

AUSTRALIAN KOOKABURRA KIDS FOUNDATION



Who We Are

Established in 2002, the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation provides evidence based, age appropriate, prevention and early intervention mental health education programs to young people aged 8-18 years who are living in a family impacted by mental illness. Designed by mental health professionals, our programs are proven to empower young people to thrive beyond the impacts of family mental illness. Delivered within a peer-based, social and recreational setting, our Kookaburra Kids programs aim to provide connection, improve mental health literacy and encourage help seeking behaviours.

The Need – Defence Context

Veterans and their families face unique experiences during a military career, and when transitioning to civilian life. Military life can involve significant challenges, including exposure to life-and-death situations, that can adversely affect mental health.

Psychological challenges are among the most common health issues facing veterans and Defence personnel.

Military life can have significant impacts on the extended family –spouses and of course children. Key aspects of military life, like deployments and relocations, have a big impact on children.

Program Objectives

- Educate young people on mental illness to facilitate greater understanding and empathy.
- Provide a safe environment to connect with peers with similar lived experiences, leading to decreased feelings of isolation.
- Develop coping skills and build resilience.
- Ensure regular contact with people in the program through a range of access points, connect them with relevant support services to meet their needs, and regularly monitor their progress.
- Add value and compliment clinical and non-clinical mental health services already provided (referring on where needed).

Kookaburra Kids offers a range of programs specifically developed to support and empower young people from families experiencing mental illness.

Our programs offer participants a much-needed break, whilst introducing them to new friends from similar situations, and equipping them with lifelong knowledge and resources to help them reach their highest potential.

Our programs

We offer three resilience-building services that we equally encourage our young people to participate in. Though unique in their own way, each service promotes mental health literacy and safe, positive help-seeking behaviours while uniting kids from similar situations to assure they feel understood and supported.

Kookaburra Kids camps

Kookaburra Kids camps are free and offer young people from families experiencing mental illness the opportunity to learn and grow while having fun in a safe, supportive environment. As expected, campers get the chance to thrive in a new place, participate in fun outdoor activities and make new friends.

What makes Kookaburra Kids camps unique is that woven through the program are important lessons about mental illness that empower kids with skills and abilities they can take home. ▶ **Learn more at:**

www.kookaburrakids.org.au/camps/

Kookaburra Kids activity days

Held during school holidays, Kookaburra Kids activity days provide the opportunity to catch up with friends from camp for a fun and free day out. Activities can include ice skating, laser tag, bowling, movies, putt putt golf and beach activities, to name a few.

These days present another great opportunity for our young people to connect with friends from similar situations, empowering them by building up their mental health knowledge. ▶ **Learn more at:**

www.kookaburrakids.org.au/activity-days/

Kookaburra Kids Connect

Kookaburra Kids Connect is our new interactive online program where kids, new and existing engage with each other in supportive, strengths-based resilience discussions.

These chat sessions, run by youth for youth, are hosted by Kookaburra Kids staff and volunteers to provide a safe, supportive setting where young people living in families experiencing mental illness can express themselves.

By expanding our program digitally, we can deliver our services to more young people across the country, including those in rural areas. ▶ **Learn more at:** www.kookaburrakids.org.au/kookaburra-kids-connect/

Like to know more?

▶ **Visit our website for further information on eligibility criteria, how to refer a young person and more:**

www.kookaburrakids.org.au

Or, email us at: info@kookaburrakids.org.au