



Ross Watt Children's Hall Inc.
Reg No A0022887Z
252 Station Road, New Gisborne Vic 3438
www.newgisborneplaygroup.com

NEW GISBORNE PLAYGROUP MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION BOOKLET

Ross Watt Hall is located in New Gisborne in the Macedon Ranges, on the Country of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples. These three groups along with the Boon Wurrung & Wathaurung collectively form the federation of the Kulin nation.

The late Mrs Ross Watt of New Gisborne donated the Ross Watt Children's Hall (RWCH) to the children of the local community. The hall opened its doors to playgroups in the early 1970's and has been an integral part of the community since. Today, we have multiple sessions available during the week and welcome families from all across the Macedon Ranges. Mrs Ross Watt would be proud to know her dream of the Children's Hall is still very much alive today.

What is Playgroup?

While playgroup is defined as 'an informal nursery group for pre-school children, we believe that playgroup should foster the needs of children and parents alike. Our playgroup provides positive play experiences for children, and a social opportunity for parents, carers or guardians.

At New Gisborne Playgroup we aim to create groups of children within similar age brackets, with the structure and activities to be determined by each individual group.

What does New Gisborne Playgroup Offer?

Our playgroup offers a collaborative space with lots of activities and toys accessible to our members, including the following:

- Craft cupboard
- Puzzles
- Books
- Indoor climbing equipment
- A variety of toys
- Dress-ups
- Blocks
- Outdoor equipment – slides, swings
- Sandpit
- Cubby House
- Adventure Playground
- Activity Resources
- Kitchen – with tea and coffee provided

We also run regular events for both members to enjoy and for fundraising.

New Gisborne Playgroup Membership

A New Gisborne Playgroup Family membership covers you and your child/children and includes the following:

- Year Round access to playgroup on your selected day/s (includes school holidays, public holidays)
- Allocated budget for new toys, games and activities
- Access to all indoor and outdoor playgroup toys, activities and craft projects
- Exclusive invitation to Playgroup events (Parents Nights, Annual Christmas Party)
- 50% discount for weekend or evening RWCH hire

All New Gisborne Playgroup members must also be registered with Playgroup Victoria.

What is Playgroup Victoria?

Playgroup Victoria is a not-for-profit, incorporated association committed to helping all Victorian families discover the benefits of playgroup. Membership covers you and your children for personal accident and injury insurance at New Gisborne Playgroup. New members can join online at <http://www.playgroup.org.au> Membership should be updated annually and with the birth of any new children attending playgroup. New Gisborne Playgroup ID with Playgroup Victoria is 12961.

Signing Up to New Gisborne Playgroup

You can sign up to New Gisborne Playgroup in 5 simple steps:

1. Contact the Playgroup (newgisborneplaygroup@gmail.com) and advise your preferred session
2. Join Playgroup Victoria (<http://www.playgroup.org.au>)
3. Complete the New Gisborne Playgroup Membership form
4. Make Payment
5. Play!

New Gisborne Playgroup Fees

Great care and consideration has been taken in determining fees in an effort to keep the playgroup accessible to all. As New Gisborne Playgroup is a not for profit organisation, these fees are non-refundable. At the start of each year the committee offer annual discounts. Social media posts and email communications are sent out to existing members with details of any discounts offered.

Annual Fees*

Family Membership Annual Fee (1 session per week): \$150
Family Membership Annual Fee (2 sessions per week) \$200

*Annual fees are due by the end of February each year. Members that join mid-year, or want to attend more than 2 sessions can contact newgisborneplaygroup@gmail.com for individualised fees.

Term Fees**

Family Membership Term Fee: \$50

**Term Fees are to be paid at the start of each Victorian School Term (see relevant term dates under Important Dates)

Internet banking details

Name of Account:	New Gisborne Playgroup
Bank:	Bendigo Bank
BSB:	633000
Account Number:	135678910
Description:	Surname - Session

How are the fees used?

