoo | *President*

Felicita De Guzman | *Vice President*

Paul Compton | *Secretary*

Jo Bowen | *Treasurer*

Ron Harris

Pearl Smith

Jenny Kelly

Geoff Cook

Gillian Collinson

Maria Pantelis



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to Koolooro Community Centre's Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2024. Everyone who is here today and every member of our Community Centre have contributed, supported, and made Koolooro what it is today: a place you can call "home" where you have a place and are always welcome.

As a Community Centre, we champion acceptance, environmental concern, professionalism, reconciliation, and social justice. We aim to make everyone welcome, regardless of race, creed, sexuality, culture, or age group. We acknowledge and encourage the abilities and talents of all. We stand with the marginalized and the vulnerable members of society so that everyone has a space in our community.

I encourage everyone to read our AGM report from the Minutes, Treasurer, Manager, Programs, Partners, Events, Financial and Highlights to feel the pulse, momentum, and life of our Community Centre.

I am very thankful to our volunteer Management Committee, Felicita De Guzman, Jo Bowen, Paul Compton, Geoff Cook, Gillian Collinson, Jenny Kelly, Pearl Smith, Maria Pantelis, and Ron Harris for their total commitment and it has been a joy to work with them. Special thanks go to our Koolooro Manager Andre Naumovski and Community Worker Charm Culla who as a team worked marvelously and tirelessly for the day-to-day seamless functioning and running of our Community Centre. They lead the volunteers, student interns and part time staff who together serve and meet the crucial and diverse needs of our local communities.

We are especially grateful for the support of the immediate past Mayor of Randwick Philipa Veitch, current Mayor Dylan Parker, Randwick Councillors and staff, NSW Department of Communities & Justice, NSW Land & Housing Corporation, and Clubs in the district. We are also very encouraged by our Local Member of Parliament, Michael Daley, and Federal Member of Parliament Matt Thistlethwaite who are always ever ready to help.

Thank you for your unstinting support of Koolooro. Without each, and every one of you, there would be no lively and vibrant Koolooro Community Centre. A big thank you to everyone. And I wish each everyone Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Boo Teong Khoo

President

TREASURER'S REPORT

Kooloora Community Centre continues to be in a secure, stable and strong financial position as at 30th June 2024.

An abridged income statement and balance sheet has been prepared and included in the Annual Report for your information. The unabridged financial accounts and audited report prepared by Meagher, Howard and Wright are available on request.

The principal activity during the financial year was the provision of Social and Community Services. This has been achieved through the grants provided by Randwick Council, NSW Department of Community and Justice and NSW Land and Housing Corporation. We acknowledge and recognise that the generosity of these entities enable Kooloora to be a prime and ethical centre of relevant, flexible and effective services to our local neighbourhood. Our total members' funds as at 30th June 2024 is \$247,793.

I would like to acknowledge Andre's hard work, initiative and diligence in securing funding, meeting and reporting on targets and keeping the Management Committee regularly updated. Andre is also aware of changing needs and priorities in our community and subsequently explores avenues for responding to the changing situations.

Charm Culla has been looking after our Vacation Care program in the past 12 months and her dedication enabled the cost efficient delivery of a meaningful and educational program.

We also appreciate the great work done by Sheryl Lee, our bookkeeper who prepares monthly reports and helps us keep track of our financial situation.

I look forward to another year as Treasurer and am proud to volunteer for such a worthwhile and ethical organisation.

Jo Bowen

MANAGER'S REPORT

During the past 12 months Kooloora delivered the programs while meeting or exceeding the planned outcomes for the year. Our services operated at full capacity and with maximum efficiency throughout the year. The high number of clients and visitors is a testament to the commitment of everyone at Kooloora to delivering a valuable service to the community.

We've seen an increased demand for material assistance and food which indicates that the cost of living is an everyday reality for our communities. The demand for food parcels through our Second Bite program has increased. Along with the cooked meals prepared and delivered by Serving Hands this program is shaping out as a very important support service to the community.

It's a similar story with the Energy Assistance Payment Program (EAPA) which had a steady demand throughout the first 9 months of the year, with a significant spike in demand during the winter bills roll out. Thanks to our team of EAPA volunteers, we were able to distribute approximately \$90,000 worth of electricity and gas vouchers over 12 months to keep households connected to power.

