

Cottage by the Sea

inspiration · fun · opportunity Queenscliff

2024 Winter Newsletter

Respect | Adventure | Integrity | Belonging | Community

Cottage experiences shared through stories

The impact of Cottage by the Sea is shared largely through stories. The communication streams are varied – from conversations to letters to phone calls – but the themes are consistent: the wonderful ways in which children experience inspiration, fun and opportunity at Cottage by the Sea.

Recently, we received a letter from a Mentor participant, thanking us for the opportunity to pursue her ballet passion through a scholarship (read the story on page 6). A few months ago, the Reefies hiked through the Otways and, with encouragement, inspired each other to complete the journey. For Take a Break participants, having fun is the touchstone of their experience – 100% of children from a recent program expressed this. These stories are all threads that make up the rich and varied tapestry of Cottage by the Sea.

We are currently embarking on a digital transformation. This is a very exciting project that will enhance our ability to communicate thoughtfully with you. This fully-funded project is well underway and we appreciate your patience as we work hard to provide the best experience to everyone as we learn a new system.

Back to the stories … many other special pieces feature within these pages, showcasing the brilliant work of our volunteers, donors and other supporters who help our team deliver life-changing programs to children and young people. Transformations occur through experiences at Cottage by the Sea each day. This financial year alone, more than 1,350 children have already experienced a Cottage program. Thank you for contributing to the impact and for your support this financial year – your help truly makes a difference. Grab a cuppa, find a comfy chair and enjoy reading our 2024 Winter Newsletter.

Adam Wake
CEO, Cottage by the Sea



Photography on OFC, page 2, page 8 and OBC by Donna Squire and Deakin University.

Take a Break – embracing new opportunities

52 children from Koondrook, Murrabit and Gunbower Primary Schools attended a recent Take a Break program. The fishing, boogie-boarding and rock-pooling activities were a big change of scenery for these children from the Murray River. The participants loved eating the fresh fish they caught for dinner – there was lots of excitement that evening as they reflected on the day's adventures.

"Children were willing to have a go at every opportunity that came their way. They willingly joined in activities with students that were not necessarily in their friendship group and treated each other with respect and kindness," shared a visiting teacher.

Feedback from another teacher reinforced the value of this opportunity for children. "Our students were very fortunate to attend Cottage by the Sea, with many students having access to activities that they would not normally get the opportunity to do. Many of our students are unable to access the beach as we live so far away and families are not able to afford it. The camp was both educational and a lot of fun."

Feedback from these program participants:

"I learned to try new things, be adventurous and to always have fun!"

"I learned that I can do stuff if I put my mind to it."

"Some new activities I liked and had never tried before were the low ropes course, the deep sea fishing and the boogie-boarding. I loved all these activities!"

"My time at Cottage by the Sea made me feel adventurous and more brave."

"This was the best camp I've been on and so much fun. I would go back and recommend for other schools."







REEF (Recreation, Education, Environment, Friendship) – the start of an exciting journey

We recently welcomed 37 Grade 6 students from Whittington and Newcomb Primary Schools to start their adventurous journey with Cottage by the Sea over the next 2 years on the REEF program.

The first camp in this program is all about establishing new friendships and working together as a team. The Reefies really enjoyed getting to know each other better. For a lot of the participants, it was not their first time at Cottage. With great relationships already established, both primary schools have been a part of the Take a Break program over the years. These children played a great role in supporting other children who were feeling the first-camp nerves.

The Reefies enjoyed exploring the local area and, in particular, going for their first swim at Cottage Beach. They are all excited to eventually go surfing and snorkelling on the REEF program – we have a group of water lovers. For one of the Reefies, it was their first time ever in the ocean!

The Camp Leaders were impressed with how well the group came together and are really looking forward to how the Reefies progress throughout the program.





Mentor – hike to "The Pinnacle"

This year, we introduced a new activity on the Mentor program – an offsite adventure in the Grampians. This trip involved a hike to "The Pinnacle", which offered mental and physical challenges for the participants to overcome.

The night before the hike, the group opened up about the challenges they've faced this year and how they've overcome those obstacles. Our team, many trained in mental health first aid, trauma-informed therapy, conflict resolution and cultural awareness, will not shy away from talking about important subjects and difficult topics to support our young adults with the challenges of our modern world. The conversation then turned to the challenge of the hike. It was a great open conversation about how some of the participants will find different parts of the hike challenging and that everyone can encourage each other to get through it together.

