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Vale Merrill Kelly

A Champion of Northern District Community Health



The Board and staff of Northern District Community Health are deeply saddened by the passing of Merrill Kelly. Merrill was an integral part of NDCH as a Board Director for 27 years and being appointed Life Governor in 2023 on the 30th anniversary of NDCH.

Steadfast, loyal and dedicated to her community, Merrill gave of herself, her time and her talents without restraint. Her passion for rural communities and commitment to helping those in need inspired her advocacy for better access to services for her town of Quambatook and the broader region.

Her lifetime of advocacy and dedication has built a legacy that will endure for generations. With a team of 140 staff and 180 volunteers, we would not be the organisation we are today, were it not for Merrill. We will honour her legacy every day by providing quality community-based health services and support to our communities where and when they are needed.

A mentor, a colleague, a teammate, a friend - there are no words for the void that she leaves in our community and in our hearts. We will uphold the spirit of community that Merrill treasured so deeply.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

NDCH acknowledges that our work occurs on the country of the Traditional Owners of the area, the people of Barapa Barapa, Wamba Wamba, Yorta Yorta and DjaDja Wurrung and acknowledge their ancestors who have been custodians of this land for thousands of years.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging, and through them, to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



LGBTIQA+ COMMUNITIES

NDCH proudly supports the LGBTIQA+ communities.



CHILD SAFE COMMITMENT STATEMENT

Northern District Community Health is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and has zero tolerance for child abuse. We are committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. In particular, we pay attention to the cultural safety of Indigenous children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, children who identify as LGBTIQA+, as well as children with a disability. Every person involved at Northern District Community Health has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do. See our [website](#) for our full Child Safe Commitment Statement.

Vision

Building healthy, inclusive and connected rural communities.

Purpose

To improve health and wellbeing and reduce rural health inequity by working across the social determinants of health.

Values

We trust, encourage and look out for each other.



We have the courage and agility to champion new ways.



We have an eye on shaping the future.



We can be counted on to deliver and do things well.



We listen.



We know diversity of people, experiences and perspectives make our work stronger



Follow Us on Social Media!



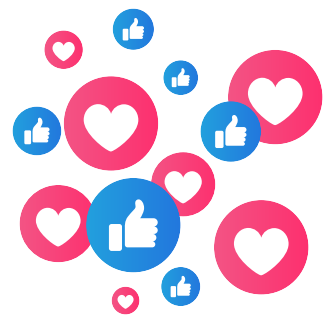
Facebook



LinkedIn



Instagram



Anglesea Camp 2025

What an adventure! 46 Children, youth and families of our Kethawil Pembengguk (Many Children) and Tyipen Kwe (Happy Friends) programs ventured to Anglesea to enjoy 4 action packed days of Culture and fun on Country there.

Monday evening, we had the wonderful Indigenous mentor, Jony Berry (Mr Universe, professional model, Australian of the year, LGBTQ+ advocate, a founding member and youth mentor of Ballawinnie Tasmanian Aboriginal Community, and co-founder of B.Excellence Program, providing Cultural support and mentoring to high-risk Indigenous youth). For many on the camp it was their first time talking and interacting with a celebrity, there was much excitement. Jony spoke about his life and how he could link the young people in with career opportunities and work pathways. Jony signed photos for the kids so they will remember the camp and, in many years, share with their own kids the things they learnt and experienced!



On the Tuesday, the adventurous attended Surf School and beach play whilst others enjoyed a Cultural canoe experience on the Anglesea River. One interesting snippet of knowledge worth sharing is a hunting trick used by Mob when they were fishing! The canoes were very flat and at night river mud was used to create a small fire pit at the front of the canoe, protecting the canoe itself from catching ablaze - the light from this small fire attracted fish to the surface making them easy to net or spear. How clever is that!

The afternoon saw everyone back at camp enjoying YMCA activities of archery, giant swing, and undertaking the Cultural trail. We were all pretty exhausted by this time! Community then enjoyed a very special Welcome to Country performed by local Kristie in the evening, who spoke the Welcome in Language and shared some special cultural knowledge. We acknowledge the Wadawurrung people as the Traditional owners of the land we camped and gave our respect to Elders past and present.



**Story continues on
the next page!**





Tuesday night saw Community hear a talk from the local Ecologic team about night animals and their unique features and adaptations. Community enjoyed an amazing display of preserved animals, native and otherwise, to show everyone these animals up close. On the night walk we were hunting animals, though we may have been a tad loud as not many animals appeared - whoops. The children did enjoy finding deer prints, seeing spiders and ants, and right at the end of the walk finding a baby brown snake!