Our Veged Out program continued to deliver the much-needed bags of fresh fruit and vegetables available for \$15 to anyone who needs access to affordable fresh produce. Malabar Bakery continued to support the Veged Out program with donations of bread and pastries to complement the Veged Out produce bags. Our volunteers worked tirelessly to collect, pack, and distribute these bags, providing affordable, healthy food to the community.

We thank Randwick Council and the Manager of Community Development Trina Soulos for the ongoing support with our vacation care program and various other funding supports. This year Kooloora was awarded the three-year Community Partnerships funding which is a great contribution towards the community development program sustainability.

Our community worker Charm has been absolutely successful managing our Kooloora's vacation care program. Kids Zone, Playgroup and the Waste Education program were also delivered by Charm with commendable results. Kids Zone provides educational and fun afterschool activities for primary school-aged children and Playgroup provides a welcoming space and support for young families. The Waste Education project was completed successfully. Many thanks to Anil Gupta from Randwick Council for his support and guidance during this project.

We have had the privilege of welcoming student placements into our community services programs, a collaboration that has greatly benefited both parties. These students bring essential support to Kooloora while gaining practical experience in delivering impactful community initiatives.

Thank you to Sheryl Lee for keeping our accounts in order and to Maria for keeping our data reporting to the DCJ up to date.

With the new year on the horizon, I am eager to continue working with the dedicated volunteers on Kooloora's Management Board. Together, we are steadfast in our mission to create meaningful change for the people we support.

Andre Naumovski
Centre Manager

MINUTES OF AGM 2023

Minutes of Koolooro Management Committee Meeting

Annual General Meeting

167 Bilga Crescent, Malabar NSW 2036

1st December 2023

12:45pm – 1:30pm

Attendance: Joanne Bowen, Geoff Cook (President), Paul Compton, Pearl Smith (Secretary), Ron Harris, Boo Teong Khoo (Treasurer)

Apologies: Felicity De Guzmán, Jenny Kelly (Vice-President), Gillian Collinson

In Attendance: Andre Naumovski (Koolooro Community Centre Manager)

- i. **Meeting chaired by Geoff declared meeting open at 12:45pm**
- ii. **Welcome to Country was warmly given by Maxine Ryan** acknowledging the Gadigal and Bidjigal people, the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we met that was taken away without their consent, treaty, or compensation. Respects were paid to Elders past, present, and emerging. Recognition was given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people attending. She spoke of teaching the school children who are our future, the importance of the land. Australians are now a multicultural people.
- iii. **First Speaker: Randwick Mayor Philipa Veitch**
Sincerely thanked and acknowledged Koolooro's numerous services to the community, the dedication of the management staff and volunteers for their time. Season's greetings and wishes to visit again in the new year.
- iv. **Second Speaker: Bill Burst, Randwick City Councillor, South Ward**
Cr Bill Burst thanked Koolooro for being a heart with the community.
- v. **Third Speaker: Matt Thistlethwaite, Federal Member for Kingsford Smith**
Expressed his continuing interest in Koolooro's wellbeing and communicated that his office would always be open to discuss any matters of concern.
- vi. **Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.**
Moved by Fely, seconded to adopt by **Geoff Cook** and accepted in the meeting.
- vii. **Reports**
Geoff's President Report for 2023
 - a) Geoff thanked Andre and Charm for their vital contribution and dedication to their work within Koolooro.
 - b) George and Jillian's Collinson were thanked for 30 years of service towards Koolooro. Geoff commemorated this milestone by presenting them with a specially consigned plaque and dinner voucher at Randwick Golf Club from Koolooro.
 - c) Acknowledged Randwick Council's, Anil Gupta, Waste and Sustainability Officer, who is the person to see about increasing community awareness of recycling.

- d) He summarized his time as President of Management Committee was highlighted by overseeing the Woodturnings, Angela's work in the community garden; ensuring the toilet renovations; and planning for kitchen renovations.
- e) Further acknowledged the attendance and Kooloora's gratitude for the support of Randwick councilors: Dylan Parker, Noel D'Souza, Bill Burst, Dany Said, Michael Daley, Michael Olive; Tabatha D'Antoine, Department of Communities and Justice; and Cameron Thompson, Maroubra Housing.

Andre's Management Report

Since July 2023, Kooloora provided 4000 services. This calculation does not even include Vacation Care. Demand for Kooloora's support and activities has grown rapidly and will undoubtedly continue to increase in the future. Kooloora is proud to provide services many times over than the funding provides.

