



CfR Merrijig participant Julia is all smiles after landing a great rainbow

Mar 2024 Issue #8

Welcome to "On the Mend", the official newsletter of Mending Casts Inc, a registered charity which runs free fly-fishing respite retreats for people with cancer.

This bi-annual circular 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

www.mendingcasts.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

22nd – 24th Apr 2024

Reel Recovery Australia
Retreat for men with any cancer
@ Marysville, Victoria

9th – 11th Sep 2024

Mending Casts Retreat for Women
Retreat for women with any cancer
@ Venue TBA

17th Aug 2024

Trivia Night & Silent Auction
Our major annual Fundraising event
@ Venue TBA

11th – 13th Nov 2024

Reel Recovery Australia
Retreat for men with any cancer
@ Merrijig, Victoria

27th Nov – 8th Dec24

12 Days of Fishmas
Our annual online auction ends
@ 8pm Monday 8th Dec

MEMBER PROFILE – FIONA WHITE

I became involved with Mending Casts a couple of years ago. The wonderful Val Young, who has been so influential in encouraging women to take up fly fishing over many years, first crossed my path around 10 years ago. Val has organised many women’s fly-fishing weekends at Millbrook near Ballarat and encouraged me to come along. I’ve been hooked ever since! By no means am I a skilled fly fisher but I absolutely love it and every time I go out with my rod I learn a bit more and appreciate what a fabulous activity it is. It takes me out into our beautiful natural environment, it gives me a focus, it gives me a relationship with lovely people that I wouldn’t have otherwise met, and it is great fun (And I don’t have a room full of gear either!).

As a consequence of knowing Val in this way, and being a Ballarat local, she asked me to volunteer at a couple of Ballarat retreats.

It was immediately apparent to me that Mending Casts is an incredibly worthwhile program; the power of attending a retreat as a volunteer includes seeing strangers with heavily compromised health quickly form a tight knit supportive group; the sheer fun- all the laughter and evident happiness; the support found within the structured psycho-social group; the a-ha moments when people stand on the oval and start getting the movement of casting; the incredible excitement when a fish is landed; the emotional goodbyes when the retreat is finished.



Fishing buddy at our 2023 CFR retreat in Marysville

I have worked for many years as a social worker and I know what a difference the impact of kindness, care, support, empathy and a feeling of hope can make. I see this in Mending Casts all the time.

The Mending Casts family continues to get bigger and bigger and I am so proud to be a part of it.

Fiona White



Fiona is a keen fly-fisher



Volunteering for Reel Recovery Ballarat in 2021

Some of the participants go on to further explore fly fishing, and many stay in touch with Mending Casts. Those who come along as buddies are inevitably moved by the experience and want to stay involved. I continue to be amazed by the generosity of our donors in donating fly-fishing equipment and other goodies. The Committee who were in place well prior to my involvement have done, and continue to do, an extraordinary amount of work to ensure the success and viability of Mending Casts- I cannot speak highly enough of their integrity and generosity.



Group photo at our Marysville CFR retreat in 2023

A PARTICIPANT'S PERSPECTIVE – Michael Young



My Reel Recovery buddy – Jim Higgs (yes - the Cricket legend)

First I had major surgery, a radical nephrectomy to remove my left kidney and ureter. The tumour attached to both had grown from 20mm to 110mm in the six weeks between diagnosis and surgery, a truly terrifying development in itself. As soon as I had recovered sufficiently, the chemotherapy began. To add insult to injury, the most effective drugs used to treat bladder cancer were developed very early on, and unlike some of the more modern drugs, they have brutal effects on your body. I had to deal with the gut-wrenching fear of having no immune system during Covid's second wave. Nevertheless, you push on with your new life, and you adjust physically. You think you have things under control.

What nobody prepares you for however is the mental effect this new reality has on you. I thought I was doing extremely well. I joked my way through chemotherapy. I made my nurses laugh. I tried to bolster the spirits of my fellow patients. I exercised as much as I physically could and I put on a brave face for my kids. The Dad jokes flowed unabated.

I knew I was doing things tough emotionally, my beautiful and caring wife knew as well, but what I didn't realise until very late, was just how poorly I was doing psychologically. Very early on, my oncologist had told us that if the cancer ever returned, it would be treatable, but incurable. This had always been firmly lodged in the back of my brain, buried in that little grey locker labelled "denial". But life went on. It had to.

