

# NCNS NEWSLETTER

## KOOLY CULTURE DAY SEES YOUNG CHILDREN CONNECT WITH CULTURE THROUGH ENGAGING SENSORY ACTIVITIES

On Friday 15th September our Early Childhood Team held an entertaining Culture Day at our Aboriginal Child & Family Centre at Cranebrook.

We had the pleasure of having Erin Wilkinson from Yanmala Cultural Education who provided an interactive experience for the children who attended the day. Yanmala Cultural Education works in the Western Sydney region educating and promoting Aboriginal Culture. They have 'programs designed to engage children in a culturally safe learning environment using sensory and tactile resources and activities to develop cognitive, fine, and gross motor skills.'

Erin introduced herself, explained who she was, and the mums & children created a circle and introduced themselves and what tribe they are from which was a great moment for connection.



Erin read a dreaming story 'Kootear The Echidna' by Cindy & Adam Laws engaging the children in the story, talking about all the animals.



After the story, the children moved onto making their own echidnas from clay. They collected their own sticks and used match sticks for the spikes.





The children learnt how to dance like the animals.



After the parade of echidnas were completed, Erin asked the kids 'Why do Aboriginal people wear ochre?' Some replied, for dance. Erin explained why Aboriginal people wore ochre including for ceremonies, Sorry Business and dance.



The children painted their hands with ochre and placed their handprints on a Kooly Kids poster.





"The highlight for me was seeing the children's face light up, listening and taking it all in. Hearing the children laugh and be so engaged was a wonderful thing to experience." Zoe Simpson, NCNS Aboriginal Child & Family Worker.



After the day, NCNS Aboriginal Child & Family Worker, Zoe Simpson, received a call from one of the mums who attended with her son. She told Zoe that her son came home from the day and spoke to his Dad and all of his relatives about the day non-stop! We love hearing this!



For more information about **Yanmala Cultural Education** please [click here](#). To find out more about NCNS Aboriginal programs please [click here](#).

[Click here](#) to view **Kooly Culture Day Gallery**.

## INTRODUCING OUR NEW PARENTING FACILITATOR SUSSAN OMAR!



### **Tell me a bit about your new role?**

My new role will involve running group parenting programs and providing some individual support to parents. I am trained in Circle Of Security and Bringing Up Great Kids so they will be the programs I focus on initially.

Group programs are a great way for parents and carers to share their experiences and knowledge as well as learn evidence-based strategies to support their parenting. Most groups will run for 6-8 weeks.

I have been working with parenting in some way or another for over 15 years. Early on my focus was working with young people who were at risk of homelessness, I then went on to support refugee and asylum seekers to settle into Australia.

But the last 5 or so years I have supported women and children who have been impacted by Family and Domestic Violence, its really in these roles that I was able to work one on one with mums to help them understand the impact of trauma on their parenting, their children and support to repair the child/parent relationship.

As a specialist Family and Domestic Violence caseworker and Service Lead for an after-hours service I was able to provide practical supports to women to either leave a violent relationship and start anew life or to stay in their homes safely without the perpetrator. Being child focussed helped to support a better understanding between the mother, child and other services.

My last role before NCNS was a departure from the community space, working as a Community and Stakeholder Engagement officer for a new program that aimed to grow the Home Care Workforce. It involved meeting numerous services and community members to inform them of the opportunities in Home Care for older Australians.

Parenting courses are a safe space to learn effective parenting strategies and to reflect on your own parenting. Parenting programs are not just for when things go wrong, in fact by attending groups you can help identify what is happening for a child and meet their needs before issues arise. Ideally if both parents or caregivers can attend it really helps with parenting of a child.

We have all learnt things from the way we were parented, friends and family some good and some that are outdated or just not in the best interest of the child.

By working on your own parenting practice, you are creating a stronger connection between yourself and child. In turn this creates safety for the child who will not only thrive but also come to you when they are in need.

The more we can do as a parent, especially in the first 3 years, the better the outcome for the child.

### **What would your best advice to parents be?**

There is no such thing as perfect parenting, get the information and support you need and don't beat yourself up about the past. There is always time to work on your relationship with children. And don't forget to give yourself a break when you need it. Parenting is a full time job, you can't give if you don't take care of yourself.

### **What is something that you find challenging about your work?**

Just the technology, I'm not a fan of computers and the online world yet its part of the world we live in.

