



Lookout over Balnarring Beach from Merricks Point

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter.

On behalf of everyone at PFC, I would like to pass on my best wishes for your good health during what has been a particularly challenging lockdown in Victoria.

I hope that reading about the successful Winter Holiday Program (p3-4) and the wonderful experiences of families (P2) will provide some joy. Thank you to our volunteers, donors, board, staff and other supporters who make our service possible.

As we prepare to reopen to an exceptionally busy summer holiday period, we look forward to providing many more vital opportunities for people doing it tough to rest, connect, and reenergise.

Warm regards,
Rachel Connor
manager@pfc.org.au

If you would like to support the work of the Presentation Family Centre by donating or volunteering, please get in touch:

E: manager@pfc.org.au
P: 5983 1819



PFC welcomes 1400 guests every year.

80% of guests are women and children

Here's what guests told us a break at PFC means to them:

It has been a very long time since I have been able to go away with my family due to numerous hospital admissions of my two children, so at least 2 years since I have been away for a break. It was wonderful to be able to take [my daughter] to the beach for a few times as she has only been twice in her life (she is now 4).

I have been taking care of so much including other people, I needed a break from it all for a moment.

As a busy mum of 47 years to my disabled daughter, wife, grandmother, friend, daughter and daughter in law, I get exhausted by life and demands. Presentation is a calm oasis, where my daughter and I find energy for the next round - and one another!

I needed down time, I have a daughter with Leukaemia and am a single parent of 6 and 4 year old.

A much needed retreat following a very stressful time

Here's what guests told us they enjoyed about their stay at PFC:

The space! The location, the beautiful grounds and labyrinth, the playground, vegetable patch and harmony garden, through thoughtful staff, the close vicinity to the beach, the change!

The welcoming staff, great program and welcome meal.

Activities, presentation of cottage, the delicious meal, fire and marshmallows, the linen on the beds provided, location, peace and quiet.

The real tranquillity, the birdlife and gardens!

The lovely welcoming feeling with our stay and all contact during the booking of the cottage, including the cancellation the year before due to COVID restrictions and the rebooking this year. Thank you so much for you kind understanding.

Winter School Holiday Program: Fostering Rejuvenation and Connection

The struggles that individuals, families and the community as a whole have faced in the last 18 months highlight the importance of connection – to self, others and the environment. From stressors such as COVID-19 and its resultant state lockdowns, many have been experiencing financial hardship, job instability, and increased mental and physical health stress.

Through our guest feedback, PFC has found that being able to come to Balnarring Beach, and to engage in activities in nature and with others during, has made a very real impact on the emotional wellbeing of our guests during these trying times. PFC aims to continue to provide these opportunities and programs for our guests, so that we may support them as they rejuvenate in a calm and restful space.

PFC hosted another successful school holiday program in July. This Winter program included a variety of guests, many of which PFC were able to fund using the Gift Fund, including single-parent families, families referred by BASP, and a family from the Dandenongs experiencing hardship during the Dandenong storms and power outages. Ages ranged between 18 months and 18, and families informed us of their interests and passions to help us facilitate activities that both young people and their responsible adult would enjoy and engage in.

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Guests enjoying our Arts and Crafts Day



Program staff and volunteers:
Alissa Bechara, Dani Swindle-Hurst and **Shane Smith**, PFC volunteers, with **Jade Warner-Benedetti**, Programs Coordinator, and **Cassie Mills**, PFC Support Staff.

Winter School Holiday Program (continued...)

Once again, PFC's administrator Mel provided immense support for all guests throughout their booking and arrival process, while program coordinator Jade and support staff Cassie did an excellent job leading the program activities.

We were able to organise a range of activities with the help of our dedicated volunteers – Margaret Maher, Dani Swindle-Hurst, Shane Smith, Tasma Pittock and Alissa Bechara.

We began with an incredible welcome dinner, including Margaret's incredible slow-cooked lamb and a vegan and halal feast. Program participants were able to meet one another and our staff and volunteers, and enjoyed meeting PFC manager Rachel, who came for dinner too.

Throughout the rest of the week, we ran a creative day of arts and crafts, an outdoor fun and games day, and a relaxed pamper day, and were pleased to see the engagement of both kids and adults in the activities. Participants made great use of the Wilderness area at PFC and were able to connect to nature and learn about our native plants and animals from our knowledgeable program coordinator Jade.

PFC would like to thank PFC staff and volunteers for their support to provide a great foundation for the programs to run.

Finally, we thank all families and guests for their participation, as their engagement and enjoyment are what makes the school holiday programs such a success, and help to inform future programs at PFC.

Jade Warner-Benedetti
Programs Coordinator
programs@pfc.org.au



Site update – with many thanks

We extend our gratitude to our donors and volunteers for their continuous support.