Virtually everybody in Australia will eventually have some sort of close encounter with cancer. For most people, it will be a friend or relative. For me, it was my Father, my Grandmother, friends and tragically, friend's children. When this happens, there can be a very understandable feeling of "thank goodness it wasn't me". And then, jarringly, it is you.

The emotions are different. The grief you feel for your loved ones becomes grief for yourself. Suddenly you are forced to confront your own mortality. You start to wonder how your partner and your children will handle your possible passing. You dwell on the unfairness that your parents should have to lose their child. You stop planning for your future. You feel lost.



The Vesting Ceremony connects you to past participants

Next your treatment begins. Your body takes a battering. You are somewhat prepared for this, the doctors and nurses will have explained what to expect from the medical intervention, and you hold on to the knowledge that at some point there will be an end point to the treatment, and your body can start to recover. For me, this took far longer than anticipated. Mine was bladder cancer, a cancer notoriously resistant to chemotherapy.



Fly-Tying session on the first night helps to break the ice....

Not long after my surgery, my good friend John Billing started talking to me about Mending Casts. I knew of John's involvement and enthusiasm for the program and I greatly admired his and all the other volunteer's dedication. "We're going to get you on a retreat as soon as you're well enough" he would tell me. Now, I've been a fly fisherman for over 40 years and when someone offers you a chance to wave a fly rod on a beautiful trout stream, you don't say no.

For years, fly fishing had been my Fortress of Solitude. I would take off my Superman cape and undies, don a pair of unflattering waders instead, and let the cold-water flow around my legs as the stress of life washed out of my head. I was unknowingly practicing mindfulness without even having heard the term used before. My mind looked forward eagerly to attending a Mending Casts retreat, but my brutalised body just wouldn't acquiesce, and I resigned myself to having to wait until I was sufficiently recovered.

In July last year, that happened. I had just returned from an incredible trip with friends to Christmas Island, chasing bonefish on the fly, my bucket list trip as a dual early 50th birthday present to myself, and a reward for beating the cancer. My future was beginning to look bright again. John called me out of the blue and told me that there was a spot on the November retreat at Merrijig if I wanted it. Did I?



Starting Day2 with Casting Practice to iron out the “bugs”

You couldn't have stopped me if you'd nailed my feet to the floor! I was feeling great, two years on from the end of the chemo, my body was feeling largely normal again, and my brain was looking forward to a long and happy future. That same brain then started rationalizing things. I was happy and healthy. I was doing extraordinarily well. I probably didn't need to go on the retreat. I resolved to call John, thank him profusely, and suggest that perhaps he should offer my spot to somebody in a much worse position than myself who could really benefit from it.



Finding mindfulness on the river – the essence of the retreat

Then in September, just after my 50th birthday, it all came crashing down. A routine scan of my bladder revealed a very suspicious lesion. I watched my urologist's face go ashen as we both simultaneously saw the red lump on the screen.

He tried to reassure me even as he explained that there was a 96% chance that the lesion could mean a return of my bladder cancer. That little grey locker with “denial” scribed into it in big red letters burst open, and the word “incurable” flew straight out at me.



At the end of the retreat you sign your vest & leave a message for the next participant who receives it.

My mental health that I thought I had well and truly under control took a violent nosedive. I resolved then and there that I was going on the retreat. I was suddenly the guy who could really benefit from it. And I did, buoyed greatly by the news that I had won the cancer lottery, and my lesion turned out to be one of the 4% of non-cancerous ones.



The Circle of Strength is used to close the retreat - Be Well Fish On!

Mending Casts is an incredible program which has helped me immeasurably, and I know it also helped my new friends and brothers who were there with me, experiencing it in their own unique ways. You don't have to already be a fly angler, in fact I believe you will get more out of it if you aren't. The discovery of the simple joy of standing in a river attempting to fool a fish with a brain the size of a pea, while you think of nothing else is liberating and addictive. It's the only form of self-medication you should ever attempt.

*Michael Young
Reel Recovery participant – Merrijig November 2023*



All of us from the Merrijig Retreat – such a wonderful group!

