

# Kangaroo Flat Family Day

## Dave Fagg

The end of school holidays is often a drag for families. The kids are bored, and parents become exasperated with endless requests for activities. That's why the Kangaroo Flat Family Day was created. Held at the end of the 2017 winter school holidays, it was a perfect opportunity for families to get together, have fun, and create a positive mood before the school term began.

To get the low down, I met with Carol Rasmussen, from Kangaroo Flat Community House, and Kim Saddler, principal at Kangaroo Flat Primary School. Carol and Kim have forged a strong friendship through their collaboration on the Family Day, and happily chatted to me about the day and its outcomes.

The Family Day was held in July 2017 in the gym of the Kangaroo Flat Primary School. "Given it was winter, we decided to hold it indoors," Carol explains. Kim takes over: "We had a jumping castle, face-painting, balloon twisting, a band from Crusoe College, and Kangaroo Flat Library hosted a 'story corner'". A variety of food, including a BBQ, coffee van and halal selections for the growing Afghani community, completed a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Families gave very positive comments about the event, particularly the activities for children such as an inflatable gauntlet run, and the native animals that were on show.

Although Carol and Kim would love to see the Family Day completely funded by the Kangaroo Flat community, they needed a community grant to support the event. The grant process was unfamiliar, so Carol and Kim turned to the City of Greater Bendigo for some help. The City runs grants workshops on topics such as demonstrating the need for your project, and how to form partnerships with other groups (workshop dates are publicised [here](#)).

Carol and Kim rolled up, expecting to listen to council staff talk for a couple of hours. What they experienced was very different. Carol explains: "We got to talk to ordinary people who have applied for grants before, and learned from their experience. That was excellent." Kim loved speaking with council staff one-to-one: "They discussed our idea with us, and helped us develop it. They even proofread our application!"

Narelle Lyle, from Bendigo council, encourages applicants to attend the workshops, and to contact council staff for guidance on questions big and small: "We want to assist people to submit the best application they can; a well-crafted application gives your group the best chance of success."

As our conversation drew to a close, Carol and Kim let me in on a secret: the Family Day was not their idea, but the brainchild of Kristy Bennett, from the council, who ran the event in 2016. Kristy says, “It was great to run the first event, but we wanted it to be owned by the local community, so we handed it over to a committee of local organisations.”

As well as the Community House and Primary School, the committee includes Kangaroo Flat Community Enterprise, and Enjoy Church, and more are keen to join.

Kim says that the decision to hand the event over to the community has led to unexpected benefits. “The Family Day was fun, but the longer-term benefit is the relationships we’ve built with the other committee members. We’ve also had lots of local businesses and organisations approach us for the 2018 event, wanting to support it and be involved. We did not predict that, but it’s very encouraging.”

These relationships are now a foundation for new and exciting possibilities in the Kangaroo Flat community.