



# SALTBUSH WINTER NEWSLETTER

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

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[saltbushbalnarringbeach](#)



[Saltbush Balnarring Beach](#)

**"I arrived on the Monday, went to my room and burst into tears, and nearly got in the car and went home."**

Having some time away can be challenging in so many ways for Saltbush guests. It often takes extra support from staff and volunteers at community service organisations, NDIS providers and Saltbush to help guests feel safe and comfortable.

Thankfully, this guest decided to stay - read her feedback on P2.

Saltbush has a new accessible pedestrian entry, made possible with the support of many people and organisations including the generosity of donors, and talented volunteers. See more P4.

We are so grateful when groups reach out to us to offer support. Thank you to the community and business groups who are sponsoring and supporting us. If you have suggestions for connecting with Saltbush, or would like to support our work, please get in touch.

Rachel Connor, CEO

Saltbush, Balnarring Beach acknowledges and pays respect to the Boon Wurrung/Bunurong people, the traditional custodians of these lands and waters.

Saltbush, Balnarring Beach is the trading name of Presentation Family Centre Inc,  
ABN 83 121 768 426 Incorporated Association Number A0040682L

# GUEST EXPERIENCE

Saltbush is committed to keeping holidays accessible for guests facing challenging circumstances. Many guests, such as full-time caregivers, people seeking asylum and people living with chronic health conditions, find booking and preparing for a holiday overwhelming and stressful. To ease this pressure, Saltbush often communicates with NDIS providers and community service organisations, who will organise holidays on behalf of their clients.

The Accommodation Fund, made possible by generous donors and grants, allows Saltbush to offer partially or fully funded stays for low-income individuals or asylum seeker families who wouldn't otherwise have access to a holiday. Saltbush aims to reach and include those who may feel marginalised, ensuring that everyone can enjoy a holiday or respite. If you would like to donate to our Accommodation Fund, you can follow the link via the website- Support Us section.

## FROM OUR GUESTS

### Why is a holiday at Saltbush valuable to you...

"As a **full time carer** for my husband, taking time out for self care is a rarity. I've also had my mother in hospital for the past month, so have had the extra burden of almost daily visits to her as well as the stress of her being seriously ill. **I almost didn't come, and didn't think I'd be able to relax enough to enjoy myself. I arrived on the Monday, went to my room and burst into tears, and nearly got in the car and went home. I did stay though, and did manage to forget about home and everyone else for a bit. I can't tell you how much I needed this small break to reset and recharge. Thank you!**"

"**I have just had 5 operations in 6 months** to be rid of breast cancer. I am 8 weeks out of the Mastectomy and Reconstruction. I am a **carer for a 76 year old person** who has cognitive issues and stage 4 metastatic prostate cancer. So, this has not come at a better time for me. **I have had no help at home** except for a cleaner for 2 x 2 hour sessions. I have struggled mentally and physically and really needed a break. **Being with the other carers helps to realise I am not alone** and we feed off each other's circumstances, learning from each other's ideas."

# GUEST EXPERIENCE

Why is a holiday at Saltbush valuable to you...

"After a significant domestic violence incident my children and I were still **healing from the trauma** and the injuries I sustained, and it was **perfect for my family and I to have the time out.**"



"Saltbush has always been valuable. Our last stay, feeling so relaxed, spiritual, **recharging batteries**. My children are 30 years on from when we first came down to Saltbush, they may not be with me now living overseas and interstate but feel **when I go to Saltbush my girls do not feel that far away**, remembering the lovely times spent and the families we shared houses with."



"I am a **carer for 4 family members**. Anytime I can get to have a break its very much needed and appreciated. Feel like the older I am getting feel the **need to have some me time.**"



# GUEST EXPERIENCE

## Winter School Holiday Program

The Saltbush Winter Holiday Program welcomed five families to Balnarring Beach, providing opportunities for inclusive play, creativity and connection. This program had 12 children participate across the week, with ages ranging from 3 to 13. Children were able to form new connections and try new things, while parents and guardians could rest and reconnect with their children.

Children joined us for cloth bag printing and soap moulding, mindful painting and arts with volunteers **Dani and Rex**. Some kids had a lot of fun with the foosball table and building blocks too! Families also had the choice to enjoy a day together at the Moonlit Sanctuary, Arthurs Seat Eagle, and at Enchanted Adventures.