Treasurers Report: Boo Teong Khoo

Kooloora is in a strong financial position. Unlike the previous year, this year there is a profit of \$1072.00. Kooloora's successful operations have only been possible with the support and assistance of Randwick Council, NSW of Community and Justice, and NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

Auditor for 2024 is confirmed to still be: Meagher Howard and Wright

Moved by Boo, seconded by Jo Bowen and approved in the meeting.

Returning officer: Shane Flint revealed the results of the election for the 2024 Management Committee:

President:	Boo Teong Khoo
Vice President:	Felicity De Guzmán
Treasurer:	Jo Bowen
Secretary:	Paul Compton
Ordinary Members:	Pearl Smith,
Jenny Kelly	Gillian Collinson
Ron Harris	Geoff Cook

II. Annual General Meeting ended at 1:20pm.

Festive Community Lunch commenced.

The President supervised the raffle drawing by Michael Olive, Noel D'Souza; Tabatha D'Atoine; Cameron Thompsona and Matt Thistlethwaite.

Next meeting: Monday, 19 February, 2024; 12:30pm

PROGRAMS

SUPPORTED PLAYGROUP



Playgroup has grown into one of Kooloora's largest and most successful programs, bringing together an average of 20-30 families every Monday and Wednesday. It's always buzzing with activity! Over time, we've had the pleasure of welcoming many new parents and, of course, saying farewell to some as well. Birthdays are special occasions, celebrated with cupcakes shared by parents and joyful renditions of "Happy Birthday." The children love dressing up in costumes and especially enjoy our recently refreshed sandpit, which was filled with brand-new sand this year, adding to the fun and creative play experiences. Playgroup has truly become a vibrant and cherished space for families to connect and grow.

We had a wonderful visit from Aunty Maxine, who shared her crafts and knowledge of Aboriginal culture through singing and storytelling. The Maroubra police also stopped by, which was a highlight for the children. They were thrilled to meet their heroes up close and even got the exciting opportunity to ride on the police car.

Our group time remains a highlight for the children, eagerly anticipated each session. During this time, we explore new action songs, often incorporating fun props, and learn simple sign language and engaging fingerplays. The children have shown remarkable growth and enthusiasm, not only developing a genuine interest in music but also enjoying the social experience of being part of a group. This shared time has fostered their confidence, communication skills, and sense of community, making it a joyful and enriching experience for everyone involved.



VACATION CARE

Andre and Charm recently completed a 14-week Quality Support program facilitated by Samantha Dela Fontaine from ACECQA. This comprehensive program was invaluable in reinforcing our commitment to quality practice and continuous improvement in education and care. The training has better equipped us as we prepare for our upcoming Quality Assessment, which we hope will take place next year.



We are also thrilled to welcome new staff members, Olivia Chang and Katie Hunissett, who have quickly proven to be fantastic additions to our team. Their energy and dedication are already making a positive impact. Meanwhile, our dependable team members—Anette, Chantelle, and Nina—continue to provide outstanding support and ensure seamless operations. During this time, Rachel and Skye took a bit of a break from their regular workload, and we look forward to their return.

This year, we've seen a rise in enrolments from children with special needs. Staying true to our philosophy of inclusion, we are proud to provide these children with access to the full range of Kooloor's programs in a welcoming environment free from exclusion or judgment. Their participation enriches our community, and we remain committed to fostering a culture of respect and acceptance for all.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improvement, we continue refining our programs to prioritize the diverse needs and interests of the children we serve. This year, we have introduced lots of new programs to children – Krav Maga, First Aid Training, Parkour Training, which are all part of our philosophy of introducing practical skills to children and culture days such as Japan Day, France Day etc. to introduce and celebrate different kinds of cultures. We hope to offer more new and exciting programs for next year.

KIDS ZONE



For the past five years, Kooloora Community Centre has proudly run the Kids Zone program, offering a fun, supportive environment where children can enjoy both indoor and outdoor play. Each Monday during the school term, 10-15 kids join us for crafts like painting and drawing, engaging games, and free snacks.



Although some children have taken up other Monday activities, leading to a slight dip in numbers, we're delighted to welcome both new and familiar faces. To further support the children, we now provide reading assistance for those who need extra help keeping up with schoolwork.

Our dedicated cook, Fely, with the support of volunteer Van, continues to prepare popular, balanced dinners each week, featuring a mix of carbs like pasta or rice, vegetables, and meat. We're also pleased to offer a vegetarian option for a child with dietary restrictions.

