

Cottage by the Sea

inspiration · fun · opportunity Queenscliff

# 2023
# Winter Newsletter

# Introduction from our CEO Adam Wake



Welcome to our winter newsletter. We've been as busy as ever at Cottage, welcoming 1,420 children across our different programs this past financial year, as well as more than 200 children and caregivers on a respite holiday.

We're immensely grateful to our generous donors, supportive volunteers and in-kind donations, which all contribute to bringing more children more opportunities to have fun, be inspired and broaden their horizons.

Another sentence from Adam here if he'd like to include anything else.

We hope you enjoy reading the stories in this newsletter, which highlight the many ways an experience at Cottage helps our program participants learn, grow and make meaningful memories by the sea.





# Deakin Research: The Difference "Take a Break" Makes

Our research partner, Deakin University, has been working on some evidence-based data that explores the impacts of the Take a Break program. The insights from this research highlight the very important need to continue offering the program here at Cottage. Published in March this year, the study found that the children develop five key attributes during the program:

- Increased confidence
- A sense of belonging
- Self-belief
- Caring dispositions
- Healthy mindset

Two additional features were highlighted about the benefits of the program: an emphasis on relationship building and intentional pedagogy. These findings reinforce from a scientific perspective what we know anecdotally – that when children are provided with positive role models and adequate support in a nurturing environment, transformations can occur that last well beyond their stay at Cottage.

You can read the full report, "The Difference 'Take a Break' Makes", on our website. We have also begun our next research project with Deakin, "The Ripple Effect", and will share more information about this soon.





# Supporting those in need Take a Break program

Our Take a Break (TaB) program is focused on inspiration, fun and opportunity. Children aged six-12 attend a five day program at Cottage.

Over the past few years, we've been focusing on welcoming participants from communities affected by natural disasters. We've conducted 16 Take a Break programs for children from bushfire-affected regions in Victoria. Next, we'll focus on participants from flood-affected communities.

These programs have involved some of our most popular Take a Break experiences – from a Sea All Dolphin Swims snorkel charter (topped off with hot Milo) to surfing at Ocean Grove beach to a fishing charter (including eating the seafood they caught). From lying on the cargo net during the boat ride to catching some of their first waves in the ocean, these participants drew on the support of each other and their camp leaders to step outside of their comfort zones and achieve new and exciting things. These experiences reinforce the therapeutic effects of adventures in nature, which is something these children need now more than ever.









# Exploring our region near and far – REEF program

Our Recreation, Education, Environment, Friendship (REEF) program fosters confidence, leadership and personal development. REEFies aged 11-14 attend 10 programs over a two-year period.

Our first-year REEFies are 26 Grade 6 students from the Colac region, who will have an adventurous journey with Cottage until Year 12. This first three-day camp focused on establishing new friendships and working together as a team to overcome challenges and achieve goals. Some of these REEF participants were part of the TaB program, and offered great support to the new participants who were feeling nervous. The REEFies really enjoyed getting to know each other and the Camp Leaders were impressed with how well they interacted with each other. The participants enjoyed exploring the local area and having their first swim at Cottage beach – this group is full of water lovers.

We also welcomed 13 second-year REEFies for their first offsite camp of the year. This adventure involved a 16-kilometre trek from Aire River to Johanna Beach near the Great Ocean Road. For some of our participants, it was their first time trekking in the bush this far carrying a pack. "It looks so beautiful up here with the green hills and the dark blue water!" shared one REEFie – the ocean was putting on a great display of power and beauty.

It was a challenging trek – especially along Johanna Beach with a howling south-west wind – but with great determination and persistence, the group worked as a team to get through the hike together. There were sweat and tears, along with a big sense of achievement at what they had completed.









# Building new skills near and far – Mentor program

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# The impact of a scholarship opportunity at Cottage

The underpinning goals of the Mentor program are for young people to be actively contributing to their community, school and home, as well as here at Cottage. Mentor participants (as well as REEFies) also have the opportunity to be involved in our scholarship program.