The hike wasn't a walk in the park – at one point, the group was walking up rock faces on a 45-degree angle! Camp Leaders encouraged everyone to take regular breaks along the way so that they could both catch their breath and enjoy the journey.

With a sigh of relief at the summit, the group sat down together and enjoyed morning tea. Everyone shared a pat on the back and congratulated one another before they stepped right out on the lookout. For some, this was the biggest challenge of the morning – stepping out onto an overhanging rock-face looking over Halls Gap.



Feedback from the offsite adventure:

"It was nice to be able to get away for a bit and re-centre myself."

"I enjoyed this camp. It allowed me to relax after a stressful term of Year 12 and working a lot."

"Thank you Cottage for everything you have done. The Mentor camps are amazing."

"It was a nice break from home."

"I definitely enjoyed the camp ... it was such a relaxing time – good for a switch off."

"I would like to thank the crew that went on the Halls Gap camp. Molly* loved it and it was the longest she had been away from home in a long time. I cannot thank everyone enough for the care and compassion they had for her."

*Parent's feedback. *Name has been changed.*



Scholarships

Our Programs Team recently received a letter from one of our Mentor participants, showing how these scholarships really do provide an opportunity for young people to pursue a dream.



"Thank you for your contribution to and support of my passions. After receiving scholarship forms from Dave after his visit to my school, I filled one out in the hopes of getting support for my participation in the Western Ballet Project's production of 'The Suffragettes'. The whole experience only happened thanks to Cottage.

By participating in these productions, I have gained more experience and knowledge as I have been surrounded by people similar to me. Using the confidence I have gained from participating in the Mentor program at Cottage by the Sea, I was able to support others and be a great part of the team to produce the performance."

"Since performing in 'The Suffragettes', I have also used my knowledge about the story of women's rights to create historical narrative writing pieces at school for English assessments. My English teacher has been very impressed with my knowledge and storytelling. I'm so thankful for your support! Thank you so much CBTS – for all you do for the Mentors and their passions."



Donor stories

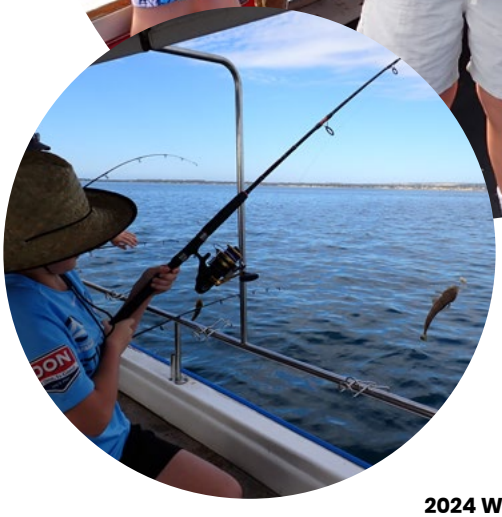
A passion for helping children



Charles “Paddy” Humphries came to Australia as an orphaned young boy. Having overcome challenging obstacles as a child, Paddy has developed a passion for helping children. We were thrilled to have Paddy visit us at Cottage for a cuppa and a tour. We were equally as delighted to go through Paddy’s impressive coin collection with him, which he has kindly donated to Cottage. We will ensure his donation has the greatest impact possible towards visiting children. Paddy said that donating his currency collection, along with leaving a gift in his Will to Cottage by the Sea, has given him an overwhelming sense of pride and happiness – knowing he is helping generations of children to come. When Paddy was leaving Cottage, he stopped near the front door and sang us an Irish ballad. It was a beautiful moment for us all as children ran around us on all sides.

Bringing a fishing dream to life





Cottage by the Sea Branches have always played a key role in raising funds for our programs. Recently, the Highton Ceres Branch made a generous contribution towards our fishing activity. Children on Take a Break maximised this opportunity with many fish caught and eaten, taking home lasting memories.

Partnerships

Deakin University

Deakin University is close to finishing its second impact study for Cottage by the Sea, called “The Ripple Effect”. This research is exploring the longer-term benefits of an experience at Cottage by the Sea through interviews with current and former program participants over the years, going back as early as 1939.

A wonderful photographer was recently at Cottage capturing imagery for the report. We enjoyed having the Deakin team onsite too, which included Professor Louise Paatsch who is working on the research. We look forward to sharing this research with you soon. Here are some great images from the day.





