



News from Engadine Community Services (April 2021)

Message from Mel – ECS Manager

This month includes 'Seniors Week' (April 13th to 24th), when the nation acknowledges and celebrates our Seniors with a wide range of activities and festivities.

In our opinion, every week is seniors' week, as we support and celebrate our seniors in the community every day through our Aged Services! However, we have planned three events to take part in the Sutherland Shire Seniors Festival: a special bus trip and information days [see box]. I encourage you to make note of dates that may be of interest to you, family or friends.

We are delighted to have many 'young at heart' seniors in our community. In this edition, we highlight our popular Grandparents Playgroup, and how it benefits all who attend, and our own very young at heart Tai Chi Instructor John.

- Monday 12th & Saturday 17th April : *Welcome to Your Aged Care Journey*
 - free 30 minute appointments available with an aged care expert (*bookings essential*)
 - information display at front entrance with ECS staff on hand to answer questions
- Monday 13th April : Seniors Big Day Out to Austinmer via Sunrise Nursery (*bookings essential*)

The kids & the kids at heart:

A peek at ECS Grandparents' Playgroup

"We don't stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing"

-George Bernard Shaw

It seems that this quote perfectly captures the theme behind the Monday playgroup, as it involves both toddlers and grandparents who come together to unwind, catch up, establish bonds, play and ultimately have fun with each other's company.

Playgroup NSW describes playgroups as "one of the first, and most important social networks for children and families held in a variety of community venues in cities and regional remote areas, allowing children and families to participate in crafts, get involved in indoor and outdoor play and share a cuppa on a morning tea."

The hustle and bustle of life can be overwhelming sometimes, and getting a break from all those elements are essential for everyone's overall health

and wellbeing. The year 2020 was quite a challenge for many, and a lot of individuals' mental health and social wellbeing has been gravely affected. Here at ECS, the impacts of the pandemic are minimised through getting community members together, in a COVID-safe environment, to do activities that encourage and support individuals' and families' social and mental wellbeing.

Our playgroups allow children and their primary carer to socialise, interact, catch up and share these moments with other community members within a relaxed environment. It enables the children to learn through unstructured play by using toys provided by the Toy Library, as well as allowing them to practice and enhance their motor, cognitive and social skills interacting and playing with other kids within the playground or through interactive activities.

In the Grandparents Playgroup, their creative grandmas and grandpas, mums and dads come up with craft activities such as painting, use of play dough, cookie decorating, basic puzzle boards, coloured-pasta necklaces, basket decorating and so much more! Holidays have a zero chance of being missed by these imaginative minds. They come up with wonderful masterpieces and run holiday-related activities that is certainly going to leave everyone looking forward to what's in store for the next season of festivity.

Community playgroups also allows long time members to strengthen years of friendships and for them to start creating a fresh bond with the new ones through a simple congenial chat [made even better over a warm cuppa]. The members of the group are warm, friendly, welcoming and inclusive, making anyone feel right at home within the first few moments of joining. Through this, people establish broader network and lasting camaraderie leading to a highly supportive social group and ultimately a stronger community. A couple of the long term members agreed "This playgroup seems to be more for us than the kids really!" said one beautiful grandma and was instantly motioned by her life-long co-member/friend, followed by a chuckle.

At the end of the day, the couple of hours each week spent at ECS with dear friends and loved ones will keep adding up moments that are certainly worth remembering someday during a trip down memory lane. Such a fantastic activity for families and their children to come join in indeed!

ECS has playgroups on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays that run for a couple of hours from 9.30 am.

Monday to Friday 9.30 am – 4 pm | 2nd & 4th Saturday each month 9 am – 12 noon

1034-1036 Old Princes Hwy, Engadine 2233 | T: 02 9520 7022 | E: admin@ecs.org.au | W: www.ecs.org.au



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The Monday group (Grandparents Playgroup) and Friday group (Czech and Slovakian Playgroup) are managed by the members themselves, whilst the Wednesday playgroup (supported group for new bubs) is under a program facilitated by staff of Playgroup NSW.

Highlighting an ECS Team member story – John Gough

Our team are our “**how**” we do what we do at ECS, and we have wonderful team members who we employ as contractors to ensure the centre has many diverse and interesting activities for our clients. Each has unique expertise and some amazing stories.

We are delighted to feature Mr John Gough in this article. John has been involved with ECS for quite a few years and has seen many changes, during which he offered his services as the Tai-Chi Instructor.

Born in St Kilda, a fourth generation Australian who grew up in Melbourne until the age of 21, John went to a boarding school at the age of 14. At 21, John got on the boat and headed to the UK for ‘the big adventure’, and spent time in the UK, Europe and Africa.

On coming home, he worked in the retail industry and in October 1970 married his lifelong love, Zofia. In 1971, he went to New Zealand for 3 weeks and came back 13 years later, as they fell in love with the place and bought a home in the Auckland countryside, and had a couple of children to boot! The decision to return home to Melbourne was about being closer to the grandparents and family.

John secured a role with a company that won the cleaning contract for the State of Victoria Electricity Commission – all the coalmines and power stations. After the privatisation, John’s company won a major segment of the Privatisation of The NSW Government Cleaning Service, so he brought his family to Sydney to change a major Government Business into a Private Enterprise Commercial operation. This resulted in him being in the cleaning and property services for over 30 years.

Through that process, John’s body wasn’t doing well, and he was looking for a way to alleviate this. He tried Tai Chi, culminating in having his own school for the past 10 years, Flowing Water – Tai Chi Chuan.

[Look up <https://flowingwatertaichi.com.au/> for more information]

We are lucky to have John as our Tai Chi Master and classes are run at the Engadine Centre on Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are currently vacancies in Tai Chi & IT on Tuesdays 3-4 pm. The IT part means you can join from home via Zoom, if you can’t come to the centre! To book, call ECS on 9520 7022.



Our elders like John, have a lot to teach us – and John has some powerful messages from his experiences:

- In all things, give the best you can give.
- It’s a privilege to share in someone’s life; learn from everyone if you can.

We encourage you tell your stories, which are unique and precious. We are listening.

A challenge for our Seniors!

Whether we realise it or not we all have a story to tell, and if you have a budding author inside now is your chance!! NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) have recently launched the seventh edition of the Seniors' Stories writing competition in coordination with the Fellowship of Australian Writers.

The competition is open to anyone in NSW over the age of 60. This year’s theme is ‘What’s age got to do with it?’ Stories can be up to a maximum of 1,000 words. Entries from the top 100 authors will be selected and published in a book that will be distributed to the winners as well as libraries across the state. If you want inspiration you can see previous editions at <http://www.seniorcard.nsw.gov.au/news-activities/seniors-stories>. Stories can be submitted until noon on 31 May 2021 to <https://fawns.org.au/>.

**ECS HONOURS
OUR FALLEN HEROES & SURVIVORS ON
ANZAC DAY, SUNDAY 25th APRIL**