The RWCH is a non-profit organisation but must remain financially viable to continue operating as a playgroup venue. Membership fees can contribute to the following:

- Hall Rent
- Building Maintenance
- Utility Bills
- Purchase of New Toys
- Community Events

Playgroup Sessions

We offer 3 sessions a day, 5 days a week. Session times are detailed below:

Mon-Fri	
Session times	9.00-11.30
	11.30-13.00
	13.00-15.30

You can elect to join as an individual or as a group.

Individuals

New members can be allocated to groups according to time and day preference, availability, children's ages and space permitting.

Groups

New groups can request to occupy an entire session time.

Please note if the desired sessions are occupied, you can request to be placed on a waiting list until one becomes available.

Group Structure

At New Gisborne Playgroup there are no allocated group leaders. The structure of each group is up to those involved.

We encourage a collaborative, and open approach to the running of playgroup session.

Groups can determine whether they want to structure their sessions, or partake in independent free play.

Some ideas for collaboration are suggested below:

- Establishing a group chat on social media (e.g. Facebook, Messenger, Whatsapp, Slack etc.)
- Creating an activity roster organising the weekly playgroup activities
- Establishing a cleaning roster within your group.
- Taking turns in providing a morning or afternoon tea

In our experience usually the simplest of ideas are the most successful with little people. Children seem to thrive on a little direction to their play.

We encourage you to play with the children or try to create situations or experiences that they don't encounter at home. You will all (parents and children alike) benefit from your efforts.

Member Responsibilities

Day-to Day Cleaning

The day-to-day cleanliness of the RWCH is the responsibility of each and every one of the Hall users. The following guidelines have been put in place as a minimum requirement. Failure to respect these guidelines will result in increased attendance costs, to pay for contracted cleaning. We currently have the Hall carpet and windows cleaned as required by external contract cleaners.

Each Group must ensure the following is adhered to during and at the end of each session. Cleaning supplies are available in the kitchen for this purpose, including disposable gloves, disinfectant and paper towels.

1. Please leave the hall and grounds ready for the users and as you would like to find them by ensuring the following at the end of each session.
 - Put away toys and equipment
 - Turn off appliances
 - Clean dishes
 - Return keys
 - Surfaces wiped
 - Rubbish placed in the bins outside
 - Vacuum all floor areas inside the hall after their session.
2. If your group has a spill or accident, it **MUST** be cleaned immediately.
3. Biological hazards and spills must be appropriately cleaned immediately.
4. Each group are asked to bring their own tea towel to the RWCH. While there are tea towels available at you will need to take it home, wash it and return it promptly.
5. Thorough cleaning of any equipment that is dirtied during your session.eg. sand pit toys covered in sand, baby toys that have been dribbled on or craft equipment (such as brushes, rollers and sponges for painting). If something needs to dry before you can put it away please leave a polite message in the Communication Book for the following group to return it.
6. All equipment is returned to its correct storage location at the end of their session.

Deep Cleaning

A Cleaning Roster is recorded in the attendance book to ensure our hall is cleaned on a regular basis. This is essential considering the large number of people who use the Hall. Please tick the roster on the date you have cleaned so we have a record that the cleaning is being completed.

Playgroup Communication

- **Communication Book** - This book has been placed on the kitchen notice board inside the Hall and is to provide a means of communication between groups on a daily basis. The Committee may also use the book to let users know about purchasing or maintenance issues or for reminders about meetings. Every group should check the Communication Book each time they use the Hall.
- **Whiteboard**- There is also a whiteboard in the Hall foyer which is used to assist with communication between Hall users. The date of the upcoming committee meeting and other playgroup events will also be displayed on the whiteboard.
- **Members attendance folder**- There is an attendance folder on the table in the front foyer of RWCH to record each member's (and their child/rens) attendance at weekly playgroup sessions. Members must ensure this is completed at the beginning of each session. In the event of an emergency, this folder will be used to ensure all users have been accounted for in the case of an evacuation. The attendance book is also essential for insurance purposes as well as the day-to-day running of our facility.
- **Complaints**- Complaints, in the form of constructive criticism, can be raised at Committee Meetings and should be brought to these meetings by your group's representative or submitted in writing to the President.

