

June 2022

Issue 3

Welcome to "On the Mend",
the official newsletter of
Mending Casts Inc,
a non-profit incorporated
organisation that runs free fly
fishing retreats for people with
cancer.

This is a quarterly circular that
is distributed to all our
members, volunteers and
retreat participants as a way to
keep everyone involved with
the organisation informed of
our activities and programs.



On The Mend

The official newsletter of Mending Casts Inc 



UPCOMING EVENTS

7 - 9 Nov 2022

Reel Recovery Australia*

For men with cancer

@ Ballarat, Victoria

* Includes a day at Millbrook Lakes, a private
catch and release fly fishery located near Gordon
in the Victorian Central Highlands.

<http://www.millbrooklakes.com.au/>

Pia - CfR 2022 participant with the catch of the day.

CFR RETREAT, BALLARAT 2022

Our amazing CfR retreat was held on the 4-6 April 2022. The weather forecast was looking bleak the closer we got to the day so I asked the ladies to do the “booby sisters NO rain dance” and it worked a treat, much to their surprise.

It was held in Ballarat, a regional city in Victoria. We had 10 keen ladies none of whom had fished before but all with a zest for living despite their various diagnoses. After an introduction to the art of fly fishing, the *River of Life* video was viewed. This resulted in one lady, initially reluctant to catch a fish because she didn't want to hurt it, now understanding that we care for the fish and cause them as little trauma as possible. Our ice breaker asked the ladies to pick a fly that drew their attention, to introduce themselves and tell us why that fly appealed to them. They were also happy to briefly touch on their cancer experiences so far. The ladies were taught how to tie their own fly - a fancy one for their hat and another suitable for fishing on the lakes.



Day 2 began with tuition on the basics of fly casting, fishing, fish handling, and wading safety. We then went to the Ballarat Fly Fishers clubrooms located on the edge of Lake Wendouree. It provided a perfect back-drop for lunch and the pampering session that followed. We were lucky enough to be able to enlist the help of an organisation called “Look Good Feel Better” whose volunteers spent time teaching the ladies about skin care and make-up application post cancer treatment, as well as providing a goody bag full of make-up and creams. The now very glamorous looking ladies spent a few hours on the lake practising what had been taught that morning. The first fishing success of the retreat was a little redfin perch caught by a very excited Kerry. The Ballarat Courier newspaper even came to write an article that made the front page.

Glamour girls after Look Good Feel Better session



Participant Kerry & her catches @ CfR 2022

Great conversations and bonding concluded the day and a very tired but happy group of ladies headed back to the hotel and bed ready for the third day.

Day 3 we all checked out of the hotel and headed off to spend the day on a private lake near a little country town called Gordon. The fish were teasing the ladies with plenty of rises and two managed to hook up. Everyone had a ball and some of the ladies have decided to take up fly fishing - they will be put in touch with their local clubs. The feedback was very positive and the ladies intend to convey their experiences to breast care nurses, doctors, oncologists and anyone else who will listen.

“The generosity of the organisers was legendary. Met some wonderful, brave and fun new friends and would happily maintain connection from here on. I wish the organisation every success in continuing to run this retreat and hope that sponsors come on board when the tax status is sorted. Thank you for the experience.” Sue

We were able to hold this retreat thanks to the support of many - the Ballarat Fly Fishers and Millbrook Lakes who donated their facilities for our use; some amazing buddies who were happy to volunteer their time to help out; as well as the tireless effort of our volunteers who put so much time into planning to make it an unforgettable retreat.

By Cherrie Ninness - CfR Retreat Co-ordinator



CFR RETREAT - PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVE

Ballarat, Victoria, 4 - 6 April 2022

As a child, I came up with the theory that if fish yelped like dogs when in pain, people would see fishing as being cruel. I have held that belief throughout my life. So why did I participate in a fly fishing retreat? Good question!

I was diagnosed with breast cancer 13 years ago, ran the gauntlet of treatment, came out the other side, continued with life. My husband and I moved to regional Victoria two years ago. One year into our new life I was told the breast cancer had returned. With whatever time I have left I've decided to take every opportunity to try something new that came my way ... even fly fishing!

I thought it only fair to let the organisers know my aversion to catching fish. When explained, there was a silence on the other end of the phone. I can only imagine what poor Val was thinking. Undaunted, however, she assured me I wouldn't have to torture a fish, and that the team at Casting for Recovery would work around my apprehensions.

Throughout the retreat I certainly proved that my diagnosis-driven desire to dive into anything new pays huge dividends. I met the most amazing group of volunteers; people willing to give up their time and expertise to provide a positive, enjoyable, relaxing, educational experience to any woman who has been through that whole breast cancer rollercoaster ride. They do this because they believe in the benefits of this program and are genuine in their passion to share their sport as a means of giving back.

I have not stopped raving about this experience to anyone who will stand still long enough to listen. The organisation of the entire event was faultless. From learning how to make a fly – which is a science in itself – to the wonderful, meditative experience of casting; as well as being out in the fresh air, sharing laughter, great food and pampering experiences. All of this combined ensured every participant felt utterly grateful and thoroughly spoiled by the time we all reluctantly said goodbye.