Many families attending our program are experiencing significant hardship. One mum says “at night we share with the family the best part of our day ... my son said this is the most fun he has ever had. It is so good to be able to have some time with [my son], as our current living situation now takes a lot of our focus.”

Another mum was relieved to come to Saltbush for some rest and a change of scenery. Of their day at Enchanted Adventures, this mum says “it’s the first time I have seen them laugh and smile like that ... there was no fighting or arguing, they tried new things and were smiling all day ... It’s just been so hard, I can’t tell you what this means to me”.

Our next School Holiday Program this Spring is fully booked, but we are often able to offer last minute availabilities. If you would like to be put on our waitlist, please email us at [info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au)



# THANK YOU FROM SALT BUSH

## Entry renovations

Our new entry is almost finished! Through the generosity of **Balnarring & District Community Bank**, the **Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry, and Regions**, and an **anonymous donor**, we have been able to make this major upgrade at the front of our property, in line with our Masterplan.

Our new entry has been carefully designed by a generous and talented volunteer to provide an accessible pedestrian pathway separate to vehicles, and privacy to our guests.





# THANK YOU FROM SALTBUSH

## Bathroom renovation

Saltbush received an incredible donation from an **anonymous donor** to renovate a bathroom in House 3. Now, House 3 has two refurbished bathrooms, one of which is fully wheelchair accessible. This long-time anonymous donor has supported Saltbush for many years. We have them to thank for renovated bathrooms in four houses at Saltbush! We are also grateful to the **Red Hill Lions Club** for their donation to this project, and long term support.



Above: House 3 bathroom renovations. Below: Previous bathroom renovations in Houses 1 - 4.



# THANK YOU FROM SALTBUSH

## Saltbush window clean

We thank a generous **anonymous donor** for organising a site wide window clean for all the Saltbush houses. Addressing the little details like window cleaning makes a huge difference to the look of the houses, and is nicer for our guests to be staying in.



## Linen House donation

**Linen House Hastings** have generously donated doona covers to brighten up houses. We love that some are even in the Saltbush colours! We are grateful for these local businesses for supporting us and our guests.





# THANK YOU FROM SALTBUSH

## Star of the Sea College

The students from **Star of the Sea College** in Brighton have supplied Saltbush with these wonderful garden pots, filled with Indigenous and locally found herbs. These are available for our guests to use for their own cooking. Thank you Star of the Sea!

Have a look at our others herbs and lettuces in our edible garden, also planted by students from Star of the Sea and **Iona College** a few months ago!



## Mornington Peninsula Disability Expo

In June, Saltbush participated in the Mornington Peninsula Disability Expo, hosted by Statewide Autistic Services (SASI). This was a fantastic day that facilitated connections between local service providers who work with people with disabilities. Saltbush connected with organisations who support people with disabilities and carers who may need a break, and provided them information to book a break at Saltbush. Thank you to **SASI** for a wonderful event. We look forward to welcoming more guests through the connections made at the Expo.



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Dani Swindle-Hurst

This newsletter recognises and appreciates one of our longest serving volunteers, **Dani Swindle-Hurst**. Dani has been volunteering at Saltbush for over 15 years. With a background in teaching and a passion for art, Dani leads the Art Sessions at Saltbush School Holiday Programs and Carers Retreats. Dani runs these sessions with compassion and a mindful approach. She is able to design activities for a child's strengths and capabilities, adapt instructional methods, and utilise creative approaches to engage children and give them opportunities to express themselves artistically.



## Thank you Volunteer Jess!

Thank you to our fantastic volunteer **Jess** for her help with operations support at Saltbush. Jess' work ensures that the houses are left stocked with supplies, and everything is in order for our guests to arrive. Jess has also done work to help Saltbush identify other local organisations that may wish to refer clients for respite accommodation or a break at Saltbush. Best of luck with your future endeavours Jess!

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

## New Saltbush defibrillator

We now have a second defibrillator on site at Saltbush! This AED is located on the north wall of the Nanospace (big blue shed) at the back of the property. All guests, neighbours and members of the community can access and are encouraged to use this AED in an emergency.

