



linking communities ~ bridging the gaps



Winter Edition 2023

Forster Neighbourhood Centre has a new home!

After a long period of inadequate premises, Forster Neighbourhood Centre can finally say it has a new home! Opening on Monday 20 March, 2023 at 3 Lake Street, Forster (the old bottlo next to the Lakes and Oceans), Forster Neighbourhood Centre welcomes the whole community to come visit the new centrally located hub.



The new premises is a Council - owned building provided at subsidised commercial rent for up to 5 years for use by Forster Neighbourhood Centre. The site was essentially a bare shed and with the support of government grants, the site has been fit-out as a central community hub complete with a community meeting room, interview rooms and a safe place for all Great Lakes residents to reach out for support. The purpose built fit-out was proudly funded by the NSW Government in association with the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and the Forster Neighbourhood Centre.

Forster Neighbourhood Centre has operated continuously in the community for over 40 years. Their new home provides the capacity needed to meet the growing demand for support and services. With the rising cost of living, the Centre is experiencing unprecedented requests for support reaching almost 100 requests per week.

We enjoy the support of local businesses Club Forster, Eastern Tiger Restaurant, Butterfingers Bakery, Evermore and Quota to meet this demand however having the space to store and distribute these generous donations is a game changer. It has taken a whole of community approach to deliver this asset to the community, thank you to all our supporters.



 **Good Shepherd**
No Interest Loans

If you are on a low income and need help to get new items. See page 3

WE HAVE A NEW LOGO designed
by KITANA PAULSON



LOGO MEANING

The outer circle represents the sand and earth, with the aqua representing the water.

The black part represents our people with the white lines representing the internal journey that each person is on. The design in the middle represents 'meeting place'.



Introduction to our New Staff Members



LILLY LERTSINPAKDEE

Lilly joined the Forster Neighbourhood Centre team in September 2022 initially as a volunteer then our NILS Officer. Lilly has over twenty years' experience working in not-for-profit organisations in various roles involving community projects, networking, counselling, case management and group facilitation.

She holds a Bachelor of Community Service Work (Family and Community) and Diplomas in Business (HR), Accounting and Leisure and Health and is passionate about social justice and being part of the process in making positive changes in someone's life.

The team enjoys Lilly's interest in cooking and sharing food with friends.



KITANA PAULSON

Kitana is a very proud Worimi/Bundjalung woman who has grown up in the Forster-Tuncurry area her whole life, joining the Forster Neighbourhood Centre in January 2023 as our Programs Officer.

At 23 years old, Kitana brings 4 years experience in Community Services, particularly cultural support and mentoring for Aboriginal children/young people in Out of Home Care. She joined our team to take the opportunity to share her skills and experience with her local Worimi community.

Kitana is a talented Artist who is passionate about connecting to culture and the strength of a community.

She encourages the younger generations to learn and grow as much as they can through our upcoming cultural camps and existing programs facilitated by local Aboriginal people's, including Worimi Elders. Her dream is that Indigenous youth feel empowered to come through as strong local Leaders working toward positive change. Kitana believes in being the change she wants to see, and has chosen Forster Neighbourhood Centre to continue her journey.



LISA HINTON

Lisa joined Forster Neighbourhood Centre in January 2023 as our NILS Officer. Lisa brings 30 Administration and Bookkeeping years' experience, holding qualifications in Frontline and Business Management. Lisa chose to join our team because of the great services that are provided to the local community, and for the opportunity to be able to assist those requiring support and assistance. She is encouraged by the opportunities the NILS loans provide to our clients, allowing them to access funds in all sorts of circumstances and empowering them to manage their own finances. Being relatively new to the area, moving here from Western Sydney 7 years ago. Lisa enjoys fishing, camping, and spending time by the water.



Good Shepherd NO INTEREST LOANS SCHEME (NILS)

No Interest Loans

Need a new Washing Machine or Laptop? Don't go to cashies or get a pay day loan – you may end up losing more than you get. No Interest Loans (NILs) have No interest or fees. EVER. Borrow up to \$2000 with 0% interest. NILs come from a community organisation that makes no money off your loan. So don't go without, get a No Interest Loan. For essentials like a fridge, washing machine, laptop, phone. School fees & booklists. Medical & dental. Car rego or repairs. Even things like bond and moving expenses. (No cash). Call Forster Neighbourhood Centre on 6555 4351 or go to www.fnc.org.au

Brought to you by Good Shepherd, funded by the Department of Social Services, in partnership with NAB and NSW Department of Fair Trading.

