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If you would like to support Saltbush Balnarring Beach by donating or volunteering, please contact us here:

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[saltbushbalnarringbeach](https://www.instagram.com/saltbushbalnarringbeach)



[Saltbush Balnarring Beach](https://www.facebook.com/Saltbush-Balnarring-Beach)

Welcome to the Summer Newsletter! As we reflect on the summer whirlwind at Saltbush, we have been thrilled to welcome almost 600 guests over this period, and enjoy our **School Holiday Program** and **Youth Adventure Program** (pg 4-5).

There have been some significant staffing changes, with the farewell of CEO **Rachel Connor** after 10 years of involvement at Saltbush. The Board, staff, and our guests will miss her greatly, and thank her for her leadership and dedication to Saltbush. We welcome our new CEO, **Maree Feutrill**, and are excited to watch her brilliant ideas and experience shape Saltbush in the years to come. Hear from our Co-Chairs and new CEO on pg 14-15.

Thank you to the many donors and supporters over this season, who have helped us to improve the Saltbush service for our summertime guests.

Cassie Mills  
Communications Coordinator

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 has had a very busy summer, and it has been fantastic meeting and welcoming our guests down to Balnarring Beach for a break. We have seen guests who have been coming to Saltbush for years, and others who enjoyed their first stay this summer. Read below about the guests that come to Saltbush, and why it is valuable to them.

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## Who stayed at Saltbush this summer?

**595**  
guests

**62%**  
women  
and girls

**385**  
adults

**210**  
children

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## Why do our guests come to Saltbush?

**139**  
affected by  
disability

**45**  
carers for  
loved ones

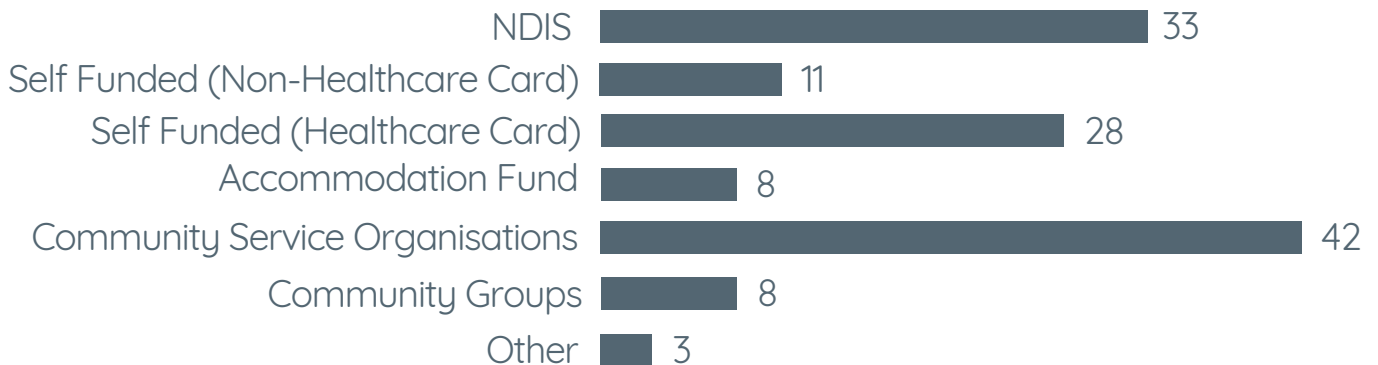
**69**  
affected by  
mental ill health

**78**  
experiencing  
financial  
challenges

**18**  
refugee and  
asylum seeker  
families

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## How were bookings funded?



# GUEST EXPERIENCE

## What did you enjoy about your stay at Saltbush?

“The children had such a memorable week with all the activities and making new friends! They all got along really nicely which was an unexpected treat for us. They particularly loved the surfing activity, which left such a positive impact on them.”

“We [were] simply overwhelmed by [Saltbush’s] hospitality and kindness ... we have had one of the most wonderful holidays away to remember.”

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

“[As a refugee family], it is 7 years since we have been able to have a few days break. Our days here were a wonderful circuit breaker during a tough family situation.”

“We were beyond exhausted emotionally and needed time to recharge and build up for the coming year.”

“We are supporting our son through a period of very poor mental health and it’s exhausting. We are also raising our grandchild and don’t have the means to be able to afford holidays. It was invigorating to be away, especially in such a beautiful location.”

“I have a daughter with Leukaemia. I enjoy a stay at Saltbush to recharge my batteries and spend time relaxing with my friends in a great environment.”

“After 8 years of no holidays [and] years of being completely controlled, the kids and I needed a fresh start. We definitely got it at Saltbush.”

