

# Sept 2022

## Issue 4

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.

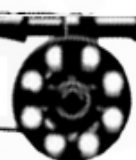
This is a quarterly circular that is distributed to all our members, volunteers and retreat participants as a way to keep everyone involved with the organisation informed of our activities and programs.



# On The Mend



The official newsletter of Mending Casts Inc



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- 15 Oct 2022** **Trivia night fundraiser**  
Eltham Bowling Club  
20 Susan St Eltham
- 7 - 9 Nov 2022** **Reel Recovery Australia Retreat**  
For men with cancer  
@ Ballarat, Victoria
- 1 - 12 Dec 2022** **12 Days of Fishmas**  
Online auction fundraiser
- March 2023** **Casting for Recovery Retreat**  
For women with breast cancer  
@ Marysville, Victoria

*Rod @ RR 2022 participant with his brook trout catch.*

## RR RETREAT, MARYSVILLE 2022

Between 5-7 May 2022, the picturesque foothills of Marysville in Victoria were the location for a very special occasion. It was the site of our second Reel Recovery Australia retreat, and the first conducted with the support of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and their Men's Shed program. Twelve courageous patients arrived from Melbourne via minibus at the impressive El Kanah lodge, not really sure of what it was they had signed up for. Any insecurity was soon put to rest when greeted by our friendly members and volunteers who showed them their accommodation. The formalities of the "Opening Ceremony" kicked off the retreat program, with the highlight being the Vesting Ceremony. This is where participants are introduced to their fishing buddies and presented with fishing vests that have been worn and signed by people who have been through the program before them. The vesting is a powerful, moving experience, and the first inkling they get that this is not just a free fishing weekend!



An Introduction to Fly Fishing presentation was held after dinner, followed by one-on-one fly-tying sessions. It was the perfect ice-breaker activity as participants got to tie their own flies that they could then use to catch fish. To wind up the first day, participants were lead in a "courageous conversion" by our facilitator who introduced them to the concept and structure of the shared group discussions that take place several times throughout the retreat. This is where participants are able to confidentially discuss their troubles, face their fears, and bond through their shared experiences. At sessions end they retired to bed with new friends made, a sense of immense achievement, a little curiosity and great expectations for the days ahead.

After breakfast, the participants were taken to a nearby field where experienced certified instructors took them and their buddies through the basics of fly casting and fishing to prepare them for their time ahead on the water. It was amazing to witness how quickly they picked up the basic techniques, with a couple excelling during the practice session.

By midday, we relocated to a private property on the banks of the Goulburn River. The location was superb, with wide slow-flowing sections making for easy access from the riverbank. Immediately the participants assembled in anticipation of the fishing to come.



After a short safety briefing, each buddy escorted their participant to a sector of the river where they would fish for the first 2 hours. After lunch, they returned to fish a different sector for the rest of the afternoon where several good fish were caught. The highlight was undoubtedly the evening's courageous conversation, held in a circle around a campfire watching the crimson sun set slowly over the willows. In such beautiful surroundings the connection between the men and nature is powerful and transformative. It is why these programs are so successful.

The following morning the group travelled a short distance to a private property in Buxton which had a farm dam full of rainbow, brown, tiger and leopard trout. The fishing which followed was epic fun, with the participants hauling in fish faster than their buddies could release them. Their smiles stretched from ear to ear as any thoughts of their cancer were banished behind the laughter. After lunch, the session culminated in the emotional "Closing the Circle" ceremony where courageous conversations are shared by participants with all the volunteers as they stand together in concentric circles, participants in the middle, buddies circled behind them and volunteers forming the outer circle. Here, the participants get to share their deepest emotional and joyful experiences with those who have supported them over the weekend, and rarely does anyone leave that circle without tears in their eyes. Such experiences are life-changing for all who are privy to them.

