



## IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter.

### WELCOME

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We are pleased to have welcomed many families, individuals and groups to Saltbush, Balnarring Beach this year, including many people who are caring for loved ones.

### CARERS RETREAT

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Whilst caring brings many rewards, Carers Victoria notes that half of all carers are on a low income, and are 40% more likely than the average to suffer from a chronic health condition. Furthermore, many carers feel isolated, and miss the social opportunities associated with work and recreation. Our Nourish for Carers Retreats are designed to provide a restorative and nourishing experience for Carers, most of whom are women, and who receive few opportunities to be cared for themselves. Read about our **Nourish for Carer retreats** on pages 2 & 3.

### SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM

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### GUEST FEEDBACK

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### WHAT'S ON

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### SALTBUSH GREEN TEAM

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### CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

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We continue to improve our site in a way that is consistent with our Environmental Charter and Masterplan. We are grateful to be supported by many wonderful volunteers and donors - most recently **St Joseph's College**, Echuca, who removed weeds, and readied our garden beds for spring planting of Indigenous plants. See a snapshot of their work in the before and after photo on page 8.

If you would like to support the work of Saltbush Balnarring Beach by donating or volunteering, please get in touch:

Thank you for your interest and ongoing support that helps us provide **restorative holidays and experiences for those who need it most!**

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Rachel Connor, General Manager  
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# Recharging through Connection: Nourish for Carers Retreats

2022 at Saltbush, Balnarring Beach has seen the introduction of a new series of retreats called 'Nourish for Carers'. These retreats have been lovingly set up with the needs of unpaid carers at the forefront. We are grateful to the **Victorian Government's Supporting Carers Locally** program for supporting the 2022 Retreats.

We have tried to think of different ways to allow these incredible carers to rest, recharge and recuperate at Saltbush before returning to the demands of their caring roles. We are cognisant that although many of these people are some of the most compassionate and caring members of our society, what they do, and what they give, is so very rarely acknowledged, or celebrated.

Nourish for Carers celebrates the amazing contribution that unpaid carers make to our society, by offering them the opportunity to experience a low-cost, relaxing holiday with a variety of enjoyable and low-pressure activities to participate in. We aim to provide a warm, hospitable and welcoming environment for them, and listen to their needs and preferences, and in doing so we aim to help them rejuvenate the mind, refresh the body, and recuperate the spirit. We give our guests plenty of down-time, which is intentionally unprogrammed, so that they may engage in activities to the extent that is enjoyable for them. After all, it is their retreat from caring, and the idea is that they recharge in the way suits them best.



Birdlife Victoria with our guests during a Carers Retreat



A picnic lunch



Continued on page 3...



# Recharging through Connection: Nourish for Carers Retreats ... continued

Our first Nourish For Carer Retreats were held in the warmer months, and Carers experienced and gave compassion to others; they both sympathized and empathized, they listened to each other, and shared experiences and information. They also shared many cups of tea, and plenty of laughs. New friendships were made, and people left refreshed. Participants told us they enjoyed connecting with other carers, staff, and volunteers by engaging in activities including beach exploration, **yoga with Amanda**, bird-spotting with Pam and Susan, the education officers from **Birdlife Victoria**, picnicking in the wilderness, massages at **Endota Spa Red Hill**, and group meals. We welcomed groups coming through in the cooler months with activities such as **Japanese journal making with Anni**, nutritious and heart-warming **cooking with Jill**, bush floristry, **yoga with Heidi**, and more massage by Leith's team at Endota Spa Red Hill.

Through sharing time with such amazing carers, we have been fortunate to live and experience connection in action, but best of all is when we have seen it come to life both in, and between our guests on Nourish for Carers. We have been privileged to connect with them, and to see them connect compassionately and with one another in our glorious natural bush and beach environment here at Saltbush, Balnarring Beach.

Jade Warner  
*Programs Coordinator*



# Autumn School Holiday Program

Saltbush has officially completed one full year of school holiday programs under the outstanding coordination and leadership of Jade Warner, who has brought so much fun, creativity and warmth to our guests through these programs. Through Jade's programs at Saltbush, we continually strive to live our principles, particularly connection, inclusivity, nature and choice. This April, we held programs across the two weeks of school holidays and were happy to welcome both new families and others returning for their second program at Saltbush.