On Wednesday there was much fun to be had in the water at the Adventure Park, while others went on a 'Rockpool Ramble' adventure learning about the animals that live in the rockpools, their importance to our country, as well as Indigenous value. Anglesea is home to one of the largest middens in Australia and viewing this midden and everything it represented was pretty special! The kids found anemones, sponges, barnacles, chitons, crabs, crustaceans, a dead penguin, small fish, sea stars, sea slugs, a purple sea urchin as well as enjoyed trying the flavours of wild growing neptunes necklace, karkalla leaves and ripe fruits, plus sea parsley.



Indigenous performer Ganga Giri treated Community to a performance Wednesday night. Lots of fun was had listening to and learning about the Yidaki (didgeridoo), as well as playing along with clapsticks, painting ourselves with ochre and dancing. Ganga was very engaging and very tired kids and families perked up and had a lot of fun! Ganga also led a men's group where they talked more about the Yidaki and how to play it, whilst the women enjoyed Indigenous painting. Some of the artwork that was produced was pretty special!



On Thursday on the way home we took a trip to the chocolate factory, so much chocolate everywhere!

The time together well and truly supported forming stronger bonds and friendships, it was beautiful to witness and be a part of these transformations. Country, Culture, Mob, we had it all.

This camp was made possible by the very appreciated funding and support from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - thank you. NDCH would also like to thank the Anglesea Discovery Camp, part of the YMCA Victoria for their support to have our families attend this camp, the staff and facilities were amazing!

See the next page for more photos! 



  **Splashing into the New Year!**  

NDCH has received youth funding for Engage and FreeZA for another 3 years! This will allow the team to support and produce various events between January 2025 and December 2027.

To celebrate and kick the year off, our youth team ran 5 pool party events across the Loddon/Gannawarra Shires. Each event featured two films, one focused at families and the following focused on a youth/teen demographic.

Overall they had approximately 700 attendees for the events in Boort, Wedderburn, Cohuna, Koondrook and Kerang. Although the weather fluctuated from raining to very hot, it was great to deliver 5 events across the week.

NDCH would like to acknowledge the support of Gannawarra Shire Council, Loddon Shire Council and North Central LLEN in these events.

The team looks forward to creating plans for the next 12 months and encourage any youth interested in events to get it touch!



Save the Date - Gannawarra Sports Club Dinner Returns!

Following the success of last year's inaugural event, Gannawarra Shire Council is excited to announce the return of the Sports Club Dinner this March!

Booking details will be announced soon! Keep an eye on the Gannawarra Shire Council's social media for updates.



**SAVE THE DATE
SPORTS DINNER**

THE GRANTS GUY

**KOONDROOK RECREATION RESERVE
Tuesday 25 March, 2025
6:00 PM FOR 6.45PM START**

- Hear "The Grants Guy" provide practical and proactive advice for grant success
- Mark the launch of the Gannawarra Fair Access Policy

Dinner provided
Drinks at bar
prices

Australian Government
GANNAWARRA Shire Council
Community Recovery Gannawarra
VICTORIA State Government

Supported by Gannawarra Shire Flood Recovery Funding through the Gannawarra Community Resilience Committee



Georgia Anderson

Carer Respite Program
Facilitator



New Carer Support Group in Cohuna

Are you a carer? Do you look after someone who needs extra help with aging, dementia, illness, disability, or mental health?

The 'Support for Carers Program' is starting a new group in Cohuna just for you. This is a safe and confidential space for you to gain support, knowledge and learn about local services that can help.

The group will meet on the **second Tuesday of each month, starting in February 2025**. Local service providers will attend to share information, and we'll bring in guest speakers you ask for.

Georgia, who already runs two successful groups in Kerang, will lead this group.

If you have any questions or would like further information, contact our office on **03 5451 0200** and ask to speak with Georgia.

Please continue onto the next page to view the Cohuna Carers Group Flyer.



COHUNA CARERS

Monthly gatherings for carers or those with care needs. An opportunity to connect with others, ask questions, gain assistance or simply have a cuppa and a chat

**EVERY SECOND TUESDAY OF
THE MONTH 10-12PM**

CONTACT GEORGIA FOR MORE INFORMATION
AND TO RSVP
LOCATION: 33 KING EDWARD STREET

5451 0200

* Back to School and Work

Fueling Your Days with Healthy Lunches!






As the new year picks up steam, many of us are heading back to school or work. It's the perfect time to set positive routines, and one great habit to embrace is packing healthy lunches!

From **February 9th to 15th**, we're celebrating National Lunchbox Week, an initiative that highlights the importance of nutritious, balanced meals for energy and focus throughout the day.



