

Multicultural Support & Well-being Playgroup



HANDBOOK

History of the Playgroup

The Gunnedah Multicultural Support and Well-being Playgroup was started by the Multicultural Women's Association (MWA) as a group of mums



meeting at the park. As the playgroup grew, the MWA sought a purpose built venue to house the playgroup, and so MWA approached Gunnedah Family Support to be a partner in formalising the playgroup.

The playgroup aims to be holistic for both children and parents, providing space to learn, be exposed to diversity and gain knowledge within a multicultural environment. It's a safe place for children to express themselves and a supportive environment for all aspects of development, including:

- Literacy
- Sensory
- Emotional and interpersonal
- Health and safety

In addition, it aims to be a fun vibrant meeting place for parents to get support to enhance their mental health too, particularly those who have just moved to Gunnedah with not much support.

About the Multicultural Women's Association

- A community where everyone feels that they belong to regardless of cultural background.
- A channel through which members are empowered, encouraged and supported.
- A bridge to overcome cross-cultural barriers through cultural programs to promote better understanding and acceptance of differences of cultures and values.



About Gunnedah Family Support (GFS)

GFS is a community-based organisation providing parenting support and homelessness services to people residing in Gunnedah Shire. In 2021, GFS began auspicing the Gunnedah Multicultural Support and Well-being Playgroup on behalf of the Multicultural Women's Association. In 2022, GFS received grant funding to continue to deliver the playgroup. All playgroup staff work for Gunnedah Family Support.



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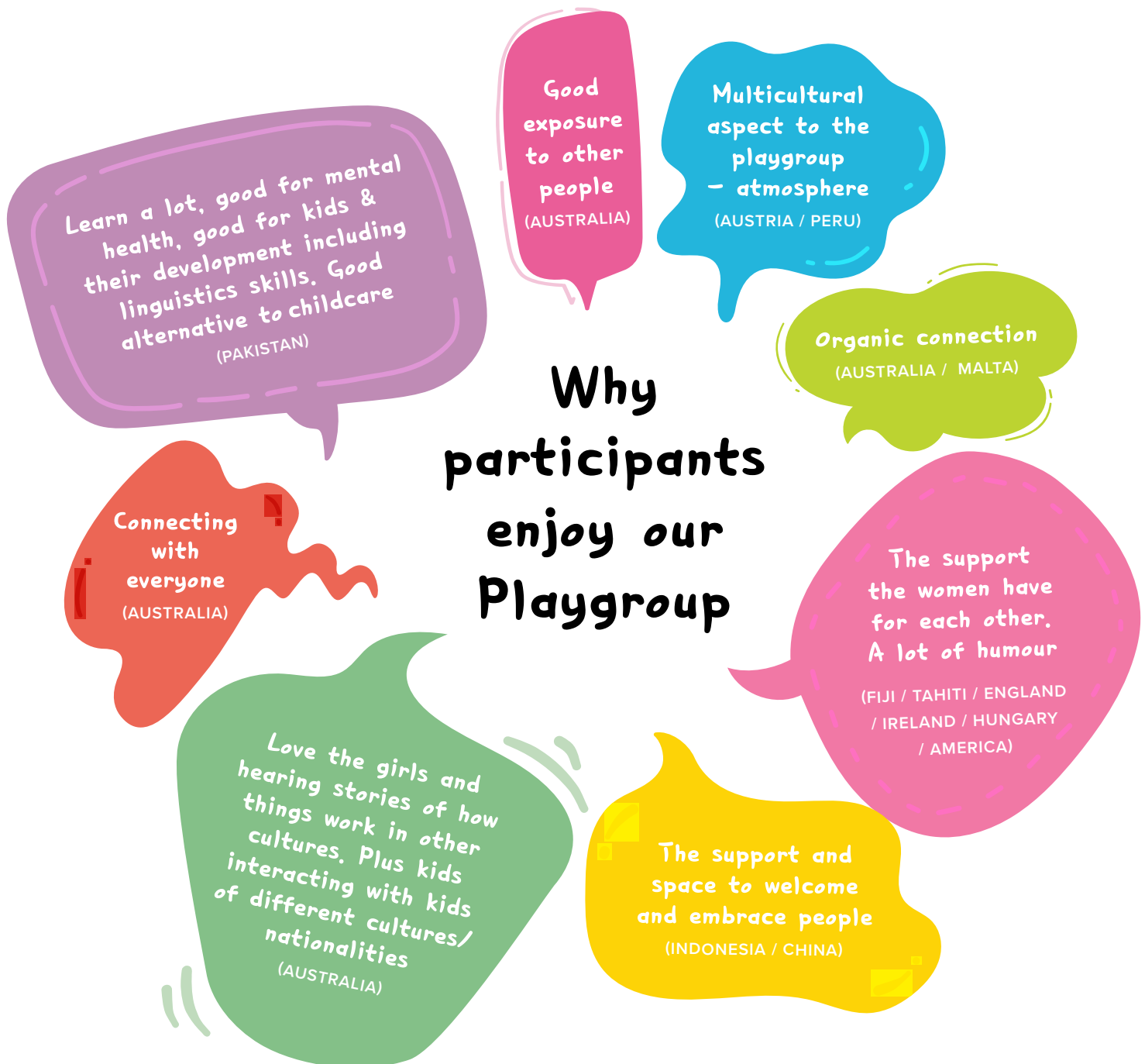
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Introduction to the Gunnedah Multicultural Support and Well-being Playgroup