Being given the opportunity to talk to people who have also walked the breast cancer path creates an instant bond within a group.



Sheryl Taylor (centre) with fellow participants Joyce and Sue

I found it a privilege to hear the other women's stories. I was amazed by how much strength and positive outcomes people had taken away from their cancer experience. Although the subject is heavy, the common thread that wove us together created a camaraderie, which led to many funny and tender moments.

We are all incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to be together and share a Casting for Recovery Retreat. There is far more to this experience than learning the basics of fly fishing. You'd be forgiven for thinking breast cancer survivors and fly fisher people are unlikely bedfellows, but it just works. This is because – at the heart of it – the essence of community, and a shared understanding, provide the opportunity for volunteers and participants to connect with one another through experience, passion and generosity of spirit. And don't we all need some of that in the world right now?

Postscript: You may be wondering if I caught a fish. No, I didn't, but I have to admit, I would have been a little excited if I had. One could say, I'm hooked!

By Sheryl Taylor

MEMBER PROFILE: JO DOBSON, TREASURER

Fly-fishing is many things to many people. On the surface it seems a solitary pursuit, however something I have learned through being involved in Casting for Recovery, and Mending Casts, is that fly fishing is a community of generally very generous people who are willing to share both time and self. This is particularly evident when Mending Casts call upon family, friends and industry contacts to support our worthy and worthwhile cause.

My journey with Mending Casts started with a conversation in Queensland when I was asked about Casting for Recovery and what I knew about it. Eventually this led to more conversations and a couple of fateful meetings; one of which saw John, Cherrie, Alisa and I involved in a meeting with Peter West at a roadhouse on the highway to Geelong. What started as a very small band of the four of us quickly led to our now thriving and growing group of Mending Casts Inc.

I have been reflecting upon my why - why start and be part of this? I can honestly say a large part was motivation and friendship with two of our group; Val and Cherrie. Val Young and her drive to connect women in fly fishing, and our own Cherrie Ninness whose journey and love for fly has been inspiring.

The other motivation was and is my own obvious passion of fly. Supporting and being supported to bring these programs to life is a passion which brings as much good feeling to myself as the programs appear to bring to others.

Fly fishing is a great leveller. It can be a simple pursuit or made as tricky as you like. Once the casting and a solid basic understanding of how to and why are achieved, fly fishing can be simple or intricate.



The species are diverse, the flies endless, but underneath this all is the constant that there is always a fish and a piece of water somewhere. For our group, the sharing of knowledge and skills, the offering of an opportunity to experience the camaraderie of fishing is important. Taking beginners into a river or onto a lake can be a shared delight. To experience the ever-present hope that fishing offers must be experienced by most people at least once in their life!

Overwhelmingly I am regularly reminded that the community of fly anglers is at heart a hopeful and generous community, by association the wider community holds many of the same. The realisation that despite where one is at in life, if you reach out, take a small step in a direction that may not be your norm, it can often lead to good things. I really am honoured to be but a small part of Mending Casts.





FLY CASTING TIPS

- When picking up your line to commence casting make sure that you have eliminated all the slack in the line before commencing and the rod tip is on the water or ground surface.
- Don't cast with too much force – just enough to get the job done is ideal. Listen to your rod while casting and if you can hear it “whooshing” through the air you are applying too much force.
- Be careful not to rotate the rod too much during the casting stroke, i.e. just use the right amount of casting arc (“slice of pizza”) for the amount of line being cast - too much casting arc will widen the loops. A shorter line will require less casting arc than a longer line. Remember, only rotate the rod at the end of the stroke.

*By Bob Young
Fly Fishers International Master Casting Instructor*

A BUDDY'S PERSPECTIVE

By Brenda Galey

I watch as the women enter the room. You can see some are excited, some are wondering why am I here? What was I thinking! Some don't feel all that well, and some are not sure they want to be here. We welcome them into the program and show them a film and you can see they start to look around and realise in this room they have understanding and allies. I watch these women bond and take on this new challenge with vigour. They smile and laugh, as you watch them cast and learn a new skill. They have so much enthusiasm. I know my new friend has found a new passion and even if she never goes fishing again, I am humbled that I could help her to heal in some small way. Being a buddy isn't about fishing, it's about bringing a small amount of joy and sunshine into another person's life if only for a day or two.



Buddy Brenda Galey (right) with Penny @ Ballarat CfR 2022

SPONSOR IN FOCUS - MILLBROOK LAKES

We have been very fortunate this year that Millbrook Lakes, a private catch and release fly fishery for brown and rainbow trout, has offered us the use of their lakes for two of our retreats. In April, the ladies in the Casting for Recovery retreat spent a day at Hillies lakes, a stunning natural environment where black swans glide nearby and wedge-tailed eagles soar overhead. In November the men participating in the next Reel Recovery retreat will also have a day to practise their new fly fishing skills in this peaceful location.

Millbrook Lakes is located near Gordon in the Victorian Central Highlands with over 30 lakes in the area, providing fly fishing tuition and guiding on a private and corporate level for both beginners and experts. (<http://www.millbrooklakes.com.au/>).