Need a new one?



Need a new one?

Don't go without.



No Interest Loans

0% interest \$0 fees

Only pay back what you borrow.

New laptop?



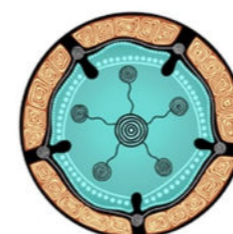
New Laptop?

Get the Tech you Need!



No Interest Loans

0% Interest. \$0 fees. 100% yours.



FORSTER
NEIGHBOURHOOD
CENTRE

Call Today!
6555 4351
3 Lake Street Forster

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

There has been plenty happening for the first part of 2023. Besides moving to our new purpose - built premises, here are just a few of the highlights:

Worimi Women Cultural Camps

We were successful in receiving funding from the NSW Government and Regional Arts NSW to work alongside the local Worimi community to build the capacity for cultural knowledge sharing over time through a series of Cultural Camps.

In February, we held the first community consultation for the project with the first camp planned for May 2023. Proudly funded by the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund in association with the Regional Arts Fund NSW and the Forster Neighbourhood Centre.



Aim High

Facilitated by Tanika Davis and Kitana Paulson, the Aim High project delivered a series of school holiday activities in April including Art workshops, NRL clinics, Surf Awareness/Learn to Surf and Fishing workshops. Up to 30 local Aboriginal children attended each day, learning new skills and developing talent in a new area.

The Aim High project is funded by the Children and Young People Wellbeing Initiative.



Womens Shed - Watch this Space!

We received a small Womens NSW Grant to re-establish the Great Lakes Womens Shed that has been on hiatus since 2014. We have some passionate and dedicated women in the community who are keen to see this great initiative get up and running again. More news to come...

MidCoast Aboriginal Action Plan

Our Program Officer, Kitana Paulson represented Forster Neighbourhood Centre at community consultations on the MidCoast Council Aboriginal Action Plan. Over two days, community members came together to provide feedback into the plan.

Better Learning Better Communities

Our tutoring program continued during Term 1, held at Tobwabba AMS. BLBC is a one-on-one tutoring program where Aboriginal children and tutors work together in ways the children want to learn. Learning together, BLBC provides an opportunity for mutual respect and trust to build between tutors and children, enhancing learning outcomes for the children.



Forster Farmers Market

The Market is on the 3rd Saturday of each month 8.00am - 12noon. In the grounds of the Visitor Information Centre, Little Street Forster.

The Forster Farmers Market supports over 20 regular local producers to sell their fresh produce direct to the public.

Aim High

An overview of this year's April School Holidays:

We ran four workshops this school holidays coordinated by our Project Coordinator, Tanika Davis and Program Officer, Kitana Paulson.

The workshops included:

1. Aboriginal Art workshop led by local Worimi Artist, Brittney Paulson
2. NRL Clinic led by Newcastle Knights WNRL players Caitlan Johnston, Kyra Simon and Caitlin Moran
3. Surf Awareness/Surfing Clinic led by Dave Rankin and Simon Basil (Great Lakes Surf School) supported by local community member Kyla Simon and staff from Homebase Youth Services
4. 'Learn to Fish' day led by local community leaders Lena Donnelly, Keegan Dodd and Shaiye Leon.



As an additional activity to nurture the artistic talent of the children, the Aim High project is supporting a local initiative called Buuranbal Marray.