We thank the **Mornington Peninsula Shire** for their support in acquiring this AED. This defibrillator, along with the first AED located at the Saltbush Office, are registered with **Ambulance Victoria**.



## Peninsula Health Carer Network Retreat

In May, **Peninsula Health Carer Network** hosted a retreat at Saltbush, bringing 13 carers down to Balnarring Beach for a 3 day getaway and program. Carers enjoyed meals together, massage, and mindful craftwork with Saltbush volunteer Dani Swindle-Hurst. Retreats like this a lovely way for fellow carers to come together, share stories and lean on each other for support. Thank you to **Lani** from PHCN for bringing this retreat to Saltbush.



# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

## Community Fundraisers

Over the past few months, Saltbush has been thrilled to be supported by our local community at several events. Fostering community relationships helps create a stronger and more interconnected community, and opens up avenues for mutual support. Saltbush supports the local community by providing our space to local groups, and by welcoming guests who are in need from the local area. We can all be a part of making a tangible difference in the lives of people who need support.

In May, Saltbush was sponsored at the **Barbra Streisand Tribute Show: "Watch Closely Now"** presented by Rachael Grace and accompanied by John Thorn and Kara Cieski. Held at the **Flinders Bowls Club**, a portion of all tickets purchased went toward Saltbush's service, as well some very generous donations on the night, we raised over \$1500! We sincerely thank **Rachael Grace, Kara and John**, and their support crew and to all who attended and donated.

Saltbush gratefully accepted sponsorship from the **Writer's Talk at Flinders Golf Club** at their events in May and June. At the most recent event - an evening of "good books, good food and good company" **Megan Roger's** presented her debut novel, **The Heart is a Star**, with ticket proceeds being donated to Saltbush. Thank you to all who attended and contributed. (See what's on for the next event details)

In July, **The Peninsula Business Network** opted to raise funds for several Peninsula based charities, including Saltbush. We are very grateful for the opportunity to share the Saltbush story with a lovely group of local, hard working and innovative business people.

If you are from a community group or organisation and would like to raise funds for Saltbush, please get in touch at [info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au)



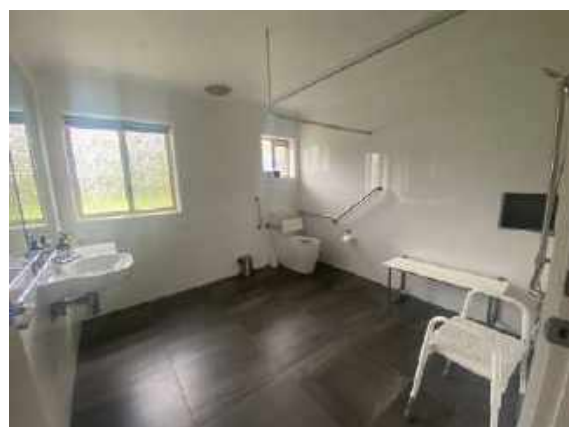


# EMPOWERING THROUGH ACCESSIBILITY

Recognising that physical limitations of buildings can impede people's access; Saltbush is committed to enhancing accessibility for all our guests. We understand the importance of providing these options to relieve any barriers when finding a suitable holiday.

Saltbush has installed a wheelchair ramp to House 4, and has wheelchair access at House 3, as well as wider doorways to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility devices. These houses also have adapted bathrooms with grab bars, roll-in showers, and adjustable-height fixtures to facilitate use. Effort has been made to declutter and rearrange furniture for easier mobility throughout the houses.

Our new entry includes a wide, accessible pathway as outlined in our Masterplan, which also plans for wider external paths, boardwalks and accessible activities across the site. With the support of our generous donors and partners, we strive to make a positive impact in the lives of those who may feel overlooked.



# COMING UP

## September Working Bee

Come along on **Saturday 9th September** as we landscape the new Saltbush entry! From 9:30am - 12:30pm, we will be planting, topping up soil and mulching. We will also be completing other tasks around the houses. Help us to spruce up our new front entrance and gardens. Please register interest via [info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au)



## Writer's Talk at Flinders

The next Writer's Talk at Flinders is approaching, and once again Saltbush is grateful to accept a donation from Writer's Talk Flinders from a portion of ticket sales. This event involves the discussion of **Nina Wan's book, The Albatross**. We encourage lovers of "good books, good food, and good company" to get yourself a ticket!