The final part of the retreat saw us return to El Kanah lodge for the closing ceremony. This is where the participants return their fishing vests and write on them their own words of inspiration or encouragement. Most pause in reflection to read previous remarks as they hand them over. The smiles and appreciation shown on participants' faces as the retreat concluded is a resounding affirmation as to the power and impact of these programs. By the end, they have experienced the spiritual and cathartic nature of fly fishing through the metronomic rhythm of casting through to the anticipation of their fly being eaten by a fish. In that moment, all their peripheral issues were pushed into the background. At that point, their minds, souls and bodies are truly free. This is the essence of Reel Recovery!

*By John Billing - RR Retreat Co-ordinator*

## RR RETREAT - PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVE

Marysville, Victoria, May 2022

Fishing in some form has always been a huge part of my life and in more recent times fly fishing in particular. What had become new in my life was a very recent cancer diagnosis in the form of a Skin Lymphoma.

As a result of this diagnosis, encouragement from a great friend and being a patient of the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre I was fortunate to be offered attendance at the inaugural Mending Casts, Reel Recovery Australia Retreat in collaboration with Peter Mac Men's Shed. **This retreat was to be held in Marysville and surrounds. Learning of my acceptance into this program had me excited yet anxious and hesitant at the same time.**

This collaborative retreat is one of the most positive personal experiences I have ever had in my life and my hesitation and anxiety quickly disappeared as I began to talk about my journey and share in the experiences of fellow participants and their cancer journeys.

I'm not one to open up to family and friends let alone a group of strangers however the program structure, dedicated and passionate volunteers along with health professionals allowed for free-flowing conversation with self-reflection, group discussion and shared experience. There was humour, banter, laughs and I don't mind admitting a few tears. Most importantly the realisation we are not alone in our cancer journeys.

*Carl (L) learning the art of fly-tying with his buddy, Choco*



*Carl (R) fishing with buddy on the Goulburn River*

The introduction to fly fishing, introduction to fly tying and introduction to fly casting workshops allowed participants and their buddies time to bond prior to hitting the water and putting these acquired skills into practice within a tranquil environment. It is an uplifting and rewarding experience to see a group of men with a common bond encouraging and cheering one another on and, in that moment, letting go of all their struggles and truly enjoying themselves. Catching a few fish was a bonus.

Having shared the experience with my Buddy, David also saw me walk away with a greater knowledge and understanding of river fly fishing and I was fortunate enough to have him correct some bad habits that had crept into my fly casting. Cheers, mate.

For me being able to share and experience others journeys and being able to open up about my own path was an experience that has given me the confidence to open up to family and friends about my cancer and journey. To now have this confidence is amazing and such a release. Without attending this collaborative retreat I doubt this would have ever occurred.

Cast away your troubles and "Fish on".

*By Carl Webber*

## MEMBER PROFILE: ALAN STATON - FAREWELL & THANK YOU -

We were first introduced to Alan after his wife Fran attended our first Casting for Recovery retreat at Eildon in 2019. Fran had such a wonderful experience at the retreat that when she got home, she demanded Alan clear out space in their garage so she could store her newly acquired fly fishing gear. From there commenced a great relationship with both Statons and our members which lasts to this day.

Alan was so impressed by the positive impact our CFR retreat had on Fran that he volunteered to join our committee in November 2020. Not only did he provide significant guidance through the Procurement Officer role, as this was his professional background, but fostered a close relationship between Mending Casts and the Northern Suburbs Fly Fishers Club (NSFFC) where he was also a committee member. That relationship is ever stronger today thanks to Alan's involvement. More recently he has helped develop internal procedures and governance systems to help attain ACNC charity status.

Not only has Alan been an active and valued committee member behind the scenes, but he also volunteered at our CFR Ballarat retreat and was a fishing buddy at our Reel Recovery Australia retreats in Omeo and Marysville. Here, he made a significant contribution to the participants he accompanied throughout those 3-day programs. The joy on participant's faces and the glowing endorsement for their experiences is due in no small part to the wonderful support, guidance, and companionship he provided them. These experiences will be shared for the rest of their lives and Alan was a big part of their journey.