The Gordon

The Gordon has been a long-time supporter of Cottage. Recently, Mentor participants undertook barista training and food-handling courses at The Gordon in Geelong. These courses are so valuable for the young people and their feedback reflects this.

“I loved trying new things because it will be very useful in the future. The barista training will help me with my job at Maccas and it can get me another job as a waiter.”

“I enjoyed the course because it will help with my resume and showed how skilled I am.”

Working bees

Many of our corporate partners volunteer their time at Cottage with working bees. These working bees have provided support across many operational areas, from gardening, cleaning and painting to cooking and sorting through donations. Over the past few months, we have welcomed and thank the following groups for their support:

- Simply Energy by ENGIE
- ABN Group/Boutique Homes
- Millbrook Group



ABN Group



Adam and PPSP Chairman Captain Mathew Close

Port Phillip Sea Pilots

Cottage by the Sea is very proud of its longstanding community partnership with Port Phillip Sea Pilots (PPSP). In addition to collaborating on community events, such as last year's Melbourne Cup Tour of Queenscliff, PPSP also supports Cottage in other ways.

PPSP Managing Director Captain Mike Hanson and PPSP Director Captain Damian Laughlin were invited to be guest speakers at a Bellarine Women's Network event. They took some boxes of Brendan Moloney's fantastic book *Pilot on Board*, which was published in 2018 to celebrate the 175th anniversary of PPSP. The ladies purchased 18 books – raising $720 – with the funds donated to Cottage. PPSP Chairman Captain Mathew Close is pictured above with Cottage CEO Adam Wake, handing over the funds in one of the books.

Both of our organisations date back to the 19th century – Cottage 1890 and PPSP 1839 – and we look forward to supporting our community together for many years to come.



Anthony Costa Foundation artwork supporting local charities

If we don't take the time to stop and witness everyday moments, we miss the opportunity to appreciate the joy found in these experiences. A new artwork featuring Cottage by the Sea highlights the impact of being mindful. Supported by Anthony Costa Foundation, the "Everyday Moments Make a Difference" illustration by local artist and illustrator Liz McGrath depicts visiting children at Cottage by the Sea playing in the sandpit.

Overlooking the ocean, the sandpit has been an iconic touchstone of the Cottage playground for more than two decades. It's where the children dig for treasure and while they're playing, they can hear the the waves crashing in the background and native birds chirping in the trees above. As Liz was drawing, the children were interacting with her and witnessing the artist's creative process unfold.

"It was a really nice project," reflects Liz. To the illustrator, the concept of everyday moments making a difference is about using mindfulness to appreciate day-to-day life. "It's about stopping, taking time and really noticing things that you might normally walk past or not pay attention to."

Staff & volunteer news

Staff trainings

Providing Cottage by the Sea staff with the knowledge, experience and training to best support children is one of our top priorities.

The team recently completed Youth Mental Health First Aid Training, which explored how to identify and help manage mental health problems in young people. Led by Andy Bell from Youth Gurus for The Mental Health First Aid Australia® Team, the training was done in an engaging, interactive and creative way. “Undertaking this course with the team gives us all the best opportunity to step in and help a young person (or adult, as it applies across all ages) and perhaps even save a life,” said Adam Wake, Cottage by the Sea CEO.

16 staff members have also previously undertaken Cultural Awareness Training. In addition, the majority of our Programs Team have or will undergo training in:

- Trauma-Informed Therapy
- Conflict Resolution
- Remote Area First Aid

New members to Programs Team

Our growth in the number of programs and children we support is increasing, which has seen our Programs Team expand. New casual staff members include:

- Ellie M – Ellie studied Occupational Therapy at university. She has previously worked in disability support and as an OT in mental health. Ellie was drawn to working at Cottage as she loves the outdoors, anything ocean-related and that Cottage focuses on environmental activities. She has a keen interest in Outdoor Health and adventure-based therapy.
- Ellie R – Ellie completed four years of study at Deakin University, majoring in Children’s Literature. She loves facilitating programs for young people in a range of activities – from anything water-based to cooking.

Staff training - Youth Mental Health First Aid Training





New team member Anika

- Anika – Anika, a local girl who grew up in Ocean Grove, has always had a passion for helping others and putting smiles on people's faces. In 2023 she completed her Certificate 4 in Youth Work, which led her to apply for a role at Cottage by the Sea. We're so excited to see where this new adventure takes her!