This section is about some of the Playgroup's activities and will let you know what the playgroup is about, what to expect, and what the playgroup expects from you too.

Playgroup values

Fun

Inclusiveness

Respect

Acceptance

Enrichment

Timetable of activities

10:00-10:30 Free play

10:30-10:50 Morning Tea

10:50/11:00 - 11:30 Storytime / sing / games / craft

11:30-12:15 Free time

12:15-12:30 Pack up and Goodbye

Examples of activities we do

- Storytime
- Sing & dance
- Art & craft
- Themed cultural day
- Sensory play for babies
- Educational games
- Free play
- Mental health and wellbeing talks
- Guest speakers and presenters

What To Bring

- Water bottle
- Sunscreen
- Hat
- Medical requirements
- Hygiene requirements (i.e nappies etc)



Correspondence and communication between playgroup and parents

Follow and keep updated of announcements on the Facebook page – Multicultural Support and Well-being Playgroup. We also have a Facebook messenger group for social purposes, urgent announcements and more personal media sharing.

If you don't have Facebook, or would like to contact the Playgroup Coordinator directly, the Playgroup Coordinator can be contacted on (02) 6742 1515 or via email info@gfsi.org.au.

Code of conduct

To uphold the values of the group, participants agree to be:

- Respectful
- Friendly
- Open

Parents responsibilities at Playgroup include:

GETTING INVOLVED

- Encourage your child to play with others
- Encourage your child to help pack up and tidy up
- Encourage your child's involvement
- Encourage your child to be patient and take turns
- Help tidy up when done
- Learn from each other

BE NICE

- Say hello to others
- Include others in conversations and activities
- Approach disagreements respectfully
- Treat others with empathy and care

SUPERVISE YOUR CHILD

- Ensure safe playing - no throwing hard objects or aggressive play
- Ensure toys are not being damaged
- Watch your child while they are eating
- Monitor your child's surroundings
- Keep an eye on other parent's children when required - e.g. if a child's parent needs to use the bathroom

DON'T ATTEND PLAYGROUP IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD IS SICK

- No attendance if child or parent is unwell
- Understand you may be asked to leave the playgroup if staff notice that you or your child is unwell

PLAYGROUP PARENT 1:

I noticed our children playing a bit rough, would you mind helping me keep an eye on them?

PLAYGROUP PARENT 2:

No problem! Thank you for letting me know.



Policies, Procedures and Expectations at Playgroup

This section is here to help you understand what to do in certain situations at Playgroup. By following these rules, we can all have a fun and safe time at Playgroup!

Photography and digital media policy

To keep a record of all the fun at playgroup, we often take photos of activities. Please fill out the photo consent form to let us know whether you give photo consent (attachment 1).

Your permission will be obtained before any photos are taken/used on social media.

To respect the privacy of children and families, please do not take photos of other children without their or their carers permission.

Food Provision

The Gunnedah Multicultural Support and Wellbeing Playgroup provides weekly morning tea thanks to the support of Woolworths Gunnedah. There are also many opportunities throughout the year for families to share a dish from their cultural heritage.

To ensure food safety and to meet dietary requirements, please fill out dietary information on the playgroup intake form.

Please ensure that you supervise your child while they are eating.

Hot Drinks

Multicultural Support and Well-being Playgroup provides tea and coffee for parents, and warm drinks for children in the colder months.

As hot drinks can be hazardous for children if

spilt, please ensure hot drinks are kept on a table out of reach of children. Please also avoid walking with hot drinks to prevent accidental spills.