# GUEST EXPERIENCE

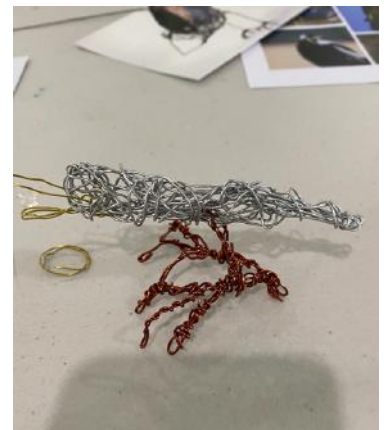
## Summer School Holiday Program: Spotlighting our Facilitators

Our Summer Program this year highlighted to Saltbush the importance of our incredible facilitators and volunteers, without whom we could not achieve such successful school holiday programs. This summer, we welcomed 26 children ranging from 3 to 17 years across our 2 weeks of activities. As a small team of 3 staff, it was our fabulous facilitators, volunteers, and Board members who helped us run these programs. The long-time support from the **William Angliss Charitable Trust** allows us to be able to offer these programs for our guests during the school holidays.

Fantastic multidisciplinary artist **Ingrid K Brooker** joined us each week for a session of wire bird sculpting, teaching us how to make lovely little birds by squishing and twisting and manipulating the beautifully coloured wires. This tactile activity was a favourite for both kids and grown ups alike, as we all tried a new challenge and watched our bundles of wire come alive into tiny little birds, each with their own character. It was such a pleasure to have Ingrid back at Saltbush, who first became involved with Saltbush through joining our Artist in Residence program in 2022.

In keeping with our art theme this program, we also welcomed local artist **Hannah Lewis**, who led us through the creation of our own buntings, using items found in the Saltbush Wilderness and surrounding beaches and natural areas. We chose from a beautiful array of leaves, shells, feathers, sticks, flowers, and seeds to create these hand-drawn buntings. We love when our activities incorporate connection to nature in creative ways, and when our families can take home their creations!

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# GUEST EXPERIENCE



... continued ...

For the families in our first week of activities, there were also tickets to **Enchanted Adventures** in Arthurs Seat, which is a favourite activity for Saltbush guests, and a way for some first time Saltbush visitors to experience some of the fun on offer on the Mornington Peninsula, and to have access to an experience they might not otherwise have a chance to enjoy.

In our second week, along with another wire bird sculpting session with Ingrid, we invited another creative local, **Cath de Boise**, to meet our guests and help us create hand-printed bags and our own woven God's eyes or "Ojo de Dios". These activities are always such a fun way to watch the personal creativity of each participant come through in their work, where no one piece of art will look the same as any other.

This week, our families went down to Pt Leo Beach for a surf lesson with the fantastic team at **East Coast Surf School**, led by Prue. We were so lucky to get some perfect warm weather for our session, and it is always such a special day watching kids to get out of their comfort zone and try something new, and feel accomplished when they find they can do it!

For our summer program, we have been grateful to collaborate with these facilitators, and to be joined by both long-time and brand new volunteers. The support, care and compassion shown by our volunteers really represents the core spirit we try to achieve during our school holiday programs. Thank you to **Phil and Maureen Steele, Minna Loft, Keeley Reade, Katy Henley, Suzanne Armstrong, Trish Hurley and Lucy Willis**. We also thank the **William Angliss Charitable Trust** for their support of our school holiday programs.

Of course, we thank the families at Saltbush this summer program for coming along to our activities and bringing the energy and excitement that makes the Saltbush programs so much fun to be part of! We look forward to welcoming our next group of program participants in our Autumn School Holiday Program!

# THANK YOU FROM SALTBUSH

## Donation from Kilbreda College

Thank you to the students and families of **Kilbreda College** in Mentone for their generous donation to Saltbush from their 2023 “Walk for a Cause” fundraising activity, part of Kilbreda’s annual Brigidine Day celebration. The students of Kilbreda raised an amazing \$9000.00 for Saltbush, which was incredibly helpful in our housing upgrades over the summer, including new bed linen, kitchen items and lock upgrades, and for our Summer School Holiday Program. We are so thankful to be the chosen charity at this event.

## MP Shire Climate Action Grant

Saltbush has gratefully received funding from the **Mornington Peninsula Shire Climate Action Grant**, and to continue our project of increasing solar panels on the Saltbush houses. We were able to double our solar panels on House 3, which will have a significant impact on reducing both carbon emissions and electricity costs. Thank you to the Mornington Peninsula Shire for the support for this necessary project.



## Donation for Upcoming Capital Works Projects

We are incredibly fortunate to have long-term relationships with our generous donors and supporters. We thank an **Anonymous donor** for their contribution to our Saltbush Open Day and for building drawings for future capital improvements.



