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A new home will allow KIDS Foundation to teach more preschoolers how to stay safe

Michelle Smith

Latest News




 NEW DIGS: KIDS Foundation's Susie O'Neill and Janine Buesnel with SeeMore Safety in their new offices at Ballarat Airport. Picture: Lachlan Bence

KIDS Foundation, the Ballarat-based charity teaching kindergarten children about safety and supporting burns victims, has moved to a new home as their child safety program rolls out to more than 400,000 children and families nationally.

The move to new offices in a renovated hut within the Ballarat Airport community hub will also free up thousands of dollars a year that was previously paid in rent, which will help more children each year according to founder and chief executive Susie O'Neill.

At the same time their pioneering program SeeMore Safety, which teaches safety to kindergarten children, is being expanded to more than 400,000 children across Australia after being successfully trialled in 2500 Victorian kindergartens.



 SAFE: SeeMore Safety and Susie O'Neill with the mascots that kindergarten children love to play with as part of the safety program.

The organisation will receive \$500,000 a year for the next two years from the federal government to implement the program nationally, with other costs borne through a decade-long partnership with the Cotton On Foundation.

"The council has a hub out at the airport and offers them to community groups for a limited amount of money per month, which means we can spend a lot more money on programs," Ms O'Neill said.

Supporters and donors offered their services and materials to help renovate the old airport hut and they moved in this week.

"It was a no brainer for us to choose a \$50 per month lease compared to a CBD office the same size for around \$2000.00 per month," Ms O'Neill said.



 HIGH FIVE: SeeMore Safety visits a kindergarten.

"The \$1950 a month we save will send four more children to camp or pay for another four kindergartens and around 200 children to receive SeeMore Safety resources, as well as keeping us on track for 84 per cent of our funds going directly to our programs."

The SeeMore Safety program teaches injury prevention and risk awareness to preschoolers, sending injury prevention resources to 10,000 kindergartens including 400,000 books and other items to go home with children, as well as occasional kinder visits from their SeeMore mascot himself.

KIDS Foundation will also run five camps for injury and burn survivors across five states this year, and conduct 'shout out' projects for individuals and families in need.

[READ A FEATURE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF KIDS FOUNDATION AND HOW THEY HELP CHANGE LIVES](#)

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Ms O'Neill established the KIDS Foundation in Ballarat 26 years ago and the SeeMore Safety campaign resulted from university research she conducted.

"We try to teach children in our program that every child is different and all have different capabilities - what is safe to one child is not necessarily safe to another and it's about self awareness and safety, feeling secure inside and out," she said.

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