Casting for Recovery participants at Millbrook Lakes April 2022

Each newsletter, we would like to highlight one of the wonderful sponsors who help us realise these programs. Please check them out and thank them by sending business their way (full link here: www.mendingcasts.org/sponsors/).

Casting for Recovery
Victoria, Australia



IN VEST MENT

Casting for Recovery Victoria Retreats are heading into our fourth year, it is time to up our game and outfit our program participants in waders and vests. In order to help this, we are holding an InVESTment drive.

What's this, you ask? Well put simply, Mending Casts would like to ask for donations of pre loved fly fishing vests. Each vest will be embroidered, repaired and generally made very useful so that our Casting for Recovery participants are able to wear a vest at the retreat. They then write a message and leave it with the vest for the next participants to read and enjoy.

So, it's a win/win for all. You feel good moving on something you no longer use, we feel great to have your fly vest as part of the CfR program. Our ladies will feel awesome wearing a pre loved fly fishing vest! Please contact Jo Dobson on 0429 140 341 or post to our P.O. Box 256, Montmorency 2094

FUNDRAISERS

As a registered non-profit organisation run by unpaid volunteers, we need independent funding to be able to provide our programs and services. Our fundraising activities are vital for us to be able to host these retreats and benefit the people we serve. None of our staff are paid thus every dollar is invested back into our programs and the activities which support them, so we truly appreciate every cent that is given to us.

Joint fundraising event in Tasmania

A joint fundraising event was held by the Australian Ladies Fly Fishing Team and Mending Casts at Penstock Lagoon in Tasmania on Sunday April 24th, 2022. The Ladies Team will be competing in the inaugural Ladies World Fly Fishing Championships to be held in Norway in early July and are raising funds to support this. The team generously decided to share proceeds from the event equally with Casting for Recovery (CfR) which is considering holding a retreat in Tasmania in 2023.

The event involved a day of fishing on Penstock Lagoon from boats controlled by members of the team and other experienced fly fishers who volunteered their time and expertise. There were two anglers in each boat and the sum raised was \$4,600 which was shared equally. The cold weather which had been forecast for the day did not eventuate and the anglers enjoyed a beautiful sunny day on the water. A few fish were landed, others were lost and everyone enjoyed the experience.

After a beautiful lunch supplied by the team at Malcolm Crosse's house overlooking Penstock Lagoon, the team members were presented with their official Australian Team blazers by Jason Garrett Jnr, the President of Fly Fish Australia.



Captain of the Australian Ladies Team, Karen Brooks (R), presenting a cheque to Mending Casts members (L-R) Val Young, Cherrie Ninness, John Billing and Bob Young.

The team members are Karen Brooks (Captain), Julie Butler, Jane Forster, Marian Miller, Casey Pfeiffer (not present on the day) and Julianne (Jules) Stevens (Team Manager and Reserve). The opportunity was taken to raffle a Primal 10 foot, 2 weight fly rod donated by The Manic Tackle Project and 2 boxes of flies tied by Stuart Young - the boxes were donated by the Aussie Angler. An amount of \$625 was raised from the raffle, all of which went to CfR.

The Mending Casts members who attended the event (Cherrie Ninness, Alisa Christie and Val & Bob Young) were impressed by the level of support shown for both the Ladies Team and CfR as evidenced by the large number of people in attendance. Further support came from well-known local distiller and fly fisher Bill Lark who donated a gift box of Lark single malt whisky to CfR.

All-in-all the day was an outstanding success. A special thank you to Peter Brooks for organising the event and doing much of the hard work to make it happen. Also thank you to Malcolm and Kaylene Crosse for the use of their property at Penstock Lagoon, it was perfect for the day and very much appreciated.

The committee of Mending Casts wishes the Ladies Team every success in Norway.



Australian Team (L-R): Jane Forster, Marian Miller, Julie Butler, Julianne Stevens and Karen Brooks (Captain). Absent Casey



SALES MERCHANDISE

Mending Casts has an online store on our website. We plan to introduce a range of custom merchandise and fly-fishing related items for sale and all monies raised will be invested directly back into our retreat programs.

Please check it out at: <https://www.mendingcasts.org/online-store>



Basball Cap - Mending Casts
AU\$28.00



Baseball Cap - Casting for Recovery Victoria
AU\$28.00



Baseball Cap - Reel Recovery Australia
AU\$28.00



Baseball Cap with Fly Logo
AU\$28.00



Bumper Sticker Casting for Recovery Vic
AU\$5.00



Bumper Sticker Reel Recovery Australia
AU\$5.00



Bumper Sticker Mending Casts
AU\$5.00



Bumper Sticker 3 Pack
AU\$10.00



Reel Recovery Buff
AU\$38.00



Reel Recovery Mesh Cap
AU\$30.00



CONTACT US

Mending Casts Inc,
PO Box 256
Montmorency,
VIC, Australia

www.mendingcasts.org
admin@mendingcasts.org

Committee Executive 2021/22
President: John Billing
Vice President: Eric Smith
Treasurer: Joanne Dobson
Secretary: Cherrie Ninness

Newsletter
Editor: Fiona Wilson