This year, we've also benefited greatly from the help of university students on placement, who have been invaluable in engaging with the children, setting up, and assisting with activities.



FITNESS FOR SENIORS



On 27 September this year, AIM ceased its regular fitness for seniors classes after many years of service to the community. This change left long-time exercise participants without their regular fitness sessions for several weeks. Fortunately, Lyn, a former AIM employee and current Kooloorra volunteer, stepped in generously to lead chair exercises for the senior participants, sharing her expertise to keep them engaged and active.

Meanwhile, a new provider, Strive for Motion, took over the exercise program for those who are still mobile and able-bodied, ensuring continuity of service for this group as well.

TAI CHI

The Kooloorra Taichi program has been running for 6 years since 2018. This is to provide the local community the opportunity to participate in a general exercise program and for socialisation.



Taichi is a system of exercise aiming to get the body movement to activate different body parts, resulting in improved body functions, such as coordination, balance and flexibility. The gentleness and easy movement in Taichi, when practised for a long timeframe, will result in an improved health status and mental capacity in dealing with everyday life stress.

The Taichi exercise group meets every Thursday at 10 a.m., during school weeks. The program is open to all adults regardless of their age. All interested persons are invited to participate and the program is offered for a gold coin donation. The program will have recess periods during the NSW school term holidays.

ENGLISH CLASS

Our English class, led by the capable and dedicated Lyn, has become an invaluable resource for non-English speakers eager to learn and improve their language skills. The class has been particularly helpful in covering essential topics for those navigating life in Australia, from applying for citizenship to handling everyday conversations. Students gain confidence in situations like visiting the supermarket, going to the doctor, or using public transportation. We're hopeful to expand our class and welcome even more learners next year, continuing to build a supportive community where everyone feels empowered to communicate.

The Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) continues to be one of Kooloorra's vital service offerings.



EAPA is a NSW government program offering emergency financial support to people who are experiencing crisis and are at risk of having their energy supply disconnected. With significant and prevailing cost of living pressures over the year, our program has seen heightened demand across our

community for relief with their gas and electricity bills.

Our program operates on-site at the Kooloorra Community Centre each Tuesday morning, except during public and school holidays. The program is run by a team of volunteer consultants who undergo regular mandatory training and testing to stay abreast of EAPA regulations and processes. With the assistance of an administrator, our consultants assess the needs of our customers making sure all their entitlements and discounts are in place, speak to the energy provider regarding better plans, or payment options and then to process the appropriate amount of financial assistance.

In the prior year we changed our catchment area to be able to dedicate and improve our services to our local community. This resulted in only a small reduction in the number of clients we assisted in that year. In 2024, we experienced a big rise in demand and managed to help a substantial number of households with their power bills.

A big thank you to consultants Kathy, Jo, Judith, Leela, Lilliane, Marilyn, Paul, Robyn, Sybille and administrator Christine. We also say goodbye to Leela and thank her for her invaluable contribution to this program.

VEGED OUT

Veged Out: Fresh, Affordable, and Local Produce for Our Community

At Veged Out, our mission is to operate as a cooperative, not-for-profit service that provides high-quality, seasonal fruit and vegetable bags to our members at an affordable price. Occasionally, we also include bread in our offerings. Our service runs every fortnight on Fridays during school terms at Kooloorra Community Centre, with bag pickups scheduled from 10 am to 12 pm.

Our produce is sourced locally from Farmer John's Fruit Bar and Deli, while bread is generously donated by Malabar Bakery. Despite the substantial rise in food prices this year, we are proud to maintain the Veged Out bag price at just \$15. Members prepay for their bags ahead of the collection date and pick them up during the designated time. To support our sustainability efforts, we encourage members to return their recycled cloth bags for reuse.

The success of Veged Out is powered by a dedicated team of volunteers: Jenny Kelly, Shane Flint, David Haugh, Nicole Tustin, and Pearl Smith. Their contributions include driving to pick up fresh produce, collecting bread donations, sorting and filling bags, disposing of packaging, and managing member records and accounts.

Our community of Veged Out members reflects the diversity of our local area and includes individuals from all walks of life—low-income earners, pensioners, students, and families. We warmly welcome new members and are working to expand our reach through word of mouth, social media platforms like Facebook, and the Kooloora Newsletter.