As always, we welcomed our families with a beautiful feast of locally sourced food and enjoyed marshmallows around the campfire. For this Autumn program, we incorporated a variety of local activities for the families to enjoy independently, as a way to introduce them to what is on offer on the Mornington Peninsula and provide experiences that our guests might not have had before. Guests enjoyed tickets to the **Enchanted Maze in Arthurs Seat**, and explored the **Rain Hayne & Shine animal farm** in Balnarring.

On other days, Jade and Cassie joined our guests exploring throughout **Balbirooroo wetlands**, watching birds, sketching, and enjoying a picnic together. When the weather turned, we joined our guests in the Nanospace for crafts, including making calming bathsalts and puzzles.

It was great to see both new and familiar faces enjoying the peace and quietness in nature that Saltbush and the wider Balnarring Beach has on offer. As always, we thank our dedicated volunteer Shane Smith for his help on the program, and all facilitators at **Enchanted Maze** and **Rain, Hayne & Shine** for helping provide new experiences to our guests.

Cassie Mills  
*Communications Coordinator*





### **What guests enjoy most about Saltbush:**

*The quiet location and beautiful surroundings.*

*Clean, quiet, thoughtful, careful and considerate management.*

*We enjoyed the peace and quiet and the location.*

*The natural open space, and very peaceful. Comfortable living.*

### **Why a holiday at Saltbush is valuable to our guests:**

*It brings the family closer getting to have more tolerance and understanding each other, also having a lot of fun, it takes away our troubles for a few days.*

*Social connection with others in similar situation ... a chance for a holiday that most of our group could not have afforded ... establish friendships with other in similar situation, learn from others in similar situation, overcome loneliness and isolation.*

*It brings togetherness, friendship, and sharing a good time. A time to allow kids to be kids ... showing them that we can have a better world if each one brings at least their smile. Laughter is the best medicine. Love and beauty is the answer.*

*Of course always needed for self healing particularly after lockdown and I still mourning the loss of my mother. I don't think I will ever recover from losing her. I miss her and she enjoyed our getaways to Presentation Family Centre (Saltbush) and I guess this is why I like coming back, as I can feel her presence when I visit.*



# What's on at Saltbush

## Saltbush transition update

The transition to our new trading name, Saltbush Balnarring Beach, is running smoothly. You can now reach us at [info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au), and our website is coming soon at <https://saltbushbalnarringbeach.org.au/>



## New to the Saltbush Team...

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Operations Coordinator, Megan, and to Jan Aitcheson and Shelley Iles, who have joined the Saltbush Board. We would also like to say farewell to the incredible Mel who dedicated 11 years of compassion and care to guests, the grounds and staff at Saltbush.



## Balnarring Playgroup

We have welcomed the Balnarring Playgroup to Saltbush's Nanospace each month, and have loved connecting with local community groups to share our spaces.



## Calling Volunteers: October Working Bee

Saltbush is looking for volunteers who would like to participate in a few hours of planting and other tasks at Saltbush. We hope to clear some garden beds and plant a variety of native flora around our houses. The date is Saturday 1st October, so please register interest at [info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au)

# What's on at Saltbush

## Understanding Our Impact

In 2021, Saltbush worked with Social Ventures Australia to identify, measure and improve Saltbush's impact. Our team met again with SVA to discuss our principles and values, and how to better provide for our guests in line with these. These included operating through a lens of inclusivity, connection, nature, choice and incorporating the strength of our guests into everything we do.



## Community Housing Retrofit Program

Saltbush has been delighted to join with Yarra Valley Water and South East Water for the **Community Housing Retrofit Program**, under support of the Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning. This program aims to reduce water waste and bills by auditing and upgrading all necessary water outlets to better quality fittings that are both eco-friendly and economical. Not all of our bathrooms have undergone renovations yet, so we appreciate being supported to make improvements where we can, and we look forward to assessing its impact through guest feedback and our water bills.



## Helping those who need it most

At Saltbush, one of our values is justice, and ensuring that our service is provided to those with the greatest need for a holiday or respite. From this, our **Accommodation Fund** was developed to exclusively support those most in need by fully funding their stays. Using this fund, we have been able to welcome 12 families from the **Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project**, so they can enjoy a holiday and participate in our school holiday programs.

If you would like to donate to this fund, please email [info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au)



# Connecting with Schools

Saltbush has welcomed school groups seeking opportunities for their students to learn new skills and increase their understanding of the world through community service. Each school approaches this in its own way. Recently, we have welcomed connections with **Clonard College** in Geelong, **Star of the Sea College** in Brighton, and **St Joseph's College** in Echuca. We look forward to continuing to connect with school groups and welcome ideas for collaboration.