RWCH Committee of Management

A Committee of volunteers manages the RWCH. The Committee is elected at the Annual General Meeting and includes the following members:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Hall Treasurer
- Playgroup Treasurer
- Playgroup Membership Secretary
- Hall Booking Officer
- Purchasing Officer
- Maintenance Officer
- Toy Levy Officer
- Media Liaison Officer and Events Coordinator.
- Social Media Officer

Committee Meetings are held every 6 weeks to ensure the smooth running of the Hall on a day to day basis.

Minutes from each meeting are emailed to members and displayed on the Committee Notice Board. It is the responsibility of all members to read these.

We encourage all sessions to have at least one member in attendance at each Committee Meeting and at least two members in attendance at the Annual General Meeting.

All members are also encouraged to consider taking a turn on the Committee.

Hall Bookings

The RWCH is available on weekends between the hours of 10am and 4pm for private parties for preschool aged children. The cost is \$50.00 for hall hirers who are current New Gisborne Playgroup members and \$100.00 for non-members. A refundable bond of \$100.00 **must be paid to secure the booking**. If the bond is not received prior to the booking date the Hall Booking Officer reserves the right to accept another booking. The bond will be refunded once the Hall has been checked and found to be in an acceptable state.

Furthermore, local community groups are able to book the hall of a night for meetings at a cost of \$25.00 per meeting at the discretion of the Hall Booking Officer.

During this difficult time where COVID 19 remains at the forefront, we have a nominated cleaner who must be used to clean the venue after parties. The cost of this cleaner is \$45. This service will include, vacuuming, mopping, wiping of tables/benches, cleaning of toilets and COVID cleaning requirements. All other cleaning remains the responsibility of the hirer including washing dishes, putting toys and equipment away, removing all decorations, ensuring furniture is put back in its rightful place and **taking all rubbish off the premises**. The hall must be left exactly as you found it.

Disputes and Mediation

The Ross Watt Children's Hall Inc. does not have a DISPUTES AND MEDIATION clause in the Constitution. In July 1998 the Associations Incorporation Regulations were amended and all Incorporated Organisations were required to have a Disputes and Mediation clause. Therefore, the Ross Watt Children's Hall Inc. will adopt the DISPUTES AND MEDIATION clause in the model rules, which reads as follows;

1. The grievance procedure set out in this rule applies to disputes under these Rules between-
 - (a) A member and another member: or
 - (b) A member and the Association.
2. The parties to the dispute must meet and discuss the matter in dispute, and, if possible, resolve the dispute within 14 days after the dispute comes to the attention of all of the parties.
3. If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the meeting, or if a party fails to attend that meeting, then the parties must, within 10 days, hold a meeting in the presence of a mediator.
4. The mediator must be -
 - (a) A person chosen by agreement between the parties; or
 - (b) In the absence of agreement -
 - (i) In the case of a dispute between a member and another member, a person appointed by the committee of the Association; or
 - (ii) In the case of a dispute between a member and the Association, a person who is a mediator appointed or employed by the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (Department of Justice).
5. A member of the Association can be a mediator.
6. The mediator cannot be a member who is party to the dispute.
7. The parties to the dispute must, in good faith, attempt to settle the dispute by mediation.
8. The mediator, in conducting the mediation, must -
 - (a) Give the parties to the mediation process every opportunity to be heard; and
 - (b) Allow due consideration by all parties of any written statement submitted by any party; and
 - (c) Ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties to the dispute throughout the mediation process.
9. The mediator must not determine the dispute.
10. If the mediation process does not result in the dispute being resolved, the parties may seek to resolve the dispute in accordance with the Act or otherwise the law.

