



Sensitive Santa 2021 - Evaluation



Children With Additional Needs
Working Group



**CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS
WORKING GROUP AND FRIENDS
PRESENT**

SENSITIVE SANTA

Sensitive Santa has agreed to join us from the North Pole and chat with our kids! **Children with autism or sensory needs** are invited to meet Santa in a **FREE** private 20 minute session with their families.

DATE BOOKED FOR 21ST DEC (F2F) AND 22ND - (ONLINE) 9AM-5PM

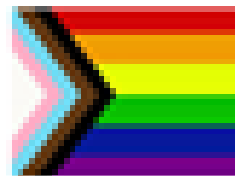
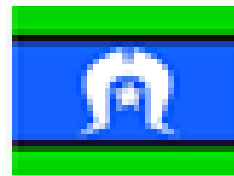
AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST WILL RUN FROM 26TH NOV UNTIL 6TH DEC. LIMITED PLACES AVAILABLE SO BE QUICK.

Important stuff:
 *As an expression of interest - you will be asked if you would like zoom or in person. Depending on preference, Sensitive Santa will run according to the majority. Santa will visit **Bairnsdale** if face to face is preferred
 *To help Santa, a small questionnaire will need to be filled out about your child/children before you meet
 *COVID SAFE EVENT
 *Depending on event type, zoom recording/photographer available.

Register by phoning Jodie on 0407 372 036 or hello@jodiesimpsonconsulting.com.au




Supported by Bushfire Resilience and Recovery Building Project & Children with Additional Needs Working Group





Background

A conversation was held in early December 2021 to ascertain interest in Sensitive Santa. An opportunity had arisen whereby one of the members of the CWANWG (from Uniting) was approached from a Santa operating in Melbourne but would attend East Gippsland for face to face and zoom sessions. This meant that more families could experience Sensitive Santa across the East Gippsland region – including Mallacoota!

Members of the CWANWG pulled together a plan which covered logistics, payment, accommodation, marketing and booking which was brought to life within 48 hours after the initial conversation.

- Funding from the East Gippsland Christmas Appeal Fund paid for some of the costs \$180.00
- Engage and Grow offered their venue in Nicholson and a several helpers for the day
- The photographer was secured as carryover for work paid for but unable to be delivered due to covid
- Santa donated his time however accommodation costs were covered out of a member's own pocket
- Toys as gifts were donated by Save the Children donated (by Lego)
- Staff time was contributed by Yoowinna Wurrnalung; Uniting Care; Save the Children and the Bushfire Resilience and Recovery Building Project (to help connect communities across East Gippsland).

What was offered?

Sessions were booked for 30mins – giving a total of 16 spots were made available in person and online. A good uptake of 14 bookings occurred for in person and six online bookings. Four families pulled out on the day for in person sessions, for a variety of reasons leaving 10 sessions for the day. A simple survey of children's key interests was undertaken prior to meeting Santa to ensure conversations were able to flow. Sessions went for approximately 20 mins.

Previous Sensitive Santa sessions that were run were located at the East Gippsland Specialist School (and offered in Lakes Entrance with no takers) and between four-six families were engaged. This year saw a large increase of families visiting for face-to-face appointments and online opportunities with sixteen families across the region engaged in 2022.

Marketing of the event was through social media (Facebook) and organisational contacts who made personal contact with families. All but two face to face positions were filled within four days (released on Friday morning and filled by Monday afternoon).



What worked well

- There was 94% satisfaction with the experience. All but one family thoroughly enjoyed their experience. The family who raised concern was happy with the experience but disappointed they were unable to access their free photos which was sorted after the event.
- More families engaged across the East Gippsland region due to flexibility of face to face and online. Those families who engaged online were comfortable with the platform and by all accounts, worked well. The online platform meant that families currently unvaccinated, had to travel long distances or had multiple children could still actively participate.
- Social media – well received and most referrals came through this medium. Would suggest approach continue in 2022 across community Facebook pages.
- The gifts provided for the children face to face brought great enjoyment for the little people attending.
- Timing of event was really positive. Moving into Christmas (when school had finished) meant families could prepare their children in a more relaxed fashion.
- The collaboration between the CWANWG membership to get the job done in a very quick turnaround timeframe, most in a volunteer capacity. It shows the strength of the relationships that exist in the Working Group and how they can be called upon in short timeframes to create events that were a success!