Currently, we prepare around 30 Veged Out bags every second Friday of the school term. Each bag is filled with an assortment of fresh, seasonal produce. For example, a recent bag featured potatoes, sweet potatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis, carrots, tomatoes, beans, oranges, red apples, pears, bananas, and strawberries. Bag contents vary depending on the season, ensuring we offer the best value possible.

At Veged Out, we're committed to helping our community tackle the rising cost of living by providing fresh, unprocessed, and nutritious food at an accessible price. Through this initiative, we aim to promote healthy eating and sustainable living for all.

SECOND BITE AND SERVING HANDS

The latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for the March 2024 quarter show that annual Living Cost Index (LCI) increases range from 3.7% to 6.2%, with employee households experiencing the largest rise at 6.2%, largely due to climbing mortgage interest rates.



To help address these financial challenges, Kooloora Community Centre continues to focus on community support programs. Through Second Bite, surplus and unsold food, such as fruits and vegetables, is rescued from food manufacturers, retailers, and growers, then distributed to those in need. This program operates three times a week to reach as many local and non-local residents as possible. Additionally, pantry staples and canned foods donated by Lexington Place

provide essential support to individuals and families facing financial difficulties.



Serving Hands offers freshly prepared, high-quality meals every Wednesday, ensuring those in need have access to nutritious food options. These programs are critical in alleviating the pressures of rising living costs for vulnerable members of the community.

THE SEEKERS

The Seekers program at Kooloora Community Centre has always been a space for growth, connection, and community. For many, it's more than just a group—it's a family. Over the years, countless members have contributed not only financial help but also their energy, ideas, and friendship to make it the vibrant program it is today.

This year, however, we say a bittersweet goodbye to two longstanding and beloved members, Tuan Xiao and Gillian Collinson. Both have been integral to the Seekers community, attending regularly and bringing warmth and dedication to every gathering. Unfortunately, due to inevitable circumstances, they are no longer able to join us.



Tuan and Gillian have become very frail, making it increasingly difficult for them to attend on their own. Their absence will be deeply felt by all who have had the privilege of sharing this journey with them. As we reflect on their time with Seekers, we celebrate the positive impact they've made. Tuan and Gillian's resilience, kindness, and active participation have inspired many, and their contributions will always be remembered.

The Seekers program continues to provide a supportive environment for personal growth and connection to its existing members. While Tuan and Gillian move on to new chapters in their lives, their legacy remains an enduring part of the Seekers family.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Waste Management program successfully concluded this year, achieving notable improvements in Bilga Crescent since its launch. Over the past year, we focused on educating the community about proper waste management, booking pickups, and the importance of using the Food Organics (FOGO) bin effectively.

One of our standout initiatives was **Sausage Fridays**, where we visited small sections of Bilga Crescent, inviting residents to enjoy sausages while discussing waste issues in their area. These gatherings provided a valuable opportunity to engage with small groups, ensuring that key messages were communicated directly and effectively.

We also organized a special **E-waste and Mattress Collection Day**, encouraging residents to bring in small electronics for proper disposal. To add a fun incentive, three participants won gift vouchers.



The support of our **resident champions** has been instrumental in the program's success. Acting as our eyes and ears on the ground, they helped identify waste-related challenges and provided insights into additional actions we could take to address community concerns.

The **recycling hub at Kooloora** has been another success story, preventing items like soft plastics, small electronics, blister packs, x-rays, and batteries from ending up in red bins. Thanks to **RecycleSmart**, these items are now collected and recycled efficiently, contributing to a more sustainable community.

Our efforts were validated by the final **Know Waste audit**, which revealed significant progress:

- **FOGO and yellow bin usage** increased compared to 2023.
- **FOGO bin contamination** dropped from 17% in 2023 to 10% in 2024.
- **Recycling bin contamination** decreased from 43% in 2023 to 24% in 2024.

While awareness around the bulk collection service has grown, there is still room for improvement, particularly regarding the RecycleSmart service.

This year's achievements reflect the power of education, collaboration, and community engagement, and we look forward to building on this progress in the future.

THE WOODTURNERS SHED

2024: A Year of Growth and Productivity

This year has been a positive and productive one for our group. The Shed is constantly growing with new members, bringing fresh energy and enthusiasm, even as some of our longer-standing members have moved away or retired. With over 30 active members currently, our group is thriving, and we're excited to continue this momentum into 2025.