Safety and Security

New Gisborne Playgroup Rules

The Committee of Management has implemented the following rules for users of the RWCH. Each is the result of concerns which have been raised by playgroup members. It is your responsibility to enforce them in your own group.

1. In the event of an emergency call 000
2. At the beginning of each session, one adult group member is required to undertake a walk through to conduct an environmental scan of the Hall and grounds. The purpose of this is to identify any hazards or potential hazards. All hazards or potential hazards should be isolated where safe to do so, and the Committee notified using the contact details provided on the kitchen notice board. Groups are also required to take steps to ensure the next Group is made aware of such hazards by leaving a note in a prominent position and recording details of the issue in the communication book.
3. Usage of all equipment and facilities at Ross Watt Children's Hall requires full adult supervision. This is especially important when children are eating (due to potential choking hazards) and engaging in water play.
4. Adult handbags and other such items must be kept out of reach of children at all times.
5. Members are asked to comply with the Victorian Government's [Communicable Illnesses Exclusion Policy](#) (applicable to Schools and Childcare centres, but is recommended to be used as a model for members of New Gisborne Playgroup), available at: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion>.
6. Members must ensure they are aware of local bushfire risk ratings and other severe weather warnings prior to, and whilst attending at the Hall. Members are to alter their attendance at the Hall based on information such as risks, warnings and other relevant information available from relevant emergency services authorities. The Hall is unavailable for use on Code Red days. Attendance at the Hall on other days of high fire danger risk or other severe weather events is at the discretion of individual members.
7. Playgroup members and/or their children may have varied food-based or other types of allergies. We require the individual with allergies or parent/s and/or guardian/s of children with allergies to acknowledge by reading this clause that the hall is a shared community space where food and other items are intentionally and unintentionally brought in or worn (such as pet hair on clothing, body lotions, perfumes etc) by hall members and/or community members. Although we request that the hall is cleaned and maintained by Playgroup members at the end of each playgroup session we cannot guarantee it is to a standard that is safe for those that experience allergies nor can we guarantee when and should the hall be hired for other purposes that it is cleaned to an allergen safe standard. Hence it is for the individual, parent/s or guardian/s to assess their own or their child/rens safety, whether they are at risk and to remain vigilant of their or their child/rens safety at all times. In the event of an allergic reaction where assistance is required call 000 immediately.
8. Dogs, cats or any other animal are not permitted onto Hall grounds unless the animal is an assistance animal eg. Guide dog.
9. All playgroup members are to supervise their child/ren and remain vigilant in the event that a child/ren or adult in their company may experience a bite be that insect, spider or snake. In the event of a bite that may cause a serious allergic reaction, sickness, illness, danger or fatality the individual/s and or parent/s or guardian/s must seek medical attention and call 000 for assistance.
10. In the event of any poisonous liquids or solids having been consumed please call 000.
11. The kitchen area is not to be used as a thoroughfare to the backyard by children. This is clearly stated on signs at the hall. Access to and from the Hall may be gained through the front door **unless in an emergency.**
12. Children are not permitted to retrieve equipment from the storeroom shelves or the kitchen cupboards. The storeroom must be supervised by a responsible adult to ensure that heavy items are not pulled down or dislodged onto children below. The Committee recommends that a certain amount of equipment/toys are removed from the storeroom at the beginning of a session and that children are encouraged to ask an adult if more is required later.

13. Adults should ensure care is taken when lifting and removing objects in and around the hall, particularly from the storage area and only do so within their personal physical capability. Items which are large, bulky or heavy may require more than one adult to lift.
14. Children are not permitted to climb or swing on the front fence or gate. Please be extra careful during the start and end of your session when people are coming and going through the front gate. Ensure you do not let other children through the gate if their parents are still in the Hall grounds.
15. A responsible adult should be supervising at all times when the children are inside and outside the Hall. The front gate is not locked and may be accessed by strangers from the street.
16. All power points at RWCH are fitted with plastic guards. Please ensure these are returned if they are removed.
17. All members are required to provide details of an adult who can be contacted in case of emergency involving an adult attending playgroup. This may include for example, next of kin, a close relative, carer or anyone in a caring role. For privacy reasons, only an emergency contact number is required and not a name. All members are required to ensure this number is kept up to date.
18. All accidents/injuries including near misses, which occur at the RWCH, must be noted in the Accident/Injury Report Book in the First Aid Box. The First Aid Box is located on the kitchen bench.