LUNCHBOX TIPS FOR THE SCHOOL TRANSITION

Starting school can be a big changes for children. Here are some quick tips to make it easier:

	Practice at home: Pack snacks and lunches in a lunchbox before school starts to help them get used to it.		Involve your child: Let them help choose what goes in their lunchbox - like cherry tomatoes, apple slices, or cheese.
	Food safety: Teach them to eat perishable foods (like yogurt or eggs) earlier in the day during hot weather.		Test containers: Ensure kids can open their lunchbox and any packets easily.
	Structured meals: Try timed, lunchbox-style meals with other kids a few weeks before school begins.		Discuss leftovers: Talk with your child or their teacher to understand why food might come back uneaten.

Whether you're packing lunch for yourself, your kids, or both, small changes can make a big impact. For more healthy eating tips, lunchbox ideas and more, check out <https://www.lunchboxweek.org>!

Let's make this a delicious and nutritious start to the year!

Click the icon below to view a recipe chosen by one of our Dietitians!



LUNCHBOX NOTES

Brighten your child's day by adding these to their lunch boxes for a nice surprise!





Updates from Kerang Neighbourhood House

Volunteer at the Kerang Neighbourhood House Op Shop!

Are you looking for a way to give back to your community, meet new people, and develop valuable skills? The Kerang Neighbourhood House Op Shop is looking for more helping hands, and they'd love to welcome you to their team!

If you have any questions or would like further information, contact Kerang Neighbourhood House at 4403 6640.

Click the Facebook icon to view their original post.



Op Shop Volunteers Needed

Call Kerang Neighbourhood House on 4403 6640

Centrelink registered



Profits go back into helping the community

Morning or afternoon shifts available



Morning Mates - Men's Breakfast BBQ

-Free-
**Men's BBQ
Breakfast**
-Morning Mates-

Starting this January
31st
All Welcome



6am - 9am

Fridays

At Kerang Neighbourhood House

-Brought to you by -



Whether you're looking to meet new people, catch up with mates, or simply enjoy a hearty brekkie, this event is for men of all ages and backgrounds.

If you have any questions or would like further information, contact Kerang Neighbourhood House at 4403 6640.

Click the Facebook icon to view their original post.



ACTIVITIES, CRAFT & GAMES

KIDS

AFTER SCHOOL

SCHOOL

COST: \$5
HCC: \$2

Tuesdays, 3:30 - 6pm **CLUB**

Kerang Neighbourhood House

CALL
4403 6640
TO BOOK

ALL WELCOME

ALL STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE,
HAVE A WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND HAVE HAD CRIMINAL
CHECKS UNDERTAKEN

DRINK &
SNACK
PROVIDED



Kerang Neighbourhood House
11 Scoresby Street, Kerang
03 4403 6640

riac Tips:



For carers/parents of children who are neurodiverse or on the autism spectrum

TIPS FOR FIRST DAY OF THE 2025 SCHOOL YEAR

Children who are neurodiverse or on the autism spectrum often experience separation anxiety, particularly when starting or returning to school at the beginning of the new year. To help reduce your child's separation anxiety when starting this school year, try the following tips -

- ▷ Talk about what will happen at school drop off the day before so your child knows what to expect.
- ▷ Use a 'social story' to help them understand how to handle the separation.
- ▷ Have a morning routine and schedule to ensure a calm atmosphere before school drop off.
- ▷ Use positive language at drop off time. Instead of saying "I'm leaving", say "I will pick you up at..."
- ▷ Be patient and understanding with your child if they become upset. Let them know it is ok to feel upset.

Come along to our **Carer Support Groups** to learn more tips and enjoy a cuppa and a chat with other parents who have faced similar struggles.

Echuca Walking Group	Echuca Carer Self-Care Hub	Online Carer Support Group
When: 9:30am to 11:00am 2nd Wednesday each month Where: Lesline Street Carpark	When: 1:30pm to 2:30pm 2nd Wednesday each month Where: Echuca Neighbourhood House	When: 12pm 3rd Monday each month To register contact Carolyn, 0488 605 363

For more information:



carers@riac.org.au



Carolyn - 0488 605 363

BOORT



Lifeline
LODDON MALLEE

safeTALK
FREE
WORKSHOPS

Thursday March 6th

9.30am - 1pm

Boort Resource & Information Centre

119-121 Godfrey Street

**A half-day alertness workshop
that prepares anyone to
become a suicide alert helper.**

Scan the QR Code or click [HERE](#) to sign up!



This activity is supported by funding from Murray PHN through the Australian Government's PHN Program.



