



Cottage by the Sea
inspiration · fun · opportunity Queenscliff



2023 Winter Newsletter

Respect

Adventure

Integrity

Belonging

Community

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.

Recently, I joined our young Mentor participants on a climb up the iconic Sydney Harbour Bridge. It was nothing short of incredible to witness firsthand the profound impact of adventure therapy and "challenge by choice", which is an integral part of our Mentor program.



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.



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 18 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.



Deakin Research: The Difference “Take a Break” Makes

Our research partnership with Deakin University led by Deakin’s Strategic Research Centre in Education – Research for Educational Impact (REDI) – 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 are very proud of our partnership over the past decade with Deakin University and a second major research project titled “The Ripple Effect” has commenced. We will share more information about this project 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.



Take a Break Participant

"I really loved the variety. There were so many activities and I learned heaps. THANK YOU so much for letting us come."

Teacher

"It has been amazing for students to have some 'normality' after bushfires and COVID 19. Thank you for assisting our students to find the time and headspace to be kids."



Building new skills near and far – Mentor program

Our Mentor program is for graduates from the REEF program, and focuses on personal development. Mentor participants are aged 13-18 and attend five to six programs per year over five years.

Cottage by the Sea has a close working relationship with the Gordon. Recently, our Mentor participants experienced this first-hand, learning from industry-trained educators at the educational institution. They completed the Espresso Master Class, which has helped our Mentors develop skills that can be used to get highly demanded jobs as baristas. All the Mentor participants had so much fun while learning these practical skills. Thank you so much to the Gordon for this opportunity to bring more children more opportunities to broaden their skill sets. The Mentor participants also undertook a food-handling course here at Cottage, which contained skills and experience that can support a career in the hospitality industry.



Our older Mentors took part in an exciting horse-riding adventure at Watsons Mountain Country Trail Rides in Victoria's High Country. There was a pivotal turning point in this experience for the Mentors as a group – the friendship dynamics shifted in a positive way and they all came together as a team, with one participant reflecting in Circle Time that they were “grateful for the opportunity to come out here to make stronger bonds with others”. This bonding also extended to the horses, as the focus of this trip was just as much about learning how to care for the animals (from grooming to saddling to unsaddling their respective horses) as it was about riding them. Meeting each horse was an exciting experience, as



Departing Mentor
“I would just like to thank you for all the opportunities Cottage has given me... Thanks for not letting me give up and for pushing me further than I ever thought I could go.”

the Mentors discovered the different personalities of the individual horses and got to know the horse they'd be riding for the week. This adventure reinforced the power of equine therapy – the therapeutic effects of spending time and connecting with horses, and how these experiences can positively enhance life back at home



Mentor Participant

“My horse was very cautious at the start and wasn't confident around me, but as the days went on she started to trust me more. I've given her lots of love and now she's giving me head bumps and resting her head on me. She's a beautiful girl overall and I think we've connected well over the last few days.”

Mentor Participant

“Showing patience and kindness when you first meet someone is important because someone might not open up to you straight away, but showing these qualities can prove that you can be trusted.”



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.

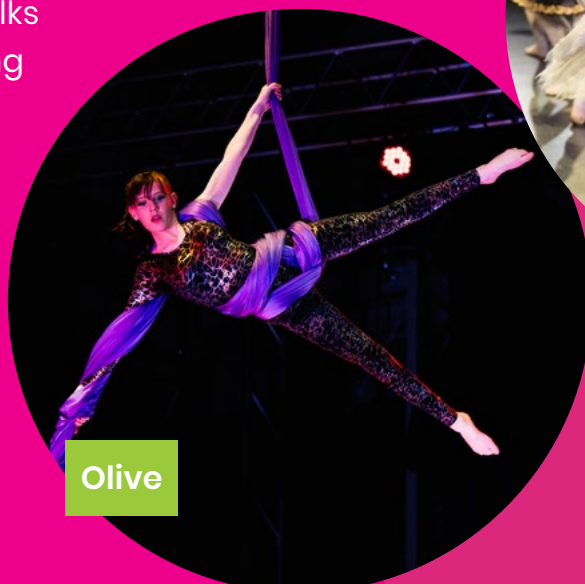
Scholarships are funded by philanthropists, and allow our Mentors to pursue dreams that may have once felt out of reach. These scholarships provide funding for approved training and equipment for Mentors to explore new opportunities. The power of these scholarships lies in their ability to provide young people with inspiration, hope and confidence to reach for 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.