Solar panel installation

PFC has now completed the substantial project of installing all six houses and the Nanospace with solar panels, thus decreasing site costs while endeavouring to operate more sustainably. Thank you to the **Freemasons Foundation** for their very generous contribution that enabled us to achieve this goal.



New dryers

Thanks to the support of the **Red Hill Lions**, we have been able to purchase new clothes dryers, which has greatly improved efficiency of our cleaning team.



New ovens

The **generosity of a donor** has aided PFC in the installation of new induction ovens in all six houses. Thank you – they are high quality, safe and energy efficient replacements for the old gas ovens.

Holiday at Home Packs

Jade and Mel have been creating wonderful at-home holiday packs for our guests who have been unable to attend PFC in person, all sourced locally on the Mornington Peninsula.



Site update



Bird boxes

We have installed new bird boxes on site to encourage more of our diverse native birdlife, wonderfully made by the Westernport Men's Shed.

New AED at front office

We now have an Automated External Defibrillator at the front door of the office, with additional child pads, that is accessible to all guests and neighbours in emergency.



Master Plan update

We have now held multiple zoom sessions and guest consultations regarding PFC's prospective Master Plan. Additionally, we have invited feedback from 100 guests that have visited in the past year and thank all stakeholders in their assistance in developing a Plan that accurately reflects the wants and needs of our visitors. We look forward to sharing more news on the Masterplan very soon.



Mental Health First Aid Community Course

PFC hosted a Mental Health First Aid community course for volunteers and the wider community in September, in collaboration with Wellsprings for Women, and supported by Red Hill Lions Club. This course acknowledges that mental health first aid requires the same attention as physical first aid, and provides participants with the tools to support others around them. Thank you to Holly Gordon from Wellsprings for Women for her excellent facilitation, and to all volunteers and community participants for attending.

All staff on site at PFC are now qualified in Mental Health First Aid.

Looking forward – what's on at PFC

Although Victoria operates in uncertainty, PFC is looking ahead, toward projects and initiatives that encourage connection, enrichment, and community engagement.

Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project

We are pleased to welcome families referred by the **Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project**, and to be able to provide some asylum seeker families with a fully funded experience. If you would like to donate to support families to have a funded holiday, please contact info@pfc.org.au.



Art Friends

Rex Swindle-Hurst – ex board member and long-time supporter at PFC – has developed the innovative online art experience “**Art Friends**”, along with co-creators Kylie and Robyn. These art classes and wellbeing experiences, aimed toward both adults and children of all skill levels, aim to help foster individual wellbeing and creativity.

Please visit <https://www.artfriends.com.au/> to view the variety of artistic activities, and well done to Kylie, Rex and Robyn for their efforts.



Art Friends

Multicultural Encounters Festival

PFC will be partnering with **Wellsprings for Women** to host the **Multicultural Encounters Festival**, to be held at Presentation Family Centre on **Sunday 23rd January**, and sponsored by **Balnarring and District Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank** and the **Victorian Government**.



The Multicultural Encounters Festival aims to celebrate Victoria’s multicultural character and foster a sense of appreciation of multicultural visual and performing arts, while creating connections between culturally diverse communities and promoting social cohesion.

The festival will include a smoking ceremony, BBQs, singing and dancing, henna painting, and children’s activities.

Promotion for this event will be distributed closer to the event. If you are interested in more information, please email info@pfc.org.au.

**From Phillip Steele,
PFC Board Chairperson**

Dear Friends,

Thanks for your ongoing support of PFC. On behalf of the PFC Board and staff I do hope you and your loved ones are safe and well and coping as best you can with COVID-19 lockdowns. We are all living in very uncertain times and even though it has been challenging, PFC has continued to be a place of welcome, peace and safety for our guests when we were able to open. Our hearts are with our guests who have booked to stay at PFC but have been unable to come due to lockdowns. When we have been open, our guests have greatly valued their special time with us amid a world so full of uncertainty and anxiety.

Thanks to our very generous donors and volunteers, we ran a very successful holiday program for our guests during the winter school holidays. We have added solar panels to the Nanospace and cottages and upgraded some of the appliances in our cottages. We are also working to build and strengthen our connections to our local community.

I would like to thank our wonderful staff, Rachel, Jade, Mel and Cassie, who make PFC the very special place that it is for our guests. They are the heart, head and hands of PFC. Thank you for all the care, warmth, flexibility and love that you show to our guests.

As we now move into Spring, I am hopeful that the warmer weather will refresh our spirits and reduce our lockdowns, so that we may be able to again be a place of peace and safety to our guests. I look forward to working with you all as we move towards the end of the year.

Phillip Steele

