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By Ruby Stanley



Happy patients: The Koala Kids Foundation continue to provide services to make treatment a little easier for young children. Photo: SUPPLIED

Koala Kids get healthy funding boost

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SUPPORTING hospitals around the state, not-for-profit Koala Kids Foundation have received a grant as part of the CommBank Staff Foundation Community program.

The \$10,000 grant will go towards enabling the organisation to continue providing "small things" to children and young people undergoing cancer treatment with major hospitals in regional Victoria, including Ballarat Health.

Koala Kids Foundation Amanda Mandie director said they've been working alongside Ballarat Health Services to provide additional care for the city's paediatric patients over the last eight years.

"All of the little things that are used therapeutically or for play, engagement or entertainment, we ensure that as many of those things as possible are available for children and their families in the Ballarat paediatric unit," she said.

"Our vision is to touch every child and young person during cancer treatment in Victoria and where children with other illnesses are located nearby, we don't discriminate.

"Whether that be LEGO, jigsaw puzzles or something like a lolly pop, every three weeks, we send something to the hospitals for the children to do."

Ms Mandie said the funding came at a vital time for the foundation as its two major fundraising events which account for cancelled due to the pandemic.

"It's very exciting to get a grant of this magnitude at any time but I can honestly say particularly during COVID when we aren't able to undertake our normal fundraising activities," she said.

In addition to funding one of the foundations core initiatives which provides birthday cakes for children all year round, the \$10,000 grant will also go towards lucky dips, superhero costumes and diversion kits for young people spending time in hospital without any visitors.

Although, Ms Mandie said these projects are only the beginning of the support the Koala Kids Foundation aim to provide not just patients but also their families and healthcare workers.



Director of Koala Kids Foundation
Amanda Mandie.



A happy patient with a package from
Koala Kids.

"All Koala Kids volunteers share this common passion of making a difference to the lives of these children and the families and the staff," she said.

"Last week, the Ballarat hospital would have received a box full of puzzles for the children to do a drawing and message and give as a Father's Day gift.

"There's also a kitchenette in the Ballarat Base just outside the paediatric unit and that's been totally provided by Koala Kids which we stock with grocery items for patients and their families."

Paediatric nurse unit manager at Ballarat Health Services Clinton Griffiths said Koala Kids truly live up to their motto that happy helps.

"They provide unique and thoughtful supports for children and young people during their treatment that also brighten the days of their families and health care workers," she said.

"The Koala Kids team help to provide a distraction and enable our patients to become engaged and involved in special days and go out of their way to deliver happiness."

To learn more about the foundation or to donate, visit koalakids.org.au.