Saturdays, our regular open days, have been buzzing with activity. The equipment is in constant use, and weekdays have also seen members making excellent use of the equipment. Our healthy finances have allowed us to maintain and improve our resources, ensuring members have access to everything they need for their



projects.

We are proud to now have five large-capacity lathes and four small lathes, supported by a vast collection of turning tools. Additionally, our comprehensive range of saws for preparing blanks means members are well-equipped to tackle a wide variety of projects.

With a strong community, excellent resources, and a passion for craftsmanship, we look forward to another outstanding year in 2025.

COLLABORATION

CUDDLE BUNDLES

Our wonderful partners at Cuddle Bundles have continuously demonstrated their dedication to supporting new and expectant mothers who are in need in our community. They provide high-quality, thoughtfully curated newborn bundles filled with essentials tailored to meet the needs of both mums and their babies. These bundles not only offer practical support but also convey a heartfelt sense of care, helping new mums feel valued and supported during a transformative time in their lives. Their unwavering reliability and commitment make a significant difference, fostering a sense of reassurance and encouragement for families embarking on their parenting journey.

SERVING HANDS

Serving Hands has been an incredible support to Kooloora Community Centre, delivering freshly cooked meals and drinks every Wednesday. Their delicious, high-quality meals have become a sought-after resource, warmly welcomed by people in the community who rely on this vital service.

Their generosity extends beyond food. During the Christmas season, Serving Hands gifted Kooloora with toys to share with families in need, spreading joy and light during a special time of year.

The impact of Serving Hands goes far beyond the meals they provide—they've become a valued part of the community, offering nourishment, kindness, and hope to those who need it most.

SERVICES AUSTRALIA

Services Australia offers one-on-one consultations at Kooloora Community Centre, providing community members with direct access to assistance without the frustration of waiting for hours on the phone. This personalized approach ensures that individuals receive timely and effective support for their needs.

Sharon, a representative from Services Australia, has been especially accommodating and helpful. Her professionalism and warmth have made a significant difference to those seeking assistance, ensuring they feel heard and supported.

This initiative continues to be an invaluable resource, offering practical solutions and a personal touch to those navigating complex situations.

ABORIGINAL YOUNG FAMILIES SUPPORT GROUP

A new addition to Kooloora's services is the Aboriginal Playgroup, facilitated by Child and Family Health, Health NSW. This wonderful initiative is designed to support new Aboriginal mothers and their babies aged 0–12 months, offering a safe and welcoming space to connect, share experiences, and access valuable resources.

Running every Wednesday during school terms, the playgroup provides an opportunity for mothers to bond with their babies while building a supportive community with other families. Best of all, attendance is completely free, ensuring this service is accessible to everyone who needs it.

This playgroup not only promotes the well-being of mothers and their babies but also celebrates Aboriginal culture and identity, creating an inclusive environment for families to thrive. We're excited to see this program enrich our community and provide meaningful support to new mothers.

COMMUNITY POP-UP HUB



Located in Maroubra's Lionel Bowen Library, the Pop-up Community Support Hub, organized by Randwick Council, serves as a vital resource for local residents. This collaborative initiative brings together a range of services, including Centrelink, Revenue NSW, housing support, addiction services, family and elder care, and HARP testing.

The hub's mission is to empower individuals by offering easy access to comprehensive assistance, addressing diverse needs such as financial issues, housing, and health support. It also provides a platform for residents to share their concerns and ideas, fostering community engagement and collaboration.

This initiative exemplifies a commitment to creating a thriving, inclusive community by offering practical support

and amplifying residents' voices.

DIABETES INFORMATION SESSION



On Tuesday, April 9th, Kooloora Community Centre hosted a session for individuals with type 2 diabetes or those at risk, organized by NWS Health. The event provided valuable insights into diabetes management, including dietary tips, exercise advice, and lifestyle changes. Participants had their blood sugar levels checked and enjoyed a nutritious lunch, fostering a supportive environment for learning and sharing experiences. We thank everyone who attended

and NWS Health for their ongoing support in organizing such beneficial initiatives for our community.

ABORIGINAL CARERS GROUP



In June last year, Kooloora Community Centre hosted an empowering *Aboriginal Women's Wellbeing Day* in partnership with the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District Carer Program. The event was tailored for Aboriginal women who provide care to family or community members, offering a supportive space to focus on wellbeing and share experiences.