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 Cottage participants, such as Olive, more inspiration, fun and opportunity.

Young ballerina, Annabella, is another grateful recipient of a Cottage scholarship. Earlier in the year, she successfully auditioned to earn a position in the production of “Excalibur”.

A thank-you letter from Annabella to Cottage
“Thank you so much for financially supporting me in being part of the Western Ballet Project.....being at Cottage has helped me to build my resilience and persistence even more in order to be even more confident. I am so grateful to have your support during my journey and I hope that you know it was definitely worth it. Thank you CBTS!”



Awards & acknowledgements

We were delighted to receive the news that Cottage Ambassador **Curtis Stone** was awarded an Order of Australia for service to the tourism, culinary and hospitality industries. Included in the list of charities is Cottage by the Sea, where he has supported us since 2011.



Curtis Stone and kids

In May, long-standing Board Member **Scott Chapman** was honoured at the Committee for Melbourne's 2023 Melbourne Achiever Awards. The Committee acknowledged Scott's impact within the not-for-profit sector through his strong leadership at the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria, his executive leadership and board governance across the youth, aged and outdoor sectors, and his passion to make a difference to people's lives.

The Awards celebrated contributions to Melbourne that will leave a lasting legacy and are awarded to both an organisation and an individual each year. In receiving the individual award, Scott outlined his guiding principle for life and work: "If you see a need and you have the capability or capacity to address it, then you're honour-bound to do so."



Scott Chapman, Melbourne Achiever Award

Phil de Fegely, a Committee Member of The Rippers, who help facilitate and enable support for our children across their far-reaching business and social networks, was recently appointed to the role of Ambassador. Phil has been outstanding in utilising his business contacts to open doors to raise much-needed funds, which is absolutely vital to a non-government funded charity like Cottage by the Sea. At the May Rippers luncheon at Cottage, **Andrew Balaam**, from Special Projects for Cottage, made the announcement and presented Phil with a gift on behalf of Cottage.



Phil de Fegely and Andrew Balaam

Staff & Volunteer movements

This year, we've had some significant changes to the Cottage team.

Due to the retirement of Anne Catchpole, **Donna Campisi** has settled into the role of Melbourne Community Relations. Donna was attracted to the role after hearing personal testimonials from staff and participants at Cottage. Her background includes working in the human service field, mainly in disability and mental health. She also has a background in presentation skills in sales, education and keynote speaking.

Ally McManus recently joined the Cottage team as its Media & Communications Officer. She grew up in Geelong and has been a magazine journalist for the past 10 years. Her values align with the philosophy underpinning Cottage and is thrilled to be sharing meaningful stories on the wonderful work Cottage is doing to enrich the lives of young people.

Our growth in the number of Cottage Programs has seen our Programs team expand. New faces to the team include: **Caitlin Fay, Shelby Jade** and **Tori Bilney**. We also welcomed back to the Programs team **Brad Hay** and **Christine Beever** (Chook). Chook returned from maternity leave.

Meg Lock (Housekeeping) has joined our housekeeping team, and we wish a big welcome to Meg.



Donna



Ally



Caitlin



Tori



Brad



Christine & James



Meg

We are so grateful to our amazing Volunteers who kindly give up their time to help with the day-to-day running of Cottage. New Volunteers to Cottage include:

- **Anne-Maree Fitzgerald**
- **Corinne Mitchell**
- **Michele McIntyre**
- **Graham Mason**
- **Jenny Grossman**
- **Joel McWilliam**
- **John Fitzgerald**
- **Julie Harrington**

Also, thank you to these Volunteers who have recently started:

- Corinne Telford
- Glenn Monckton
- Julie Runik
- Maureen Monckton
- Nola Wood
- Silvana Bongiovanni
- Suzanne Capell
- Barb Slee
- Bron Davis
- Colin Hatcher



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. Below is 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, member **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.