VOLUNTEER of the YEAR AWARD (VOTY)



Each December the members and volunteers of Mending Casts and their families gather for our annual Christmas dinner where we collectively reflect and celebrate the successful retreat programs and related activities of the year. It is a great occasion for us all to have a lovely meal and casually review things. It is also where we present our annual Volunteer of the Year Award (VOTY). This year's dinner was held at the picturesque Fondaata 1872 restaurant in the Yarra Valley.



The VOTY is awarded by the President to the member or volunteer who they believe has made the most significant contribution to the organisation over the preceding 12 months. This can include work at our retreat programs or fund-raising activities, promotions or even support functions behind the scenes. This year our committee agreed to name the trophy the "Noni" in honor of our member and friend Noni Wilson who passed away earlier in the year, which added an even greater level of prestige and significance to the award.



Our Volunteer of the Year for 2023 is Bob Young. Bob is our current Vice-President and has been a committee member since 2021. He played a major role in the development and documentation of the policies and procedure needed to secure our official Charity Status with the Australian Charities and Not-Profits Commission (ACNC). Bob has also been closely involved in the development and refinement of our retreat programs. He developed the Fly-Casting Instruction program that is delivered at both our men's and women's retreats and the Risk Management registers that we follow. He also assumes the role of Buddy Coordinator, where he is responsible for collectively educating our buddies on the procedures, expectations and behaviours that we ask them to follow when volunteering with us. He is also a valued contributor on several sub-committees tasked with overseeing governance, financial management and grants. Finally, Bob is a regular contributor to this newsletter with his "Fly Casting Tips" being a very popular section.

A much valued, loved and popular member, Bob richly deserves the award and the thanks of everyone within Mending Casts for his exceptional contribution this year.

Well Done and Thank You Bob !

CASTING FOR RECOVERY RETREAT- MERRIJIG MARCH 2024

Our 4th Casting for Recovery retreat was held with 11 wonderful ladies in the beautiful, and very warm and dry, surrounds of Merrijig on March 4-6th. We all met over afternoon tea on the Monday afternoon, as usual a little unsure of what the retreat would bring and how everybody would engage and respond. Within minutes we could hear the happy chatter of people getting to know each other and settling into the next couple of days.



Once again, we were located at the Sebel in Merrijig; a very comfortable hotel set in beautiful grounds and mountain surrounds, with excellent facilities, great food, and lovely staff.

Participants and buddies met each other properly that afternoon at the vesting ceremony, learning a bit more about Mending Casts/ Casting for Recovery, and what to expect over the next two days.



Very fortunately for us, it happened to be Paella night at the hotel. The chef, Gari, armed with a captivating smile and accent, and his mother's paella recipe, treated us to a cooking demonstration in a very large paella pan full of delicious fresh seafood. Whilst we were waiting for the main course to be cooked, we feasted on a range of delicious tapas.

The fly-tying session after dinner was a lot of fun as people learned to tie a "serious" fly and then chose colourful feathers and tinsel for their brooch fly.



After a hearty breakfast the next morning we all headed to the oval area at the hotel and had a fly-casting lesson led by Andrew, and ably supported by Louise and Charley. The participants got the hang of making ovals and circles, and back and forward casts, and learned how to safely land and handle a fish, with Andrew energetically taking on the role of the running fish (aka "Bert")!



Today's lunch was an outdoor feast with a lamb on a spit and an array of delicious salads. Nobody was going to starve on our watch! After lunch, the ladies had a session with the Look Good Feel Better staff who volunteer their time to attend our retreats. The goal of the organisation is to help improve well-being and confidence for people undergoing cancer treatment, and participants receive a beautiful goody bag full of quality make up and skin care products at the end of the session.



It was time then to move to the Sebel's pond, which has previously been stocked with trout, and for everyone to have a go at flyfishing, using their newly-acquired casting skills. Alas the pond was very quiet. It was a hot afternoon and we were all of the view that the fish had wisely decided to have a quiet afternoon at the bottom of the middle part of the pond. However, it was a great opportunity to have a practice before heading to the river the next morning.



After a quick tidy up and refresh, a happy hour was spent on the deck around the Sebel restaurant, admiring the views of Mt Buller, spotting deer and kangaroos, and chatting and laughing. Rob Mitchell from Sassy Sisters was on site offering us samples of his delicious and locally made blueberry liqueur. Yet another delicious dinner (warm chocolate fudge cake- wow!) was consumed, and we took the opportunity to wish one of our ladies, Shirley, a very happy birthday. The participants ended the evening with a discussion facilitated by our beautiful and gentle Dr. Renata.