Attendees enjoyed a range of activities, including health checks, art sessions, and discussions about caring roles, while also being

treated to a light lunch, gift bags, and prizes. The day was a wonderful opportunity for participants to connect, relax, and gain valuable insights into caring for themselves and others.

The event highlighted the importance of community, culture, and self-care, leaving a lasting positive impact on everyone involved.

KOOLOORA OPEN DAY – 8 NOV



On November 8th, Kooloora Community Centre hosted a vibrant Open Day in celebration of National Recycling Week. The event featured a range of activities for all ages, including a sausage sizzle, a jumping castle, and face painting for the kids, making it a fun and family-friendly gathering.

In alignment with National Recycling Week, the event also showcased RecycleSmart and highlighted the importance of recycling within the community. Partnering with Randwick Council, the day emphasized sustainable practices and encouraged attendees to engage with recycling initiatives.

It was a great opportunity for the community to come together, enjoy some outdoor fun, and learn more about making a positive environmental impact.

KOOLOORA CHRISTMAS PARTY AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023



Our annual Christmas Party remains a cherished tradition at Kooloora, bringing together our community to celebrate the year's achievements and create lasting memories. Held alongside the Annual General Meeting, the day allowed us to reflect on our accomplishments and set the tone for the year ahead.

A special moment of the event was honouring long-time volunteer George Collinson, who has been an integral part of Kooloora for many years. In recognition of his dedication and unwavering support, George was presented with a plaque of appreciation. Although he will no longer be able to join us at future Christmas parties due to personal reasons, we extend our heartfelt well wishes and gratitude to him.



The event also included the election of new board members, a crucial step in guiding Kooloora's future. Following formalities, the festivities began, featuring a diverse spread of delicious cuisines catering to everyone's tastes. We were honoured by the presence of several distinguished guests, including Mayor Philippa Veitch, long-time supporter Matt Thistlethwaite, Aunty Maxine, who delivered a heartfelt Welcome to Country, and Councillors Dylan Parker, Bill Burst and Noel D'Souza. Their support continues to inspire our efforts in building a vibrant, inclusive community.





On Thursday, May 23rd, Kooloora proudly celebrated the Volunteers Day Awards 2024 as part of National Volunteer Week, themed "Something for Everyone." The event honored the dedication and contributions of our diverse volunteers, with a warm Welcome to Country by Aunty Maxine setting the tone for the day.

This year we recognized our 45 volunteers with a certificate and chocolate gift, courtesy of Randwick City Council Community Connect funding.

Distinguished guests, including Mayor Philipa Veitch, Cr Dylan Parker, and Cr Noel D'Souza, as well as representatives from DCJ, praised the invaluable impact of volunteerism on the community. Volunteers were celebrated for their unique skills and commitment, which bring life and vibrancy to Kooloora's programs.

We extend heartfelt thanks to all volunteers and Randwick Council for sponsoring the event, ensuring its success and highlighting the importance of community spirit.



RECOGNITIONS

RANDWICK COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PROGRAM



The support from Randwick Council and its commitment to the communities in the South Ward continued with the allocation of the Community Partnerships funding to Kooloora. This funding will ensure that Kooloora has the resources to continue to deliver outcomes to support the most disadvantaged communities in the South

Ward. The official grants presentation took place on 26 August at Randwick Town Hall presided by Randwick Council Community Development Manager Trina Soulos.

AUSTRALIA DAY COMMUNITY SERVICE GROUP AWARD



On the auspicious occasion of Australia Day, January 26th, re-markable individuals and community groups were celebrated as part of Randwick City Council's prestigious Community Service Awards.

These deserving recipients embody the spirit of service and dedication, devoting their time and energy to various noble causes. Among them are individuals who have selflessly volunteered their efforts in areas such as netball, Scouts, and environmental conservation. Additionally, we applaud the commendable work of community groups that have tirelessly worked to connect individuals facing social isolation and provide crucial emotional support to mothers in our community.

Randwick Mayor, Philipa Veitch, extends her heartfelt commendations to all the award recipients for their outstanding contributions. Their efforts truly reflect the essence of community spirit and solidarity.

While our collective efforts did not secure the group award, it is with immense pride that we announce the recognition bestowed upon our very own Kooloora Veged Out team. Their unwavering commitment help the local community to have consistent access to affordable healthy food on a regular basis has been duly acknowledged, and they have been presented with a Certificate of Appreciation in honour of their dedication and hard work.