Buuranbal Marray (Spirit Dreaming) Art Exhibition 2023

By creating the Buuranbal Marray Art Gallery we plan to shine a light on the stories that are part of Worimi Dreaming (and stories of truth-telling from history within the Worimi community). We aim to encourage as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as we can to engage, share and celebrate different aspects of Culture as part of the journey to the exhibition date. The exhibition during the NAIDOC period will be the end point but it is the journey to this time that holds the key to achieving our goal. Listening to Elders, visiting places of significance 'On Country', reading the literature available in books and online, and learning how to create stories through art will provide the opportunities for Cultural sharing and learning along the way. The event will be the culmination of learning with a particular focus for this year on stories through art. It involves a range of age groups across the community and depending on the age and experiences of the participants, Buuranbal Marray would require participants to either share or strengthen their knowledge of those stories that are significant within the Worimi community.

The Buuranbal Marray Art Exhibition will provide a platform for our school communities and members of the wider community to learn about and celebrate the Culture and story of the Worimi people and nation through the stories they share. This exhibition will raise the awareness of non-indigenous visitors to the gallery of the rich Cultural knowledge, skills and history that exists, and the positive work within our community to partner with the Worimi community towards Reconciliation.



Food security

It's understandable that under COVID-19 there are many more people relying on food hampers. **Please don't go hungry.**

- **Fresh food and bread from The Salvation Army in South Street on Tuesdays and Fridays** from 11.30 am to 1.00pm. Enquiries 6557 2076.
- **Lunch** is provided from the **Catholic Church Hall in Lake Street on Wednesdays & Thursday** between 12noon and 1pm. Enquiries:6554 6401
- **Pantry Item/Food packages** can be picked up from the **Neighbourhood Centre, 3 Lake St Forster Monday to Friday.**

We try to be discrete and understand that this is the first time you may have had to ask for help. Ring ahead and we can have it ready for you (but we will ask your surname, year of birth, children's ages how many you are feeding - this will help us tailor the food package to your requirements and to ensure that the same people are not coming every week, making it available for more in need). Enquiries 6555 4351.

EAPA - help paying your electricity bills

is available from the State Department of Industry through Service NSW and/or the Forster Neighbourhood Centre can help you with your application. Residents can apply for up to \$400 twice a year - especially if you have been financially impacted by COVID-19. You must reside in the premises that is named on the electricity bill and you must have a current bill to apply... preferably before the due date, so you can still get your 'pay on time' discount. Drop into the Neighbourhood Centre or apply electronically: www.servicensw.com.auEAPA> EAPA

Some Top Tips to save you energy and money around your home.

Anytime



Switch off appliances at the wall when you're not using them.

In the living areas



Turn off lights when you leave a room.

In the laundry



Wash clothes in cold water.

Hang clothes to dry.

TELSTRA - help paying your home landline bills

is available from Telstra via The Smith Family through Forster Neighbourhood Centre. \$50 vouchers are available with restrictions.



Free Financial Counselling

Available Mon to Thurs through Mid North Coast Financial Counselling Service 1300 662540 or call Steven direct on 0448 676 091

Legal Aid

Every second Wednesday a **Civil Lawyer** holds an outreach program from 10:30am to 12.30pm. Call 02 55251600 before each Wednesday for an appointment **Family law:** Clients must ring 1800 551 589 to book an appointment over the phone. Telephone appointments only at this stage.

The Vision Impaired Support Group

The group consists of adults from all ages and stages of vision impairment. Interacting with this group impressed upon us how brave and joyful the clients are faced with such barriers in life.

If you or someone you know could benefit by participating in this social inclusion group please contact Rachel on 6555 4351.

Forster Neighbourhood Centre Local Men's Support Group

Join us every Friday 12noon - 2.00pm at The Bullring Forster

Where we provide:

- A free cup of coffee
 - Information relating to services available in our Community
 - A non judgemental, informal space for men
 - The best view in Forster
 - A place to unwind and relax
 - An opportunity to meet and connect
 - A chance to talk about issues that affect us
 - A place to share your story
- Enquiries - contact Steven on 65554351.

Community Donations

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING BACK



Thank you

To Butterfingers Bakery who are generously donating fresh bread for our emergency relief pantry.

Thank you

Donations of crochet knee rugs received from Christine Gilchrist, Greenacre (here on holidays)



Thank you

Evermore Retirement Living who donated miscellaneous items for gifts to be used by vulnerable families over the Christmas Period.