Hall Access

The RWCH must remain securely locked at all times when it is unattended. There is a keypad security system in place. The pin code for this system is changed at the Committee Meetings as required. The pin number is to be given to playgroup members and those that privately hire the hall only.

EVACUATION PLAN

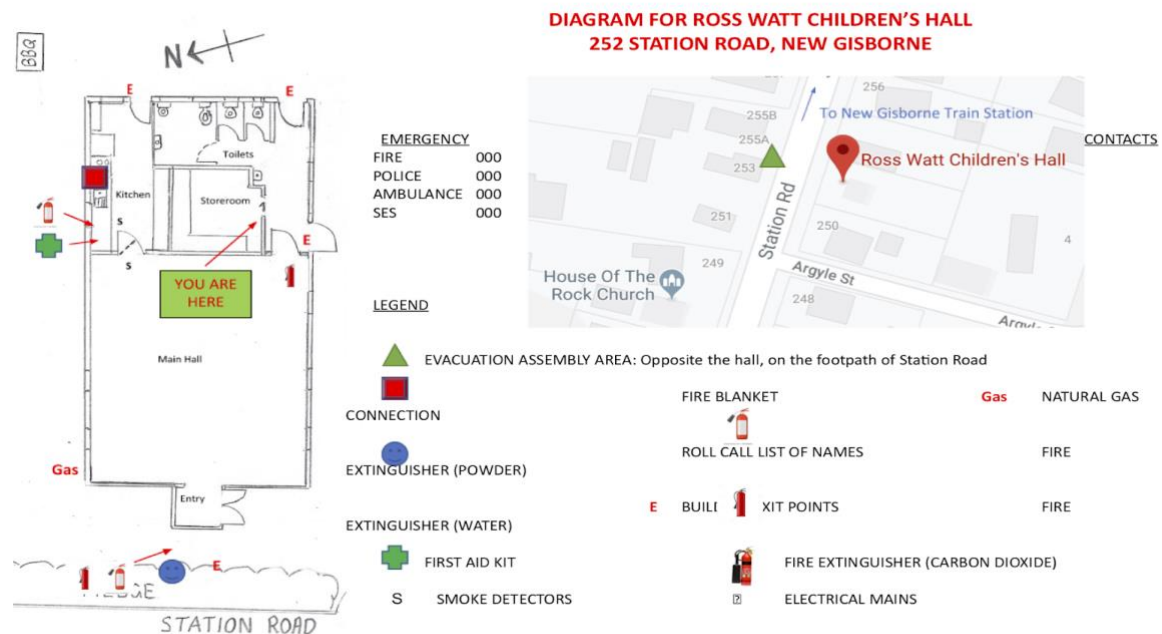
Ross Watt Children's Hall
 252 Station Road, New Gisborne 3438

Closest Cross Road is Argyle Street

EMERGENCY GUIDELINES FOR FIRE OR THREAT OF FIRE

1. Dial 000 ask for the service you require (Fire Brigade, Ambulance, Police, SES)
 - The nearest public phone is available further north along Station Rd towards the New Gisborne train station and/or the New Gisborne Primary School.
2. Give relevant information ie:
 - Your name,
 - Type of emergency
 - Number of people involved
 - Address (252 Station Road, New Gisborne),
 - Closest Cross Road (Argyle Street/ Station Rd.).
3. Nominate 2 Fire Wardens : 1 for inside and 1 for outside playground to round up all people and take them to the evacuation point
4. Remain calm at all times. Evacuate the children to the **Nominated Evacuation Point: opposite the road on Station Road.** Once people are accounted for they can leave the area and can go home. It is important to remove vehicles from in front of the building for emergency vehicles.
5. In the event of a fire, and if safe to do so, an initial attack of the fire is to be carried out by a competent and trained person using the fire extinguisher provided.
6. Upon the Brigades arrival a Nominated Fire Warden is to provide an attendance roll of the present playgroup so a head count can be made and all can be accounted for. This should have been carried out prior to the Brigades arrival so an immediate search can be carried out for anyone not accounted for.
7. Fire Wardens are to ensure that no one re-enters the premises once all are accounted for.