EXAMPLE 1
I have noticed
<insert issue>, would
you mind <insert
action required>?

EXAMPLE 2
I have noticed
<insert issue>, is
there anything I
can do to help?

Discipline

Children are still developing and sometimes do things they don't intentionally mean.

As a Multicultural Playgroup, we understand that different cultures have different understandings of how to best discipline children.

Research has found that children respond to positive reinforcement far better than negative discipline strategies such as hitting or smacking.

Never strike a child or children in your care, and never attempt to discipline someone else's child. If you notice a child behave in a way that you are concerned about, we encourage you to have a quiet word with the parent/carer in a non-judgemental, supportive manner – remembering



your child may come to someone else's attention at another time.

GFS provide a range of parenting education programs designed to assist parents better understand and manage their children's behaviour - talk to the playgroup coordinator for more information or visit GFS Facebook page or website <https://gunnedahfamilysupport.org.au/> www.facebook.com/GunnedahFamilySupport/

Smoking

As both playgroup and the surrounding grounds are smoke-free environments, please do not smoke or vape at playgroup.

Safety and supervision

As mentioned in the parental expectations, please ensure you are supervising your child

at all times during playgroup. While you are at playgroup, your child is in your care and your responsibility. Supervisors along with other parents can ensure kids are always safe if we ensure all eyes on all the children.

Sick Policy

If you or your child is unwell, please refrain from attending playgroup if you had symptoms within the last 48hrs.

When necessary, you may be asked to stay home until you or your child gets better.

First Aid

The Playgroup Coordinator is first aid accredited and is responsible for ensuring that a basic first aid kit is available at Playgroup. Parent and carers are responsible for administering first aid to their own children

The Playgroup Coordinator will make all attempts to assist you and your child in the event either of you require first aid. The Playgroup Coordinator will call an ambulance if required.

Depending on the nature of the injury, GFS may ask you to complete an incident report. Playgroup Coordinator will assist you with this if you need.

If your child requires any specific medication for conditions such as Asthma or Anaphylaxis, please ensure you bring these with you to playgroup to administer if required.

PLAYGROUP PARENT 1:
Hi there, I just need to duck out to the bathroom, would you mind supervising my child till I return?

PLAYGROUP PARENT 2:
No trouble at all, will do!

Embracing Diversity

'In diversity there is beauty and there is strength'

– Maya Angelou

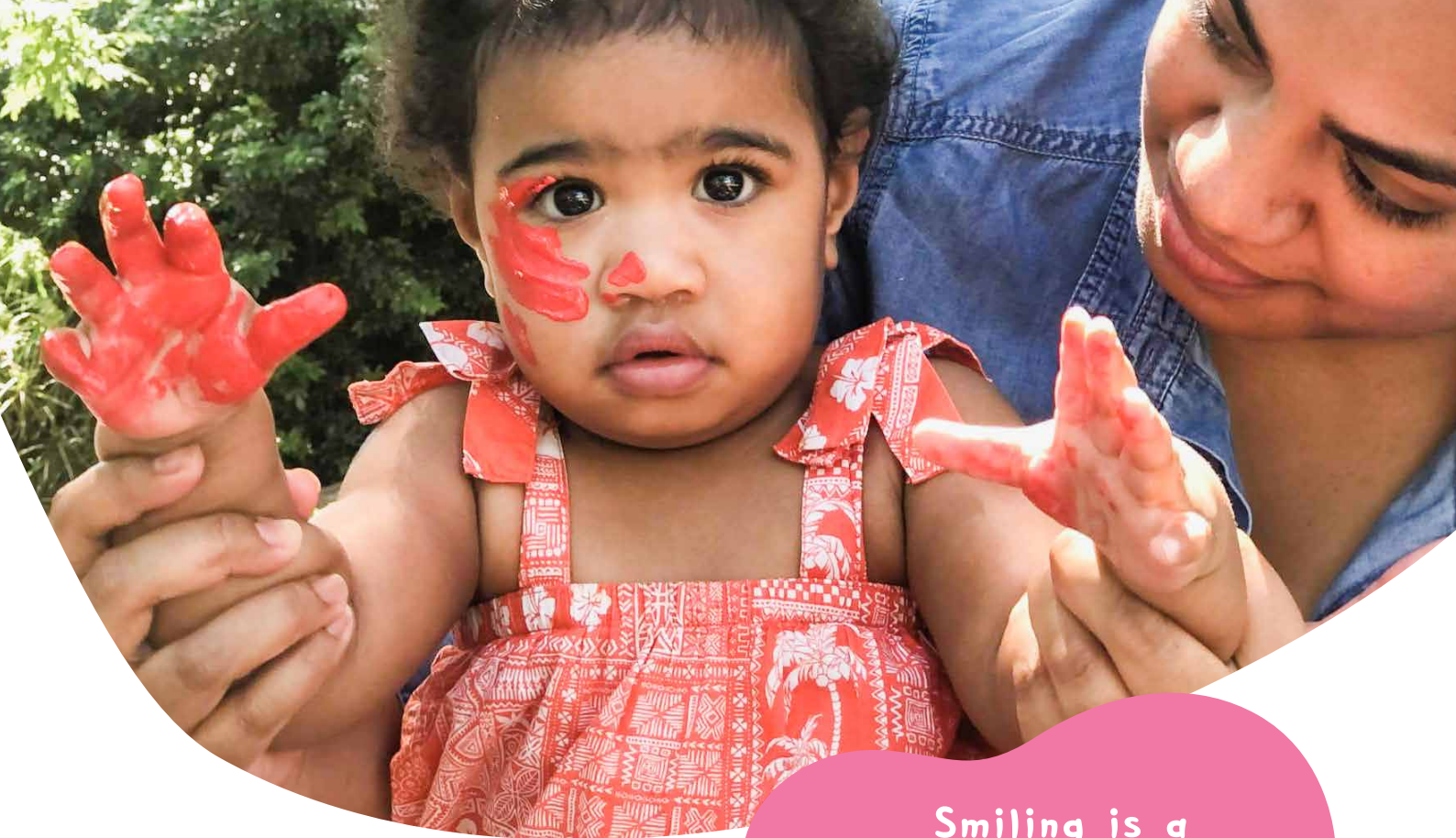
Australia is made up of many cultures and nationalities. We are a multicultural playgroup, made up of people both Australian-born and from all around the world, and this is something we celebrate!