Thank you

Banks and Dade Chiro + Wellness who generously donated smallgoods for Christmas Hampers.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

15-21 MAY 2023

THE CHANGE MAKERS WEEK

To all our great volunteers who shared a thank you luncheon at Forster Golf Club from Forster Neighbourhood Centre management.



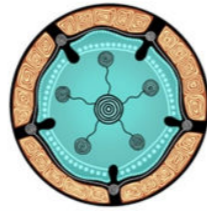
UPCOMING EVENT



THE BIG SING BY THE SEA

Is happening again 10 - 12 November 2023.

If you would like to be involved in the organising committee, please call Felicity on 0411 566 593.



FORSTER NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Forster Neighbourhood Centre's Opening Hours

Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 9am - 4pm
Thursday & Friday 9am - 12.30pm
3 Lake Street Forster
02 6555 4351

Community Strengthening - 5 days each week Information, referral and advice

NILS - No Interest Loan Scheme
Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Child and Family Targeted Support Service 5 days each week

Information, Advice and Referral/Parenting Programs/
Family Capacity Building/Personal Counselling/Support
for Parents with children 0 - 12

Emergency Relief

Help with emergency food parcels

EAPA Vouchers

We can help you access electricity vouchers to help with your bill.

WDO (Work Development Orders)

Monday by appointment Pay off your State Debt by
volunteering @ \$30 credit per hour, or by attending
counselling or training sessions @ \$50 credit per hour

Legal Aid - Family and Civil Law

Civil Law appointments every 2nd Wednesday
Appointments essential - 02 5525 1600

Better Learning Better Communities

One-on-one tutor training for young Aboriginal students
Monday afternoons at Tobwabba Aboriginal Medical Service.
Enquiries to Kitana.

Comprehensive tutor training - contact Patsy 0431 208 319

Coomba Park After School Project (ASHOW)

Every Wednesday afternoon during school term.
Contact Felicity on 0411 566 593 or Elaine on 0419 680 987

Tax Help July - October Appointments necessary

Local Men's Support Group

Fridays 12.30 to 2.30pm.
Enquiries to Steven: 0405 375 470

Vision Impaired Support Group

Held 3rd Thursday of the month - Contact 6555 4351

Baraya Wukulda (singing together)

For enquiries, contact Felicity on 0411 566 593 or
Aunty Janice on 0408 674 604

The Big Sing by the Sea

27 - 29 October 2023. Contact Felicity 0411 566 593

Cultural Cruises

Check our website for upcoming cruises



Forster Farmers Market
8am - 12 noon
Catch us on the 3rd Saturday of
each month @ Forster
Enquiries to Linda: 0421 347 273

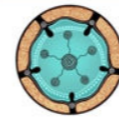


Forster Community Garden
Tuesday
Mornings from
9am - 12noon
More volunteers
Welcome
6555 4351




Rainy day?
Here's how to pay.

No Interest Loans
0% interest \$0 fees
Ever.



FORSTER NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Call Today!

6555 4351

3 Lake Street Forster

Rainy day expense? Expenses always come up and now there's a better way to pay for them. Borrow up to \$2000 for essentials - No interest, no fees, no catch. No Interest Loans (NILs) are from not-for-profit community groups. When you pay back your loan we lend to someone else. There are no credit checks and we don't judge you - we just help you get what you need, brand new. We only lend to you if you can afford it so you don't get into trouble.

For essentials like a fridge, washing machine, laptop, phone. Or for school fees & booklists. Medical & dental expenses. Car rego or repairs. Even things like bond and moving expenses. (You can't get cash).

Brought to you by Good Shepherd, funded by the Department of Social Services, in partnership with NAB and NSW Department of Fair Trading.



Housing and Homelessness

Link 2 Home - 1800 152 152

Social Housing Register D.V Line
1800 656 463

Great Lakes & Manning Youth Homelessness
02 6551 6996

Great Lakes Women's Shelter
02 6555 9835

Compass Housing Office
1300 333 733

Samaritans "The Hub"
02 6539 3400

Rentstart
1800 422 322
(support at FNC)

Tenancy Advice
1800 654 504
or 02 4969 7666



www.fnc.org.au

www.facebook.com/forsternc

go to

www.mymidcoast.com.au > forster neighbourhood centre