# THANK YOU FROM SALTBUSH

## William Angliss Charitable Fund

The **William Angliss Charitable Trust** have been a wonderful support to Saltbush and the school holiday programs we deliver. Thanks to their contribution, we have been able to run 5 weeks of school holiday programs every year, enjoyed by 96 kids and 61 adults in the last year.



## Flinders Probus

The **Flinders Probus** have generously donated holiday gifts for our Saltbush guests for the third year running! These gifts have been thoughtfully provided for a range of our guests, from toys for young children, books and games for our older kids, to lovely candles, creams and other gifts for our adults. Thank you to everyone at the **Flinders Probus** for this donation, which helps to make our guests stay at Saltbush extra special in the summer holiday season.



## St Marks Op Shop Balnarring

**St Marks Op Shop** in Balnarring have kindly donated a variety of kitchenware items to restock our houses. We are always in need of items to improve our kitchen supplies, so this donation is very welcome! Thank you very much to St Marks Op Shop!



# THANK YOU FROM SALTBUSH

## Holiday Food Packs

We were able to fill our houses with additional food packs all summer thanks to the combined efforts of **St Mary's Hastings**, **St Brendans Somerville**, and **St Joseph's Crib Point**, organised through **St Vincent de Paul Hastings Chapter**. We are grateful for the community support that is fostered through these schools and St Vinnies. We also thank the **Social Justice Team** from St Josephs for coming down and delivering their own food packs to share with our guests.



## Trailer donation

We are so thrilled to receive a very handy trailer from **Saltbush Board Co-Chair** and supporter **Charles Reis**. Our very large site is always in the process of a garden and landscape tidy up, from the fantastic community service days attended by schools all over Victoria, to the Saltbush staff popping into the garden for some pruning. Now, we have our own means to move and discard our green waste. Thank you Charles, this is a game changer!



## Flinders General Store

The wonderful residents of Flinders have kindly donated food hampers this summer season, supported by **Flinders General Store** and organised by **Keeley Reade**. We are grateful for the community collaboration and know our guests have enjoyed these goods!



# THANK YOU FROM SALTBUSH

## Star of the Sea College: Ave House

We are so pleased to have fostered a wonderful relationship with the students of **Ave House** at **Star of the Sea College**, who are the sponsors of Saltbush House 4 and regularly visit Balnarring Beach for community work. We sincerely thank them for their donation of funds raised by the students of Ave House in Term 4 2023, and look forward to seeing them again at Saltbush in 2024!



## Summer Garden Volunteers

A very big thank you to the Willis family, **Simon, Jack** and **Lucy**, for their help this summer in the Saltbush gardens. This wet summer has our gardens thriving, so it was incredibly valuable to have ongoing gardening support to help us manage! We were also able to tick off some important gardening tasks, like trimming back bushes and shrubs, deadheading agapanthus, and removing invasive tree saplings. Thank you to the Willis team!



# THANK YOU FROM SALTBUSH

## GiveNow Donations

Our GiveNow donation platform is live on our website, and we are very thankful to those that donate to Saltbush, either with a one-time donation or ongoing donations. These contributions help us to support families and individuals in need of a break.

Find our support page [here](#).



## Tree Planting with Mornington Peninsula Koala Conservation

We are grateful to have had donated some beautiful Coastal Manna Gum and Narrow Leaf Peppermint saplings, courtesy of Lisa from the **Mornington Peninsula Koala Conservation Group**. These trees help to provide food and habitat for the the koalas found around Balnarring, and often in the trees at Saltbush! Thank you to Belinda from the MPKC for helping us plant these by the koala bridge.



## Magazine donation

We are grateful for the anonymous donations of magazines for our houses. These travel and lifestyle magazines are in excellent quality can now be enjoyed by guests who come to Saltbush, and also contribute to a circular economy, where the magazines have a new life and are not wasted. Thank you **Susan Beanland** for delivering these to Saltbush.

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

## Saltbush Open Day

Our inaugural Saltbush Open Day was a terrific day to meet members of the community, showcase our houses and gardens, and share the Saltbush story. We had about 70 people come along, and saw old and new faces alike, including our generous community donors and supporters, long-time and incoming volunteers, past Board members, Presentation Sisters, and our neighbours in the community. The **Red Hill Scouts** generously served fresh hand-made scones all morning. Thank you to everyone who came along, gave a donation, bought a Saltbush hat or bag, and showed their support for the work we do. We look forward to hosting our next one!



## Introducing: Friends of Saltbush

We are excited to launch the Friend of Saltbush regular giving program! For over 30 years, Saltbush has provided accommodation, retreats and programs to people living with challenging circumstances. Over 70% of our guests would not be able to access a holiday or program without our service,

We aim to keep our costs very low, so that we are accessible to those on a low income or with limited or no access to funding.