- Workers are from a culturally linguistically diverse background
 - Multiculturalism is a feature and focus of all aspects of our playgroup
 - We don't assume knowledge or make assumptions
 - We have the ability for things to be translated
 - We have many nationalities, we learn different things and we learn about other people
 - Starting point for people new to town or country
- Integration - belonging, not being the odd one out
 - People are different yet the same
 - Addresses isolation
 - Learning different languages
 - Learning other people's 'normal'
 - Learn to understand Australian life and also the slang
 - Sharing food is important in breaking down barriers and cross-cultural communication

Being aware that communication styles can look a little different in different cultures is a good step toward better understanding one another. Here is what some of our Playgroup participants had to say about cross-cultural communication:

- **Gestures** - some gestures in Australian culture are rude in other cultures, e.g - 'took-your-nose' gesture or 'come-here' gesture with one finger are both highly offensive in my culture (Indonesia)
- **Tone of voice** - raising your voice at someone is not respectful (Australia)
- **Language** - a word in one language may mean a bad word in another, e.g Maga (Fiji/Tahiti)
- **Eye Contact** – It is polite to keep eye contact in some cultures, but disrespectful in others (Australia)
- **Reaction** - Ignore and move forward if something has happened (Pakistan)
- **Reaction** - Address the issue one on one (Australia)
- **Action** -Smiling





Smiling is a
universal language,
so remember to
smile! :-)

Dealing with grievances and misunderstandings respectfully

As we are a multicultural playgroup, we acknowledge that inter-country and inter-cultural tensions between or within countries around the world may impact on our day to day lives in Gunnedah. We also acknowledge that misunderstandings may be approached differently in different cultures.

In the spirit of inclusion, we ask that participants support, contribute, and create an environment that is safe and free from discrimination on the basis of gender, race, disability, religion, sexuality or gender identity. All children and adults who attend Playgroup will be treated with respect and dignity.

We understand that from time-to-time conflict or misunderstandings may occur at Playgroup. We ask all participants to first attempt to resolve any conflict directly and respectfully with the person they are having a grievance with.

If you require assistance to manage a disagreement or misunderstanding, please talk to our playgroup coordinator.

Conflict resolution should always be done in a safe manner with no aggression.

Feedback and Complaints process

It is important to us that you have a positive and enjoyable experience at playgroup. We are always keen to hear how we can improve the services we deliver. From time to time our playgroup coordinator will ask families to provide feedback about your experience attending our playgroup. Your feedback will also be provided to our funding body.

Our playgroup coordinator is always available to receive your feedback

If you have input for improvements, please feel free to raise your concerns with our playgroup coordinator. They will provide you with a copy of our complaints/feedback policy.

