

Creative Cooperative

THERE IS A CREATIVE MOVEMENT GAINING MOMENTUM IN ST GEORGE WITH KASEY LOCKWOOD A DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE FORMATION OF A LOCAL CRAFT AND ARTISAN COOPERATIVE THAT CELEBRATES ALL THAT IS LOCAL AND HANDMADE.



A warm glow radiates from the shopfront of the Balonne Handmade Cooperative, a charismatic artisan craft cooperative tucked away off the main street in St George. Tonight it is Social Yarn Night. Soft music is playing and deft hands are busy knitting and crocheting.

Kasey Lockwood instigated the formation of the Balonne Handmade Cooperative almost four years ago and the group's efforts are gaining momentum and attracting interest far and wide. The concept brings together skilled artists of all forms, from all over the district. As long as she can remember, Kasey has found great comfort in the healing benefits of creativity and expression through handicrafts. A talented all-rounder, Kasey can turn her hand to just about any craft you can imagine whether it is knitting, weaving, sewing or patchwork. She is a quiet soul who finds refuge through creative pursuits.

"I have always enjoyed working with my hands," says Kasey, who is also a part-time physiotherapist at the St George

Hospital. "Since having children, making things has become an obsession. I like to utilise every minute in my day and have learnt that by scraping together small periods of time here and there (swim club, football training, in the car at school pick up) you can be productive despite an otherwise hectic schedule."

Kasey has taught her elder two children, Millie (9) and Oliver (7) to knit and weave, with her youngest son Finlay (4) not far behind. She sees great benefits in teaching children the skills of yesteryear. "I have found that craft has a calming effect on our kids; while their hands are busy they can switch off and relax," says Kasey. "These repetitive motor tasks give the brain some space, which is therapeutic for children and adults alike."

Kasey sources quality fabrics and supplies and has a penchant for linen. Her linen box tops and cross back aprons have become key signatures in her range which also includes children's shirts in beautiful Liberty prints.

The Balonne Handmade Cooperative started as a pop-up shop and due to

1. ????. Image by Kasey Lockwood. 2. Kasey Lockwood. Image by Jennifer Street. View more images at our online magazine: www.highlifemagazine.net

overwhelming support from locals and visitors, it now regularly opens its doors to keen shoppers who are looking to buy local and handmade. A range of items including crochet scarfs and blankets, handmade jewellery, pottery, clothing (for adults and children), artwork, woodwork and much more can be found at the shop.

Next time you are in St George, call in to see Kasey and the team at 12 Henry Street, St George. Opening hours are Saturdays 8.30am to 12.30pm and by appointment. Call 0438 469 316 for more information.

words – Kerry Suttor