*NOTE If the fire alarm activates and no evidence of smoke or fire exists, please report it immediately to the maintenance officer, the president or committee. Do not text or leave a message please keep calling all numbers until you speak to someone.



Ross Watt Children's Hall History

In 1913 Mrs Ross Watt felt that there should be a place where school children could play after school hours.

Having just returned from England, where she had witnessed and was much impressed by the great success of Queen Alexander's "Rose Day" she thought up the idea of having a "Wattle Day" to raise money for a hall. After approaching the Melbourne City Council the Ladies of Gisborne were given permission, on a day in August, to sell their sprigs of wattle in Bourke and Lonsdale Streets. This effort was so successful financially that enough money was raised, approximately \$1,400.00, to build this hall and the surplus was donated to the Children's Hospital.

This hall has proved very useful over the years. The Methodist, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches have all used it for services at times. There have been meetings, weddings, christenings, funerals and Guild meetings, parties for charitable purposes and children's Sunday school etc....

The Trustees of the hall originally appointed were Mrs B M E Ross Watt and William T Pearce. Miss E T Pearce, for many years, acted as unofficial Secretary.

The ladies of New Gisborne formed a Guild and, for many years, looked after the hall and provided funds to keep it in repair.

On May 30th 1974 Miss K E (Betty) Ross Watt, Wanda McCormick and David Robinson became Trustees of the New Gisborne Children's Hall. Late in the 1970's the Gisborne Church of Christ was formed and the hall was used as their weekly place of worship. This continued for several years until they built their own church.

In the early 1980's the hall was used for a weekly interdenominational Christian program for the children of New Gisborne with up to 60+ children attending each week. Also, after years of planning, the extension on the back of the Hall (kitchen, storeroom and toilets) was completed and new roofing iron was put on the Hall.

During the mid-eighties the playgroups attending the Hall increased from one (1) group to eleven (11) groups and by 1988 there were approximately 120 local families using the Hall.

Sadly, in 1989 Trustee Miss Betty Ross Watt passed away. As always thinking of her beloved charities the New Gisborne Children's Hall received an inheritance which was put into a Trust account to maintain the Hall for the duration of its lifetime.

In 1990 out of respect for Miss Betty Ross Watt the hall name was changed to become Ross Watt Children's Hall. With the change of name came a change of Trustees to Neil Robertson (Executor of Miss Betty Ross Watt's will), Pat Coundon and Kaye Wilson.

In 1991, due to the amount of playgroups attending the Hall and in order to protect the Trustees. the Ross Watt Children's Hall was Incorporated.

By 1995 fifteen (15) playgroups attended the Ross Watt Children's Hall, three (3) playgroups a day, five (5) days a week accommodating approximately 190 local families with 265 children.

Years on saw the Ross Watt Children's Hall Inc. Committee represented mainly by parents of children attending one of the many playgroups. The Hall has reaped the benefits due to the Committee concentrating on the maintenance of the Hall. The Hall has been completely repainted, inside and out along with the roof. A new child-proof front fence and a garden storage shed have been erected and the back half of the hall has received new floor coverings as well as an extension which included new bathroom facilities.

By July 1999, the Hall had thirteen (13) playgroups accommodating 118 local families with 193 children. It was one of the largest playgroups, operating out of one (1) facility, in Victoria.

Today the Ross Watt Children's Hall is still privately owned and operated by a Committee of Management and Trustees.

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