Farewell with thanks

In December 2023, we said farewell to our treasured colleague, Megan. Megan started at Cottage by the Sea as a volunteer 19 years ago. Her staff roles at Cottage have ranged from working as a Funding Coordinator to a Grant Writer. Megan's work in helping to secure funding through wonderful relationship building has been instrumental. On Megan's last day, she went down Cottage's famous slide – for the first time! Happy retirement, Megan. We wish you all the very best for the future and love that you come back to visit us regularly.

We also said farewell to the following volunteers: Bron Davis, Barb Slee and Michele McIntyre. Thank you for donating your time to support Cottage by the Sea.

New volunteers

We are so grateful to our dedicated volunteers who kindly donate their time to help with the day-to-day operations of Cottage. "Without them, we could not offer the quality of what we do – it would simply be impossible," said Cottage by the Sea CEO Adam Wake. New volunteers include:

- Elizabeth Peretich
- Maree Greig
- Danette Morrison



Megan on her last day

Melbourne Community Relations

Cottage by the Sea has had wonderful support from our Melbourne community this year.

Thank you to the new community groups below who have shown their interest in supporting Cottage:

- Kingston Heath Probus Club
- Combined Probus Club of Syndal Inc.
- Hoppers Club Ltd Social Travel Club
- Syndal Thursday Friends
- Seaholme Probus Club
- Pinewood Combined Probus
- Doncaster View Club
- Waverley Lions Club
- Sunbury Macedon Ranges View Club
- Rotary Club of Chadstone/East Malvern
- BlueCross Highgrove
- Melbourne Sunrise Probus
- Probus Mt Waverley Combined
- Probus Club of Rickett Point
- Anglican Church Altona
- Waverley Auxiliary for the Royal Children's Hospital
- Footscray Lions Club

Many thanks to all our awesome Melbourne individuals and groups for continuing your support. I encourage everyone to visit Cottage by the Sea in Queenscliff. Bring a friend, make a day of it and see the magic of Cottage for yourselves. If you are in Melbourne and would like a visit, please email donna.c@cottagebythesea.com.au or call 0436 191 010.

Donna Campisi
Melbourne Community Relations,
Cottage by the Sea



Zorica

Making toys since 2001

Meet Zorica from "Woodcraft Manningham" in Templestowe. Zorica leads a wonderful team of enthusiastic wooden toymakers. Each toy is individually crafted and painted in flat pieces, and includes instructions for the child on how to put the toy together. It's a fun craft activity that gives the children a sense of pride and achievement. The Woodcraft Manningham team have been making toys for 23 years. They have made more than 25,000 wooden toy kits for children – wow! We are truly grateful for the great work and support.



From left: Charles Hooi, Kok Bin Ong, Zorica Platts, Robert Dall, Robert Murphy and Tave Choong

Future giving: Include a charity in your Will

Don't just dream of a better world. *Will it.*

When you dream of a better world, what does it look like? What are you Will-ing to do to make that vision a reality? Well, you can be a part of that change, and achieving it can be easier than you think – by leaving a gift in your Will.

Leaving a gift in your Will 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.



Gathered Here is offering Cottage's valued supporters a free, legally binding Will, which only takes 10 minutes to complete. Write your free Will online via https://wills.gatheredhere.com.au/c/cottage-by-the-sea or scan the QR code on the back of this newsletter.

Tony Featherston
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Already have a Will?

Cottage by the Sea has created a Codicil form, which allows you to include a gift to Cottage by the Sea in your existing Will without incurring the expense of completely rewriting your Will.

A Codicil is a legal document that amends your Last Will and Testament, helping you keep your estate plan up to date. With a Codicil, you can change, add or remove clauses from your Will, so you don't have to rewrite or execute an entirely new document.

For a free form or more information, contact us or download the Codicil Form from our website: https://www.cottagebythesea.com.au/support/leaving-a-gift-in-your-will/



Events & fundraising

Bulls & Bears Annual Golf Day

The Bulls & Bears Golf Day returned on Friday, February 16 at Flinders Golf Club for its 19th year as a Cottage fundraiser. Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's golf day. "Not only was it a most successful event, enjoyed in great spirit by all, but it was extremely successful from a fundraising perspective," shares Alan Harrison and Geoff Counsel from the Bulls & Bears Golf Group. This year's Bulls & Bears Golf Day raised $41,641.

Congratulations to the winning team, "Who's Your Caddy", captained by Nick Mitchell (pictured). "Nick has been an amazing supporter of the Golf Day (and Cottage in general) over many years," shares Alan.