Saltbush is a lean operation with a small number of paid staff. To continue to provide our service and maintain low fees, we rely on people supporting our service through volunteering or giving.

If you would like to become a Friend of Saltbush through monthly giving of any amount, visit our [Friend of Saltbush](#) page.

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

## Padua College Volunteering

2023 was wrapped up with a visit from six teachers across the **Padua College** campuses, who spent the afternoon fixing up the fire pit chairs with a few coats of oil. The chairs have gone from looking dull to showing their beautiful deep red-brown colour. Padua College teachers have completed community work at Saltbush each December for 2 years now, and we thank them for their support!



## Visit to the Presentation Sisters



Newly appointed CEO Maree Feutrill and Saltbush Co-Chairs Phillip Steele and Charles Reis were off to St Kilda this month to meet with the **Presentation Sisters Victoria**. It was an excellent opportunity for our new CEO to meet with the founders of Saltbush, Balnarring Beach, and to discuss the upcoming 2024 Saltbush Objectives, ensuring they continue to align with the original vision and mission of the Presentation Sisters, established over 30 years ago.

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

## Expressions of Interest: Weekly Volunteer Gardening Group

Saltbush is establishing a weekly volunteer group, who can come together for a morning of gardening or other tasks, followed by morning tea. We hope to create a team with various interests and strengths, so that volunteers can engage in activities that they enjoy, while providing much-needed support to Saltbush.

If you are interested in learning more, please email the team at [info@saltbushbb.org.au](mailto:info@saltbushbb.org.au).

## Monash Waverly CIS

Phillip Steele was kindly invited to talk about the work of Saltbush Balnarring Beach at the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the **Monash Waverley Community Information and Support**. The meeting was well attended by over 40 people who were interested to learn more about Saltbush and its important work. Phil had many questions and handed out many Saltbush brochures.



## Saltbush AGM and Annual Report

Saltbush, Balnarring Beach hosted their AGM in November 2023, and the 2022-23 Annual Report is available on our website. It's always a great opportunity to reflect on the year at Saltbush, and we thank every person and group who attended Saltbush, donated, volunteered, or supported us in the 2022-23 Financial Year.



# MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

During January, the Saltbush Board has made some major staffing changes as our much-loved CEO Rachel Connor decided to resign from Saltbush due to changed personal circumstances.

Rachel has been involved at Saltbush for over 10 years, beginning as a volunteer, then becoming a Board Member, the Board Chairperson, the General Manager and more recently the CEO. Rachel has always had a special place in her heart for Saltbush and we will miss her greatly.

Rachel has played a pivotal role in transforming Saltbush into a modern, professionally run, sustainable and community engaged NFP charity.

We have all seen major improvements at Saltbush over the last few years, that build on the wonderful work done in the previous 30 years. The new name Saltbush Balnarring Beach, the new website and social media presence, new and improved programs for guests, measurement of our social impact, improved business processes, new policies, the site Master Plan, the Foundation Fund and the Accommodation Fund. Rachel has also established and led a caring, capable, and proactive staff team that is committed to our mission.

The Board sincerely thanks Rachel for her outstanding contribution to Saltbush and wishes her every success for the future.

Continued ...



# MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

The Board is very excited to welcome Maree Feutrill as our new CEO. Maree commenced in January and has recently returned from a period of four years in a senior leadership role working alongside First Nations people in preventative health programs in remote communities across the Northern Territory.

Maree has extensive leadership experience in the Camping and Outdoor Education sector in Victoria and internationally and is passionate about creating inclusive opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to gain the health benefits from being outdoors, immersed in nature. Although she has only been with us a short time, Maree has already been able to use her wisdom, knowledge, skills and professional connections to create many opportunities for Saltbush.

The Board warmly welcomes Maree and looks forward to working with her in future to further develop Saltbush whilst ensuring it remains a place of warmth, welcome, peace and safety for our guests.

Charles Reis & Phil Steele

## CEO COMMENTS

Dear Friends,

I'm honoured and humbled to join Saltbush Balnarring Beach and sincerely thank the board, staff, volunteers, Presentation Sisters, Kildare Ministries and the local community for a very warm welcome. It is inspiring to learn the origins of Saltbush and the many lives that have been positively impacted through the vision of the Presentation Sisters



and the dedication of countless people over the past 35 years.

Together with the broad community of Saltbush volunteers and staff, I look forward to continuing Rachels work, in strengthening the organisation and creating opportunities for more people to gain access to a restorative break here on beautiful Bunurong country.

Maree