Feedback from families

“Hi Lisa and team, just wanted to say a very big thank you for making this morning’s visit to Santa such a memorable positive. You guys have made both my children’s day, year I reckon! My mother-in-law and myself cannot believe how well it went and how well it was organised. And that Santa, he is a keeper! Absolute one of a kind! The way he interacted with both children was amazing and getting down to their level, just beautiful! It’s the little things just like that that make it, that makes my heart sing. It was wonderful to watch my children warm up to Santa. Thank you so much for the presents too! And making it such a positive experience.

From the bottom of our hearts, a very big thankyou to you, the team and Santa, for giving us this opportunity to meet Santa. Have a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy new year! Thanks”

“The care taken to make my child feel really welcomed was a joy to watch. He was well engaged and while he didn’t say much at the time, the trip home was full of chatter. Thank you to everyone involved.”

“We met with Santa online and it was fabulous. My children were very engaged and the little “survey” sent out beforehand meant that Santa knew what questions to ask. If it was done again next year, we will be there next time for sure”.

“Hello

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all. Sorry this is a bit delayed but I just wanted to say THANKYOU so much to all involved in the Sensitive Santa. We were blown away with how awesome the experience was. My daughters loved every second! Thankyou for allowing us to be a part of something so special.

Very much appreciated”

Recommendations/Further Suggestions

Some of the staff that participated on the day, really enjoyed supported the sessions. Families gave positive feedback on the day and observed the joy of children participating. Some children connected with Santa quite quickly, but for others it took time for them to feel comfortable. A space for Aboriginal designed animals for colouring in was provided for children that needed to focus on a creative outlet for some of the time of their Santa visit.



- While Santa volunteered his time, appropriate governance to be put in place to ensure that correct policy/procedures are followed to reduce any possible risks – this to be undertaken by Uniting/Save the Children as the CWANWG does not have any HR policies and procedures due to their status.
- A focussed online booking sheet which leaves parents/carers in control of their bookings and registrations reducing the manual handling of a staff member. A nominated member of the CWANWG with appropriate skills to fulfill this role.
- One point of contact (external facing) to take calls and respond to family questions that may arise. A nominated member of the CWANWG with appropriate skills to fulfill this role.
- Possible allocation of positions for organisations (up to 3 per org) to ensure those not connected with social media are included next time.
- Increased connection with Aboriginal Organisations to ensure a more inclusive environment for families/carers to attend. A nominated member of the CWANWG with appropriate skills to fulfill this role.
- Work with Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust and Moogji on either a specific event or financial contribution to their own event (funded through this proposal) on behalf of the CWANWG. A nominated member of the CWANWG with appropriate skills to fulfill this role.
- Open opportunity up to an older cohort of participants with a disability. This could then be distributed through Noweyung and other providers with older participants who would still love a visit with Santa. Ensure this is contained in December 2022 flier.
- A sub working group established in July 2022 to begin planning of event in December 2022. This group would work through evaluation and start grant process for the event mid year to ensure all costs are adequately covered to ensure good success. Having staff pay for costs out of their own pocket is not a sustainable option going forward. Members of the CWANWG with appropriate skills to fulfill this role.
- Thankyou certificates for all teams who contributed to the event in 2021 with an EOI for involvement for Dec 2022. – Gina Callander from Save the Children – to be confirmed
- Social story for either zoom or face to face visit to help families and carers help their children. A nominated member of the CWANWG with appropriate skills to fulfill this role.
- Flexibility with bookings – in December 2022 plan for one day of face to face and one day of zoom. If there is a need (which is likely given the success of December 2021), increase face to face to two days.
- When booking 'Santa', approach several Santa's with the idea. Use process as an EOI and interview to work through best 'fit' for the community. A combination of Santa's (online and face to face) could also be considered. A nominated member of the CWANWG with appropriate skills to fulfill this role.
- Plan for a grant now. Suggest up to \$7000 to cover the costs of Sensitive Santa, photographer, accommodation, venue hire and a contribution on behalf of the CWANWG to Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust and Moogji.
- Seek permission to add photos of December 2021 experience to new flier. A copy of the flier used for December 2021 has been attached for information.