DOCTORS

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Dr Zoya Sadeghipour

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

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Heather Spence

NURSES

Jen Brereton-Team leader
Shannon Laursen
Kristen Hipwell
Narelle Weekly
Sharee Edge
Rosi Bear
Jen Emonson
Marg Winship

ADMIN STAFF

Aliesha O'Neill (Practice
Coordinator)
Nicole Betson
Hilda Higgins
Leonie Garner
Taylah Clements (casual)

BEYOND BLUE

Anyone feeling anxious or depressed
beyondblue.org.au | 1300 22 46 36

KIDS HELPLINE

Counselling for young people aged 5-25
kidshelpline.com.au | 1800 55 18 00

LIFELINE

Anyone having a personal crisis
lifeline.org.au | 13 11 14

HEAD TO HEALTH

*Support from experienced mental health
professionals*
headtohelp.org.au | 1800 59 52 12

MENSLINE

Men with emotional or relationship concerns
mensline.org.au | 1300 78 99 78

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS INTAKE

For people needing help with alcohol & drug issues
www.acso.org.au/aod-mh-support | 1300 022 760

REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH TRIAGE

Assessment service for people experiencing mental illness
1300 363 788

ORANGE DOOR

People experiencing family violence
orangedoor.vic.gov.au | LODDON: 1800 51 23 59 | MALLEE: 1800 29
09 43

VICTORIAN HOUSING SUPPORT

Crisis housing support
1800 825 955

AFTER HOURS GP ADVICE & SUPPORT LINE

1800 022 222

NURSE ON CALL

Caring, professional health advice 24 hours a day
1300 60 60 24



Clinic Services

- GP Consultations
- Health Assessments
- Nurse Practitioner Consultations
- ABI (Ankle-Brachial Index Test)
- Medicals
- Immunisations
- Travel Vaccines
- GP Management Plans
- GP Mental Health Plans
- Specialist Referrals
- Ear Wash
- Skin Check Biopsy & Excision
- Cryotherapy
- Diathermy
- Spirometry (Lung Function Test)
- 24 Hour BP Monitoring
- 24 Hour Heart Monitoring
- ECG (electrocardiogram)
- Hearing Aid Specialist
- Telehealth Services
- Cardiologist
- Pathology services onsite

Procedures have a practice fee. Call our Medical Receptionists for appointments or information: 5452 1366.

OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCIES

In the event of a medical emergency please ring 000. For urgent after hours care, please attend or call Kerang District Health on (03) 5450 9200. If you are seen by one of our Clinic Doctors at Hospital, please be aware that a \$50 co-payment will be charged.

PHONE CALLS

If you need to speak to a Doctor during business hours, your call will be returned at the Doctor's earliest convenience. Please be prepared to leave your contact details with the Medical Reception. If you have an abnormal test result you will be contacted by the Doctor or clinic staff.

COMPLAINTS

We welcome your suggestions, complaints and compliments. Complaints should be addressed to the CEO of NDCH. If you are unhappy with how we manage your complaint, you can contact the:

Health Complaints Commissioner
 Phone: 1300 582 113
 Level 26, 570 Bourke Street, MELBOURNE VIC 3001.

HOURS AND APPOINTMENTS

Monday to Friday: 8.30am - 5.00pm
 Consultations are by appointment only
 Double appointment times can be made by request.
 Please let staff know if there are any specific needs.
 We would appreciate early cancellations where possible to allow us to contact other patients we may have on a waiting list.



Contact Us

KERANG COMMUNITY HEALTH

24 Fitzroy Street
Monday to Friday
8.30am to 5.00pm
Phone: 03 5451 0200
Email: info@ndch.org.au

MEDICAL CLINIC

34 Fitzroy Street
Monday to Friday
8.30am to 5.00pm
Phone: 03 5452 1366

COHUNA

25 King Edward Street
Monday to Friday
9.00am to 4.00pm
Closed 12:00pm to 1:00pm
Phone: 03 5451 0250

PYRAMID HILL

12 Victoria Street
Monday to Friday
9:00am to 10:00am
(other times by appointment)
Phone: 03 5455 7065

BOORT

119-121 Godfrey Street
Open by appointment only
Phone: 03 5451 0260

QUAMBATOOK

33 Mildred Street
Mon, Wed and Friday
9:00am to 10:00am
(other times by appointment)
Phone: 03 5457 1300

SWAN HILL

107 McCallum Street
Monday to Friday
9:00am to 4:00pm
Closed 12:00pm to 1:00pm
Phone: 03 5451 0200

We share professional spaces in Koondrook, Charlton, Sea Lake, Donald & Wycheproof too.



Northern District Community Health

Thank you for reading.

www.ndch.org.au

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Australian Government
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