More recently, Alan's capabilities were recognised at NSFFC when he was elected club President. With him in this role, the club commenced a major capital works program which has taken up much of his recent spare time so regrettably, Alan decided to step down from our organisation in June to dedicate more time to NSFFC. Our loss is NSFFC's gain, and whilst we will miss Alan's cheeky grin and overt generosity, we thank him for his contribution to Mending Casts and wish him well in his future endeavours. Thankfully, we will continue to work closely with NSFFC with his support.



*Alan Staton (L) with buddy Michael @ Marysville RR 2022*



## FLY CASTING TIPS

- When shooting line to lengthen the cast, the line should be released by the line hand immediately after the stop.
- Think about throwing the back cast up, not down. The front and back casts should generally be 180 degrees opposite to each other (the 180 degree rule).
- Wide loops are useful when casting with heavy flies, sink-tip fly lines or teams of flies on droppers.

*By Bob Young  
FFI Master Casting Instructor*

## A BUDDY'S PERSPECTIVE

By David Grisold (AKA Choco)

I remember being asked to help at the Marysville retreat. As a prostate cancer survivor, I was excited to help having known about Casting for Recovery, Mending Casts, Reel Recovery and the good that is done.

Arriving that morning I was a little nervous not knowing what to expect. Everyone made me feel welcome and once settled into our accommodation and meeting the other volunteers, all was good. The arrival ceremony to meet the cancer patients went well and we were allotted our participant for the next 3 days. My participant Carl was great, and we hit it off straight away.

As the retreat progressed, we became more trusting of each other and lots of things came bubbling to the surface.

Carl had kept his cards close to his chest and had not let anyone know about his journey with cancer. I am happy to say that is not the case now. Carl has now discussed his cancer with family and friends. He is now doing more for himself and thinking about his future differently.

I personally had a most rewarding time away meeting and helping people that I would normally not have meet. I speak to Carl regularly and we discuss his journey and the things he has to look forward to.

As we discussed many times "Nothing good lasts forever and nothing bad lasts forever," so let's just keep on keeping on or let's just fish on.

Since the retreat I have been saddened by a couple of the attendees who have lost their battle with cancer. Life is precious, all the money and shiny things just don't matter.

I certainly look forward to assisting on future retreats.

Cheers, Choco



*Choco (R) with participant Carl @ Marysville RR 2022*

## UPCOMING RETREATS

### Reel Recovery Australia: 7 – 9 Nov 2022 @ Ballarat

We will again be partnering with the Peter Mac Men's Shed to host another 12 cancer patients to our next Reel Recovery retreat. The program will be located at Ballarat and make use of the wonderful facilities of both the Ballarat Fly Fishers Club and Millbrook Lakes private fishery. If you are interested in participating in one of our Reel Recovery retreats, please contact us via email at [admin@mendingcasts.org](mailto:admin@mendingcasts.org)

### Casting for Recovery Vic: March 2023 @ Marysville

Dates, venues and details are yet to be confirmed but our next CfR retreat is planned for March next year. If you are interested in participating, please contact us via email at [admin@mendingcasts.org](mailto:admin@mendingcasts.org)



## 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.

### Promotional trip to Bendigo June 2022

Cherrie Ninness and Val Young attended various Bendigo Health and St. John of God cancer treatment centres to promote the Mending Casts retreat programs. Bendigo was well represented at the April Casting for Recovery retreat held at Ballarat and Millbrook Lakes with four of the participants from the Bendigo area. Because of the enthusiasm shown by these ladies following the retreat, the professionals running the cancer centres were all aware of the benefits, both physical and emotional, to be gained by the participants. Meetings were held with the McGrath Foundation Breast Care Nurses from Bendigo Health and St John of God hospitals, the Lymphoedema Clinic at Bendigo Health and the very impressive Wellness Centre which is totally self-funded. Mending Casts can look forward to ongoing support from these groups and they will pass on information to any interested patients.

As well as the cancer centres, a meeting was also held with Margaret Keech from Dragons Abreast, a very successful Bendigo Dragon Boat Club. Margaret was also aware of the Casting for Recovery program and we will pass on information about future retreats to her.