## Free AED and CPR education session at Saltbush

Saltbush is hosting a "Call Push Shock" session on Monday 31st July, run by the **Metro10** team at **Ambulance Victoria**. This session covers how and when to administer CPR and how to use an AED (automatic external defibrillator) to help save a life. This is not an official certification course. The session is free, and will commence at the Saltbush Nanospace from 10:00am - 11:30am, followed by morning tea. Please email us at [info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au) if you would like to join.

# SALTBUSH: THE ARCHIVES

34 years ago, Saltbush was established as Presentation Family Holidays by the Presentation Sisters. From their vision and dedication, we have now welcomed over 30,000 people for holiday or respite accommodation. Look through our archives and see how it all began!



1989- Following the sale of O'Neill College in Elsternwick, The Presentation Sisters purchased land known as "Harbour View" at Balnarring Beach in 1989. This image shows one of six houses transported to the site, which became known as the Presentation Family Centre.



1990s- The site was used to provide holidays and programs to families identified through Presentation schools. In the first holiday program in 1990, over 100 families applied to participate. Being newly developed, the Presentation Sisters at Harbour View were able to welcome 50 families. Here, families and volunteers gather to watch some backyard cricket.



1992- Programmes were run by Presentation Sisters and volunteers, and by 1992, 360 families had attended. Resident dog Samuel was well loved by all!



2004 - Art and crafts has always been an enjoyable and valuable element of our programs, and is continued in our programs 20 years later.



Early on, schools and local community groups supported Presentation Family Centre, including St Vincent de Paul, Hastings Community Centre, and Star of the Sea College. Many of these relationships continue today, through fundraising, donating goods, and referring guests.



# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Dear Friends of Saltbush,

I would like to thank all our volunteers who so generously continue to give of themselves, their time, talents and resources to ensure that when our guests leave Saltbush they feel refreshed and renewed, and able to move forward with their lives.

I have been reflecting recently on the special spirit that permeates Saltbush. I am constantly inspired by this spirit when I see the feedback from our guests, and when I speak to our staff, Board members, and our volunteers and supporters. Saltbush is a place where you can come as you are, and you will be welcomed, nourished and valued. We exist to enrich the lives of people experiencing hardship by providing a peaceful environment for rest, play, growth and connection. I am sure that our staff, volunteers, and donors are also enriched by their connection with others at Saltbush. I have been thinking recently about the possibility of establishing a Friends of Saltbush Group which might be able to build up and strengthen our very special Saltbush community. I would greatly value any ideas or thoughts that you may have on this possibility.

Saltbush is constantly working to identify and reach out to those who face difficult life circumstances. Over the last couple of years, we have developed and introduced Carers Programs designed for those carers who could greatly benefit from some time out at Saltbush before returning to their important work of caring.

Given the recent publicity about the First Nations Voice, the Board realised that we should strengthen our connections with First Nations groups to ensure that we are able to reach out to First Nations people who face difficult life circumstances. We hope that soon we will see more First Nations guests at Saltbush as a result.

At a personal level, I have been reflecting on the request by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people to be formally recognised in our Constitution and to have a Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament and Executive Government about federal laws and policies affecting them. I am not an expert in this area, so I have been doing my best to learn more.

CONTINUED...

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

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The Commonwealth Closing the Gap Report 2022 identifies how important it is for First Nations peoples and governments to work together to overcome the inequality experienced by First Nations peoples and achieve life outcomes equal to all Australians. First Nations peoples have been seeking recognition in our nation's founding document - the Australian Constitution - for many years as well as involvement in making the Commonwealth laws, policies and programs affecting them. The proposed change to the Constitution is a result of a request from First Nations leaders to the Australian people which is expressed in the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart.

I would encourage everyone to learn more about this important issue and discuss it with your family and friends, remembering everyone has a right to their opinion. I hope that the Referendum result will enable us to walk together more closely with First Nations Australians.

In conclusion, thanks again to our wonderful Saltbush Community for the important work that you continue to do. Stay warm and well.

Phillip Steele  
Chairperson