### **How do you like to spend your time outside of work?**

Love nothing more than a walk along the beach, listening to the waves, reading a good book or catching up with family and friends.

### **Tell me something interesting about yourself?**

I'm really interested in natural health and healing with essential oils.

### **What are your favourite parenting courses to teach?**

Circle of Security - Parenting™ because you get great feedback from participants.

### **We have a Circle of Security - Parenting™ Program starting in Term 4, why would you recommend Circle of Security - Parenting™ and who is this for?**

Circle of Security - Parenting™ is a great program to do in the early years, I would recommend it particularly for parents and caregivers of babies to toddlers.

I would recommend this to start the journey of parenting as it helps you reflect of your parenting and helps you to recognise and respond to your child's need early on. This leads to secure attachment which helps your child grow and navigate life's challenges.

To get in touch with Sussan:

0437 699 019

parenting@nepeancommunity.org.au

### **KEEP UP TO DATE WITH ALL OUR FREE PARENTING, FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES:**

#### **Facebook:**

@ParentingInPenrith @NepeanCommunity

**Web:** [www.nepeancommunity.org.au](http://www.nepeancommunity.org.au)

To find out more about Circle of Security - Parenting™ course please see out flyer.



#### **Circle of Security - Parenting™ - Term 4 2023**

At times all parents feel lost or without a clue about what our child might need from us. Imagine what it might feel like if you were able to make sense of what your child was really asking from you.

The Circle of Security Parenting™ program is based on decades of research about how secure parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened.

#### **Learning outcomes:**

- Understand your child's emotional world by learning to read their emotional needs
- Support your child's ability to successfully manage emotions
- Enhance the development of your child's self esteem
- Honour your innate wisdom and desire for your child to be secure

Please note: Commitment to attending ALL sessions is expected. This is not a counselling or behavioural management course for children.

#### **When:**

Wednesdays 18th October - 6th December 2023

**Week 1:** 18th October 2023

**Week 2:** 25th October 2023

**Week 3:** 1st November 2023

**Week 4:** 8th November 2023

**Week 5:** 15th November 2023

**Week 6:** 22nd November 2023

**Week 7:** 29th November 2023

**Week 8:** 6th December 2023

#### **Time:**

10am - 12pm

#### **Where:**

Cranebrook Neighbourhood Centre,  
Hosking Street, Cranebrook, NSW 2749

Childcare available.

**PLACES LIMITED. REGISTRATION ESSENTIAL.**

Contact Sussan for all enquiries on 0437 699 019 or [parenting@nepeancommunity.org.au](mailto:parenting@nepeancommunity.org.au)

**NCNS**  
NEPEAN COMMUNITY & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Keep up to date with all our FREE parenting, family and children's activities:  
**Facebook:** @ParentingInPenrith @NepeanCommunity  
**Web:** [www.nepeancommunity.org.au](http://www.nepeancommunity.org.au)

## CHILDREN STAYING AT BREKKY CLUB LONGER, GIVING THEM A CHANCE TO REALLY CONNECT & DEVELOP LONG LASTING FRIENDSHIPS



Seeing the children express themselves throughout the artwork has been amazing! Their connection to culture and sense of belonging is so strongly expressed and seen through this.



Brekky Club in Term 3 has been great fun with a variety of things going on. We have been doing lots of artwork with the guidance of Uncle Dennis, activities to identify safe people during Child Protection Week, teaching each other card games and board games.

The children have been enjoying the great weather and getting outside for some cricket and tag, table tennis competitions and of course eating a whole bunch of toasties.

Brekky Club Worker, Kim Sutcliffe explained, *"I have seen great growth within brekky club, with a large portion of attendee's being highschoolers whom we see each day throughout the week and who stay for the entirety of the time Brekky Club operates which is great to see. The Braddock kids are forming some great relationships with the teens and really looking up to them, and I think this will help form future safe people for the kids as they enter high school."*

Children of all ages staying at Brekky Club for longer periods of time, instead of grabbing a toasty and leaving. This has been a huge win and allows us to really connect with the children and form relationships with them, which keeps them coming back.

We are sad to see some of our highschoolers leave as year 12 wraps up this week, but we wish them all the best and have been encouraging them to drop in and visit us!"