Nick Mitchell

Queenscliff Branch "High Tea with Heidi" event

On April 8, our Queenscliff Branch hosted their "High Tea with Heidi" event at Cottage by the Sea. Guests sat in the dining room overlooking a rainy day out at sea and enjoyed a delicious array of sweet and savoury delights, including Cottage's famous scones.

Guest speaker Heidi, owner of Van Loon's Nursery, spoke about the history of her Wallington nursery and its dedicated support of Cottage by the Sea.

Thank you to everyone who attended the high tea, as well as the Queenscliff Branch and Cottage team (volunteers and staff) for organising the event. Through the combined support of everyone, the event raised $2,906.



Queenscliff Branch members and guests with Heidi

Bellarine Branch "Music by the Lake" event

Cottage by the Sea's Bellarine Branch ran a "Music by the Lake" fundraiser on April 28 at Connewarre Wetland Centre. The autumn sun was shining as Gary & Jenny Jones and friends played some great tunes. Guests enjoyed homemade biscuits, raffles and a sausage sizzle with "BBQ King" Bill Kerr while listening to the music.



The band led by Gary & Jenny Jones

Thanks to everyone's generosity, the event raised $2,365. Thank you to the 150 guests who attended and the Bellarine Branch for organising the fundraiser. We also thank Connewarre Wetland Centre for donating the facilities, time and staff so that everyone could have fun while raising important funds for Cottage.



Winter Warmers Breakfast

Our annual Winter Warmers Breakfast returned on Wednesday, May 1 at GMHBA Stadium. There was a great buzz in the room as guests learned more about Cottage and the Winter Warmers fundraising campaign, along with wellbeing insights from guest speaker Paul Taylor.



Cottage Ambassador Ian Cover OAM hosted the event. He took the roving microphone to Cottage Patron Rebecca Maddern, Cottage Alumni and 2x Olympian Morgan Mitchell, and Cottage Ambassador Warren Davies "The Unbreakable Farmer" for some great conversations.

Winter Warmers fundraising campaign – every child deserves warmth

The informative and fun-filled Winter Warmers Breakfast also launched our Winter Warmers fundraising campaign, which is taking place from June 17–30.

For more information, to start fundraising or to make a donation to Winter Warmers, visit give.cottagebythesea.com.au.

Upcoming events

Please mark your calendars for the following upcoming events and fundraisers:

- **Bellarine Branch Card Day (Bridge) between July 15 and July 21.**
- **Roderick Insurance Race Day supporting Cottage by the Sea on August 9.**
- **Bellarine Branch Spring Luncheon on September 13.**
- **Geelong Branch High Tea at Windsor Park Retirement Village on September 26.**
- **Geelong Branch Surfside Singers Concert with Afternoon Tea on October 20.**
- **Bellarine Branch Open Garden on October 20.**
- **Cottage by the Sea Annual General Meeting on October 25.**

Make a tax-deductible donation that will enhance the lives of children

Our children's programs are entirely non-government funded, so we need your support.



As the demand increases for Cottage by the Sea programs, please consider making a monetary donation this financial year. Your support will help us offer inspiration, fun and opportunity to more children. All donations of $2 and more are tax deductable.

ALL DONATIONS OF $2 AND OVER ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

I would like to donate *(please circle)*

$25 $50 $100 $250 $500 Other $.....

Title:..... Name:.....

Address.....

.....Postcode:.....

Telephone:.....

email:.....

Cottage by the Sea, Queenscliff Inc.
ABN 21 987 748 593 INC. A 0006878E

☐ **Cheque** payable to Cottage by the Sea, Queenscliff Inc.

☐ **Direct debit** (Please use your name as the reference)
BSB: 083-825 ACCOUNT NUMBER: 68 084 1769
ACCOUNT NAME: Cottage by the Sea, Queenscliff Inc.

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex

Cardholder name:.....

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Card number

Cardholder signature:.....

Expiry Date ☐☐ ☐☐ CCV ☐☐☐

☐ *I am interested in receiving information about leaving a gift in my Will to Cottage By the Sea.*

I would like to make this a regular donation.

$..... ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Annually

Make 2024 the year you create a life-changing legacy

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WRITE YOUR FREE ONLINE WILL TODAY AND PLEDGE A GIFT TO CHARITY.



Cottage by the Sea inspiration · fun · opportunity Queenscliff

gatheredhere