Scholarships are funded by philanthropists, and allow our Mentors to pursue dreams that may have once felt out of reach. These scholarships provide funding for approved training and equipment for Mentors to explore new opportunities. The power of these scholarships lies in their ability to provide young people with inspiration, hope and confidence to achieve their goals. With this newfound sense of empowerment, they can thrive throughout the rest of their teenage years and into adulthood.

We are thrilled to share how our scholarship program is supporting one of our current Mentors. Through a scholarship from Cottage, Olive has just completed her aerial silks training. She has been loving the experience, and was awarded an emerging talent award at a recent competition. Olive was also given a wildcard entry into the national finals, which are taking place on the Gold Coast in mid-January 2024. Well done Olive!

We are so grateful to Olive and her family for sharing this update on her training and scholarship journey. With the support of our generous donors and philanthropists, we can continue to offer more Mentor participants, such as Olive, more inspiration, fun and opportunity.



# Staff & Ambassador news (Andrew working on this)

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# Future giving: Include a charity in your Will

Community support is at the heart of our work at Cottage by the Sea. Leaving a gift in your Will is one of the many ways to support Cottage, without affecting your current income or bank balance. It allows you to leave a legacy of money, property, shares or goods beyond your lifetime, which will support many children to come.

Include a Charity Week, which is taking place from September 4-10, is aligned with international legacy weeks across the globe and invites you to consider including a charity in your Will.

Gathered Here is offering Cottage by the Sea's valued supporters a free, legally binding Will, which only takes 20 minutes to complete. Preparing your Will can cost hundreds of dollars and be a time-consuming process, but Gathered Here is making it free and simple.

While it's not required when writing your online Will, leaving a gift to Cottage by the Sea is a lasting and meaningful way that you can not only future-proof our important work, but also leave a legacy of inspiration, fun and opportunity for the generations of children to come. If you choose to support Cottage by way of a gift in your Will, it will keep you giving, in perpetuity, by providing ongoing financial security.

Write your free Will online now via: http://wills.gatheredhere.com.au/c/cottage-by-the-sea.

**Write your free will today**



# Melbourne Community Relations Update

Here's an update from Donna Campisi, who works in Community Relations in Melbourne for Cottage by the Sea (CBTS).

I had the pleasure of spending three days with Anne Catchpole, who introduced me to this role and many wonderful supporters. (Anne previously worked in Melbourne Community Relations for Cottage for 28 years.) In the short time we had together, I could see the appreciation everyone had of her, including myself. Here's a lovely photo I captured of the team at Pinchapoo, who are regular supporters of CBTS, while Anne and I visited them. Thank you, Anne, and Pinchapoo.



While speaking at the Mulgrave VIEW Club, Val shared a story with me about her mother, who visited Cottage as a child. Her mother had happy memories of the experience and shared these with Val. They even drove to Cottage to have a look one day. Her mother didn't want to get out of the car – she was just happy to see it from the outside. Sadly, Val's mother has passed away. However, Val will come for a tour one day, and see for herself the wonderful space we have for the children.



Val isn't the only person who has spoken to me about past experiences at Cottage. Often, adults who I speak to at events share their fond memories as a child at Cottage. We encourage all to come back and visit us.

I get to meet individuals and group supporters of Cottage every day in my role, whether that is attending events as a guest speaker or picking up kind donations from our Melbourne community. I would like to thank you all here individually, but I would be taking up all the space in this newsletter. Thank you all for your warm welcome.

As you can see in these pictures, we give every child a "goody bag" when they come to Cottage. We are so grateful for your contributions.

With the support of our CEO, I will be sending a monthly email blog to our wonderful supporters in Melbourne. This email will keep you in the loop of what we, as a community, are up to in Melbourne. Look out for that email soon.





Photos by Ian Jasper

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