For more information about our Brekky Club please [click here!](#)



## PARENTS CORNER: ONLINE SAFETY FOR KIDS

As parents and caregivers, our concern for children's online safety is paramount. To protect them effectively, we must actively engage with and understand their digital world. Open communication from early years through adolescence can reduce online risks.

### COMMON ONLINE RISKS

Depending on your child's age and internet usage, risks may include:

#### Excessive Screen Time

One of the primary concerns for caregivers is the amount of time children spend online. Current guidelines recommend specific limits based on age.

- For children under 2 years old, it's recommended to avoid any screen time other than video chat.
- Between the ages of 2 and 5, limit screen time to no more than 1 hour per day.
- For children and adolescents aged 5 to 17, the recommended limit is no more than 2 hours a day, excluding school-related work.

#### Online Gaming

Online gaming can become addictive and impact other areas of a child's life if not monitored.

#### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying, comprising hurtful messages, posts, and images, that are sent directly to the young person or shared online. This can impact young victims mentally and physically.

#### Child Grooming

Child grooming involves adults posing as peers, establishing trust with minors, and leading to potential sexual abuse. According to e-safety research, 38% of young people chat to strangers online, and while most interactions are harmless, caregivers need to be aware of the risk.

#### Sexting

Sexting, common among youth, can turn problematic when coerced, shared without consent, or used for control. Both males and females are equally at risk of being victims here. It's important to note that once an image is sent, it can be lost forever in cyberspace.

#### Exposure to Online Pornography

Children may inadvertently come across explicit content, affecting their development.

### PRACTICAL STEPS FOR CAREGIVERS

#### Open Communication

Engage in online activities with young children and maintain conversations about their online experiences and safety.

#### Set Boundaries

Establish clear rules on where and when kids can access the internet, favouring communal spaces.

#### Agree on Rules

Discuss age-appropriate time limits and consequences for device usage. Create agreements together when possible.

#### Provide Support

Foster a safe environment where children can seek help when facing online threats or issues.

#### Use Parental Controls

Utilise built-in controls in devices and apps to monitor and restrict online access.

Today, children enjoy the digital world for fun, education, and connection. While it can be enjoyable, parents must remain vigilant, set boundaries, and support their children.

For more resources, visit:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/parents>

<https://kidshelpline>

*Article written by Sussan Omar, Parenting Facilitator*

# **SASSY SISTA'S TAKE A TRIP TO THE THREE SISTERS AND LEARN ABOUT ARTEFACTS, WILDLIFE AND BUSH TUCKER**



On Thursday 24th August, NCNS Aboriginal workers Leonie Haines and Bronwyn Nuttall along with teachers Nicole Wallington and Sarah Stonestreet, from Cranebrook High School, had the privilege to take 25 young females from Cranebrook High School on a trip to The Three Sisters. The 25 students had been learning the different stories that have been told about the three sisters.

We had the opportunity to meet Uncle Lester who was our tour guide, and he explained the different artefacts, wildlife and bush tucker founded in the Blue Mountains and how it is significant to the area. Leonie was asked to help Uncle Lester out with some of his artefacts. Whilst Leonie stood there, she was given a dilly bag which she placed around her forehead and the bag sat on her back. This is used to collect foods and place them inside, for example berries. She was then given a coolamon to place on top of her head. This is used to carry water or foods and to place a newborn baby in.





Next was a digging stick to be able to find different foods in the ground. Aboriginal women were also Hunters and Collectors. Uncle Lester then took us on a bushwalk to show us the different medicinal bushes for certain injuries and sores that you can use if you get injured in the bush. He also spoke about the lyrebird and how important his role is in the mountains.

The last leg of our walk, we saw a Bower Bird's nest. It is coming into mating season for the Bower Bird, and he has his little nest looking pretty, waiting for his mate to show. You can see the blue materials he has collected to put into his nest.

We all had an amazing day and learnt many new things!