Please contact Donna on donna.c@cottagebythesea.com.au if you would like to book Donna as a guest speaker.



Donna Campisi



Anne Catchpole and team



Val

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>.

Use the QR code to write your free Will today.



Events update

There are many events held across the Cottage community throughout the year.

One special event in recent months was an amazing lunch to thank our Volunteers as part of Volunteer Week. As one Volunteer said about the day, "Our Volunteer lunch was so enjoyable and having Cottage staff there for the presentation made such a difference." This was in reference to the whole Cottage team getting behind the day to help our Volunteers understand just how important they are.



Robyn, Pauline, Lois and Sandra

The Rippers hosted its annual May lunch for its members. The guests sat at the very tables and chairs the children sit at when they enjoy the delicious and nutritious food served at Cottage.

The guests were inspired by the heartfelt stories from two of our amazing Alumni – Jade and Caitlyn (pictured in the next column). Jade spoke about the scholarship program and how this gave her the opportunity

and inspiration to gain her pilot's licence, which led to a career in aviation. Caitlyn spoke about the opportunity she was given with the first-aid training she received during the Mentor program at Cottage, which inspired her to follow a career in nursing.



Jade and Caitlyn

Our new fundraising initiative Winter Warmers was launched with a breakfast for more than 120 guests at the home of the Cats at GMHBA Stadium. Our special guest was Paul Taylor from the Mind Body Brain Performance Institute. Cottage Ambassador Ian Cover OAM was the MC, and interviewed special guests such as our Patron Rebecca Maddern, Ambassador Warren Davies and President Don Rankin. We also ran a Winter Warmers workshop with Paul Taylor at Cottage on July 17. Our staff, Volunteers, Ambassadors Jan Nettie Wilkinson and Warren Davies, along with

Paul Taylor seminar



K-rock's Tim & Jess, Beca Maddern & Ian Cover



guests of Cottage, all loved hearing about his six pillars to finding the best version of ourselves. A shout-out to those brave souls who took the plunge in an ice bath after the session.

We look forward to the annual Cottage by the Sea Race Day at the Geelong Racing Club on Friday, August 25.

We are delighted to announce Queenscliff, more particularly, Cottage by the Sea, as a 2023 Lexus Melbourne Cup Tour destination! Thanks to the Victoria Racing Club for this amazing opportunity and the Borough of Queenscliff for their support. Each year, the 18-carat-gold Cup visits various destinations in an effort to unite communities by engaging councils, schools and the local community to

raise funds for local causes. We look forward to sharing the magic of the People's Cup with the Queenscliff community. Most importantly, our lucky children here on the day will get to hold the Cup for a photo (with a white glove on, of course!). ☺ The Cup will be in Queenscliff all day, with the Cottage team working with the community to organise various events throughout the day. Our big day to host the Cup is Tuesday, October 24.



Cottage CEO, Adam Wake with two-time winning Cup jockey, John Letts (centre) and Joe McGrath, VRC Manager Racing Engagements & Cup Tour (left).

The Rippers, in conjunction with the wider racing community, will be hosting a Cottage fundraising event at the nearby historical property Suma Park on October 24. This will be a cocktail evening to raise funds for Cottage and celebrate the Melbourne Cup in town. Pencil this event in your calendar.

Other important save the dates on the Cottage calendar include the Annual General Meeting on October 27 and the Annual Fair at Cottage on January 13, 2024.

Please sign up to donate and support Cottage by the Sea.

Our programs are completely non-government funded, so we need your support.



As we are seeing an increase in demand for our programs, please consider making a monetary donation. All donations of \$2 and more are tax deductible.

DONATE



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Will **WONDERS NEVER CEASE.**

INCLUDE A CHARITY



IAC WEEK 4-10 SEPTEMBER

GIVE A GIFT TO THE FUTURE