*L-R: Lou, Bronwyn, Joyce Cherrie and Sheryl*

A catch-up lunch was held with the Bendigo ladies who attended the Ballarat retreat and it was great to hear the enthusiasm and positivity from Sheryl, Joyce, Bronwyn and Lou.

### Presentation to the Inner Wheel Bundoora August 2022

Cherrie and Val also attended the August meeting of the Bundoora branch of the Inner Wheel, the ladies' arm of Rotary. The videos of the Omeo Reel Recovery retreat and the Ballarat Casting for Recovery retreat were shown, and information brochures were distributed to the members. There was a lot of interest shown in the programs both for the videos and for the plans for proposed future retreats. The President, Merle Maunder presented Mending Casts with a cheque for \$1,000 which was gratefully received.

*L-R: Val, Cherrie, Faye, and Merle*



**Mending Casts**  
changing lives one cast at a time

**OCTOBER  
15TH 2022  
7 - 11.30PM**



**ELTHAM BOWLING CLUB  
20 SUSAN STREET ELTHAM**

# TRIVIA NIGHT

to benefit



and



silent auction, games,  
live auction, raffles,  
drinks at bar prices,  
byo snacks

**\$25 pp**

Reserve your spot at  
[admin@mendingcasts.org](mailto:admin@mendingcasts.org)  
and pay at the door

OR  
pre purchase tickets via  
**EVENTBRITE**



## SPONSOR IN FOCUS - SCAPE

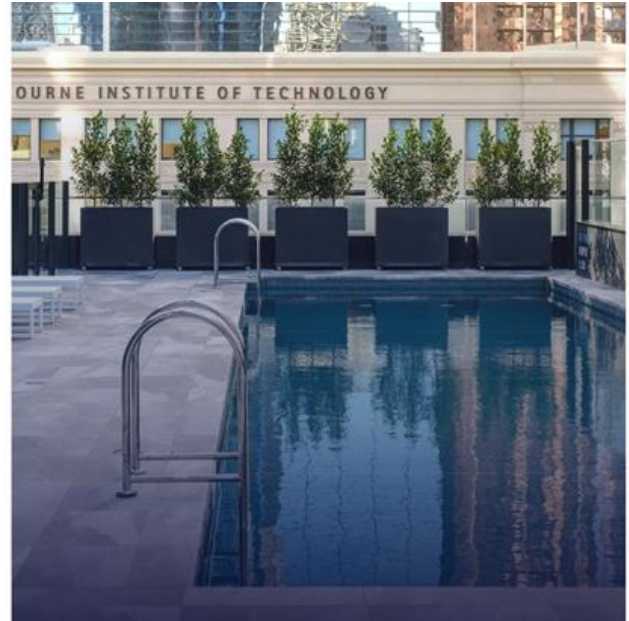
SCAPE has generously donated an accommodation package as one of our major fundraising prizes. They have a close affiliation with the Peter Mac Men's Shed and have been wonderful supporters of our Reel Recovery retreat programs.

They launched in Australia in 2013 and have become the biggest PBSA (purpose-built student accommodation) owner and operator since their acquisition of the Atira and Urbanest Australia portfolios in 2019 and 2020 respectively.

Scape has 16,000 beds in 33 buildings across Australia's four key educational precincts – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Adelaide. They also have 12 buildings in planning and development which will bring the portfolio to 22,000 beds by 2024. They are the largest investor in Australia's higher education sector with A\$6 billion in capital committed since 2018.

Scape has also diversified its offering to include Scape Living – a new way for students and working professionals to live centrally, affordably and easily. The donated prize involves 3 nights' accommodation at Scape Aurora in Melbourne.

[Aurora - Scape Living Australia \(livingbyscape.com.au\)](https://livingbyscape.com.au)



*Shane from Scape (L) getting a fly-tying lesson from Eric @ Marysville RR 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/](http://www.mendingcasts.org/sponsors/)).

## 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. All monies raised will be invested directly back into our retreat programs.

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



Baseball 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**



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