

# Bendigo Advertiser

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By Nicholas Nakos

## Fundraising welcomed by foundation amid coronavirus pandemic



**HAPPY:** Koala Kids Foundation has received a \$10,000 donation that will help extend its work with children in hospital. Picture: Supplied

A Victorian not-for-profit organisation providing care packages and assistance to children and young people undergoing cancer treatment has received a \$10,000 donation.

Koala Kids Foundation received the donation from the CommBank Community Grant, at a time when its two major fundraising events were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Koala Kids has supported Bendigo Health's children's ward for a number of years, nurse unit manager Deb Forbes said.

"We are always amazed at their generosity. They have donated many activity packs, grocery deliveries and toys," Ms Forbes said.

The five-figure grant will support Koala Kids' ongoing work in hospitals, with a cornerstone of their support a chocolate smash cake on patients' birthdays.

Program director Amanda Mandie said the foundation has extended its support to major hospitals in regional Victoria.

"We are particularly grateful for the grant given we don't know when we will be able to resume our regular fundraising activities," Ms Mandie said.

Koala Kids has been instrumental in setting up a new wellness area at Bendigo Health, Ms Forbes said.

"This was initially going to be a sensory area for children and families, for us by staff," she said.

"During COVID-19, the focus has turned to the wellness of staff and it is a quiet, reflective area for staff to use.

"Once the pandemic is behind us, we will be opening this up as a wellness area for patients, families and staff."



**SMILES:** A Koala Kids chocolate smash birthday cake is warmly received. Picture: Supplied