# ABORIGINAL SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM PREPARES CHILDREN TO START SCHOOL IN 2024



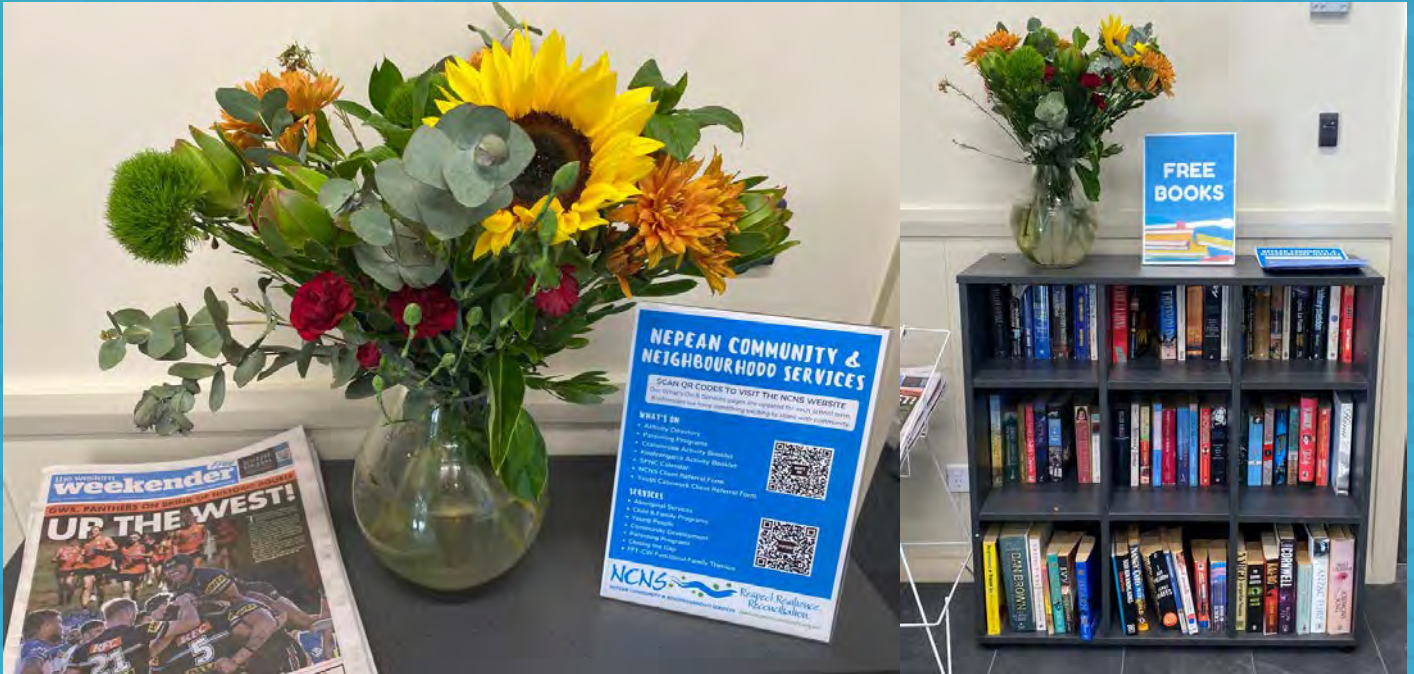
Our Aboriginal School Readiness Program was run at Braddock Public School in Cranebrook during Term 3 on Thursday mornings for eight weeks to support families and children prepare for starting Kindergarten in 2024.

A part of the school readiness program is connecting families with schools and their procedures, staff meeting children and their parents. We also visit environments around the school, so children learn their way around. We teach them phonological awareness, the ability to recognize and manipulate the spoken parts of sentences and words, numeracy skills, playing games to teach children how to take turns, and follow rules. They get the opportunity to express their creativity through art and develop language skills.

We take the children to sit in a classroom to get a glimpse of what happens there. We focus on skills to help during recess and lunch such as opening packets of snacks, giving parents ideas on healthy easy lunch options, how to make an order at the school canteen, what apps to download or look at, at whatever school you may attend.

For more information about our Aboriginal School Readiness Programs or [Early Childhood programs](#) feel free to contact our Aboriginal Child and Family Workers, Amy or Zoe on 02 4729 0442.

# CHECK OUT OUR SWAP & GO LIBRARY AT OUR REVAMPED SOUTH PENRITH NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE!



Come and check out our newly renovated South Penrith Neighbourhood Centre! We have a swap and go library where you can take any books to read and bring them back when you are done for someone else to enjoy. We bring extra books out the front of the centre on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

We also accept book donations for our library. We are especially keen for children's books, so if you have good condition used books, please come down to the centre and donate.

Get the paper, enjoy a tea or coffee. Call the centre on **02 4721 8520** to make sure our staff are there. We hope to see you around the centre soon!