## St Joseph's College Echuca

In June, 20 VCAL students from **St Joseph's College** in Echuca came to Saltbush to engage in some community service work. They did some incredible work on houses 2 and 3, weeding, clearing and re-mulching the garden beds so that they are ready to be replanted with Indigenous plants, and rendering the west wall of house 3. Thank you to the students and staff at St Joseph's, we look forward to having you here again!

**Above:** Before & after, side of house 2  
**Top right:** The St Joseph's VCAL team.



**Above:** Saltbush GM, Rachel Connor speaking at **Star of the Sea College**. One Star of the Sea House, Ave, will be adopting a Saltbush House to look after – including raising funds and collecting toilet paper and other items of need.

**Above:** Luci Quinn, Principal, and Helen Wood, Business Manager from **Clonard College** in Geelong overcame the wintery conditions to visit Saltbush and chat about ways we can work together. Lots of great ideas are brewing!



# Saltbush Green Team

The Green Team was established in 2020 to understand and reduce our impact on the environment. The Green Team has a focus on how to be more climate conscious and active to reduce our carbon footprint, and how to incorporate these values into the holidays, programs and retreats that we provide. In our commitment to act, we are inspired by the traditional custodians of the lands Saltbush is located on, the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation. We recognise the thousands of years of Indigenous land stewardship and management that has taken place over these lands and waters and are inspired by their history of care and connection to country.

Since its inception, the Green Team has facilitated various environmental projects. This includes installing solar panels on all six houses and the Nanospace, replacing all gas ovens with energy efficient induction cooktop ovens, replacing hot water storage services to heat pump hot water systems on two houses, installing bird-boxes to encourage native birdlife, and replacing a large and inefficient clothes dryer with two energy efficient dryers. These projects are possible through the generosity and support of our donors. Saltbush has also added information in the houses about the wilderness area on our property, and the wildlife here and in surrounding areas, to encourage our guests to get out in nature along local walking tracks and accessible native bushland/National Parks. In addition to this, our programs coordinator Jade continues to incorporate activities in nature and education about native flora and fauna to foster a sense of appreciation for our natural environment and the need to protect it.

Not only have these projects made a significant impact on our energy bills and reduced our carbon footprint, but it helps remind our guests while in our beautiful environment about the importance of protecting our lands and waters for ourselves and for future generations.

We welcome any suggestions and comments about future Green Team projects, so please feel free to get in touch with any environmental ideas you think Saltbush might be able to implement.

Cassie Mills  
Communications Coordinator  
[info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au)



# GM & Chairperson's Report

Dear Friends,

Saltbush has had a busy year, with our busiest month ever in April. This no doubt reflects the need across Victoria for rest, and recovery from a period of isolation and ill health. Of course, the challenges continue for many, especially with the ongoing impacts of Covid and Influenza. The Saltbush team adapt as needed to ensure that people most in need can access a peaceful holiday.

Our Carers Retreats have offered many of the most hard working people in our community the chance to rest in a peaceful, supportive environment, to connect with others in similar circumstances, and to take much needed time for themselves. Thanks to Jade and Cassie, in particular, for delivering these programs with such care.

We are pleased that Saltbush is continuing to implement initiatives that reduce our impact on the environment. In recent months, we have eliminated the use of gas completely in two of our six houses. We have achieved this with the support of the Federal Government's Powering Communities Grant, which funded new heat pump hot water systems, and with the generosity of a donor who prefers to remain anonymous, who funded the replacement of gas stoves with electric/induction cooktop stoves. Recently, the green team has turned its attention to saving water, and we are grateful to the team at the Community Housing Retrofit Program for providing fittings that improve our water efficiency. Our thanks goes to our dedicated Green Team members.

We are delighted to have Shelley Iles and Jan Aitcheson on the Saltbush Board. Shelley and Jan are both local to the Peninsula with a strong commitment to the Saltbush values. Their work experiences in finance and community service respectively are valuable additions to our Board. We are also thrilled to welcome Megan to our Saltbush Team as Operations Coordinator. Megan brings operations experience, which is already proving very valuable. We, like many guests, are sad to see the wonderful Mel leave after eleven years at Saltbush/PFC. Mel had a lasting impact on many of our guests and will be remembered as warm and compassionate.

We would like to thank our donors and volunteers who continue to support us, as we work toward our vision of restorative holidays and experiences for those who need it most, and wish all of our Saltbush Friends a healthy and happy winter season.

Warm regards,

Rachel Connor, General Manager & Phillip Steele, Board Chairperson