You can also contact the Manager of Gunnedah Family Support on 6742 1515 anytime Monday-Friday 9am -4pm or via email - info@gfsi.org.au

Resources, Support, and Community Contacts

We are here to help! If you have any problems, please reach out – we are here for you!

Emergency Services

All Emergencies 000

Police 000 or (02) 6742 9099

36 Abbott St, Gunnedah NSW 2380

Ambulance 000

Hospital (02) 6741 8000

Marquis St, Gunnedah NSW 2380

Fire: 000 or (02) 6728 2214

State Emergency Service SES (for natural disasters) 13 25 00

Gunnedah Shire Council 02 6740 2100

council@infogunnedah.com.au

www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au

Live Traffic NSW (road information)

www.livetraffic.com

Local services

St Vincent De Paul (02) 6742 1836

Salvation Army (Food assistance and financial assistance): (02) 6742 6380 or (02) 6742 0540

30 Tempest St, Gunnedah NSW 2380

PCYC (02) 6742 1586

Healthwise (02) 6742 3633

Homes North (02) 6742 0363

Headspace – Youth Mental Health Support

(02) 6762 9290

Community Organisations

Multicultural Women's Association – find us on Facebook or email mwa.connect@outlook.com

Multicultural Gunnedah Inc – Follow on Facebook

Gunnedah Toastmasters – Follow on Facebook

Parenting

Gunnedah Family Support (family support and homelessness services) 02 6742 1515
www.gunnedahfamilysupport.org.au

Parenting Helpline New South Wales
www.parentline.org.au

Raising Children Network
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Resourcing Parents
www.resourcingparents.nsw.gov.au

Pregnancy Birth Baby
www.pregnancybirthbaby.org.au

Australian Breastfeeding Association (24-hour breastfeeding helpline) 1800 686 268
www.breastfeeding.asn.au/breastfeeding-helpline

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence Support 1800 65 64 63

1800 Respect (domestic and family violence and sexual assault counselling 24/7) 1800 737 732
www.1800respect.org.au

Enough is Enough Anti Violence Movement
www.enoughisenough.org.au

Violence Against Women www.respect.gov.au

Head to Health www.headtohealth.gov.au

Job Network Services

Joblink Plus (02) 6748 4300
www.joblinkplus.com.au

Jobs Australia (02) 6742 4193
www.jobsaustralia.com.au



Other Services

NSW Family and Community Services (formerly DoCS) www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families

Mensline - National Men's family and relationship counselling service

1300 78 99 78 www.mensline.org.au

PANDA (mental health support for expecting, new and growing families) 1300 726 306 www.panda.org.au

Youth Insearch www.youthinsearch.org.au

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

Lifeline (24/7 mental health support) 13 11 14

Legal Aid www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Health Direct www.healthdirect.gov.au

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 www.beyondblue.org.au

Carer Gateway 1800 422 737 www.carergateway.gov.au

Paint the Town REaD www.paintthetownread.info

My Aged Care 1800 200 422 www.myagedcare.gov.au

Share the Dignity www.sharethedignity.org.au

Australian Childhood Foundation www.childhood.org.au

NAPCAN www.napcan.org.au

Bravehearts 1800 272 831 www.bravehearts.org.au

New England and Western Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (NEWTAAS) 1800 836 268 (1800 TENANT) www.tenants.org.au/taas/newtaas

Apps

Aurora – an app from Women NSW, it can help you if you, a friend or a family member is experiencing domestic violence or are worried about your relationship

Myquitbuddy – an app to assist you to quit smoking

Money Health Check – an app which assists you in assessing your financial health and tells you how to improve it

Moneysmart Mobile Calculator – Personal finance tool

Keeping Baby Safe – Features information on over 30 different infant and nursery products

Job Seeker JobSearch – Australia's largest free mobile app for online jobs

National Public Toilet Map – Shows the location of more than 14,000 public and private toilet facilities across Australia

Express Plus Centrelink – A simple, easy-to-use app tailored to your particular circumstances

My Phone Rights – Designed to assist you to quickly resolve problems with phone or internet services

Quit For You – Quit For Two – If you're pregnant or planning to be, this app provides support and encouragement to help you give up smoking

Sunsmart – Lets you know when you need sun protection across Australia

Trackmyspend – Track your personal expenses on the go

Health Direct – Health symptom checker



This handbook was developed by E.S Emojong
and P.J Van Houten on behalf of Gunnedah
Family Support Service on Gomeri Country