The next and final day dawned hot and sunny again. After breakfast (yes, another hearty one!), we car pooled across the highway to the sensational Delatite riverside property of Peter and Jan Howarth (also the parents of one of our lovely participants, Emma). The VFA had very kindly stocked the river a couple of days previously, and after a safety check, participants and buddies set off to catch a fish. After a slow start, the score board started to mount up, and at least a couple of stonkers were caught along with some beautiful little local rainbows. Chairs and tables were set up under the vast spread of a beautiful, shady elm tree, and we all passed a happy day fishing, chatting, munching and enjoying the environment.

Alas, the retreat had to come to an end. The de-vesting ceremony was as usual a moving and happy one, and as people bid each other farewell there were many calls to stay in touch and to meet again. The Mending Casts crew of amazing volunteers packed up and bid each other goodbye until the next time, all reminded yet again of what a worthwhile program Casting for Recovery is.

We were very sad that Bob and Val Young, foundation members and absolute stalwarts of Mending Casts, were unable to attend due to health concerns. It was definitely not the same without them, however Andrew, Cherrie and Shelley picked up the leadership mantle with great skill and care, and all of the wonderful buddies who always join in with such enthusiasm and integrity, made us proud. Thankyou also to Renata who once again volunteered her time, and who has such an impact on all who attend. We can't wait for the next one.

Fiona White – Mending Casts



DONATE VIA THE CONTAINER DEPOSIT SCHEME (CDS)



We are pleased to announce that Mending Casts is now officially registered with CDS as a community ‘Donation Partner’. What this means is that all recyclable cans, cartons and bottles can be recycled with you choosing to donate the funds to Mending Casts. CDS provides a 10-cent refund for every eligible drink container returned at refund points across Victoria. Every bottle, can and carton you return helps divert containers from landfill and, with your donation, will assist Mending Casts to continue our valuable work.

Mending Casts ‘Donation Partner ID’ with CDS is C2000010416 and we are listed under Mending Casts Incorporated.

How to assist Mending Casts to raise funds through Container Recycling:

- **Collect eligible drink containers.**

Most aluminium, glass, plastic, steel, and liquid paperboard (carton) drink containers between 150mL and 3 litres are eligible. Look for the 10c mark on the back of the pack. Some drinks are not eligible, including plain milk containers, wine and spirit bottles. TIP: Do not crush your containers, and leave lids on.

- **What can I return?**

Most aluminium, glass, plastic and liquid paperboard (carton) drink containers between 150mL and 3 litres are eligible. You can keep the lids on, they are recycled too.

Eligible 



- ✓ Aluminium cans
- ✓ Plastic bottles
- ✓ Glass bottles
- ✓ Paperboard cartons (under 1L)
- ✓ Steel bottles/cans

Most beverage containers (between 150mL and 3L) made from aluminium, glass, plastic, steel and liquid paperboard are eligible.

Ineligible 



- ✗ Wine and spirit bottles
- ✗ Milk containers
- ✗ Paperboard cartons (over 1L)
- ✗ Cordial bottles

Don't throw these out! Ineligible containers may still be accepted in your kerbside recycling bin.

- **Check for the 10c mark.**

Look for the 10c mark on the drink container label. It is often located near the barcode.

- **Return your eligible drink containers.**

CDS's interactive map makes it easy to locate refund points near you

– go to <http://cdsvic.org.au>

- **Common Refund Types.**

If you attend an over-the-counter refund site, you will be refunded in cash. However, if you attend one of the many Reverse Vending Machines, you can choose vouchers to spend at common shopping locations, electronic payment into your nominated bank account or “donation”. You will find Mending Casts listed as a registered charity at your local refund point, or you can use our unique Donation Partner ID (C2000010416). However, if it is easier for you, please feel free to collect the items for recycling and pass them on to Shelley (Mending Casts committee member) and she will do it for you!!

The 3 zones encompassed by CDS VIC:

CDS Vic encompasses three zones: the North, East, and West zones.

For more information about each of our Zone Operators you can visit their websites by clicking the links below.

North Zone

Operated by [Visy](#)



East Zone

Operated by [Return-It](#)



West Zone

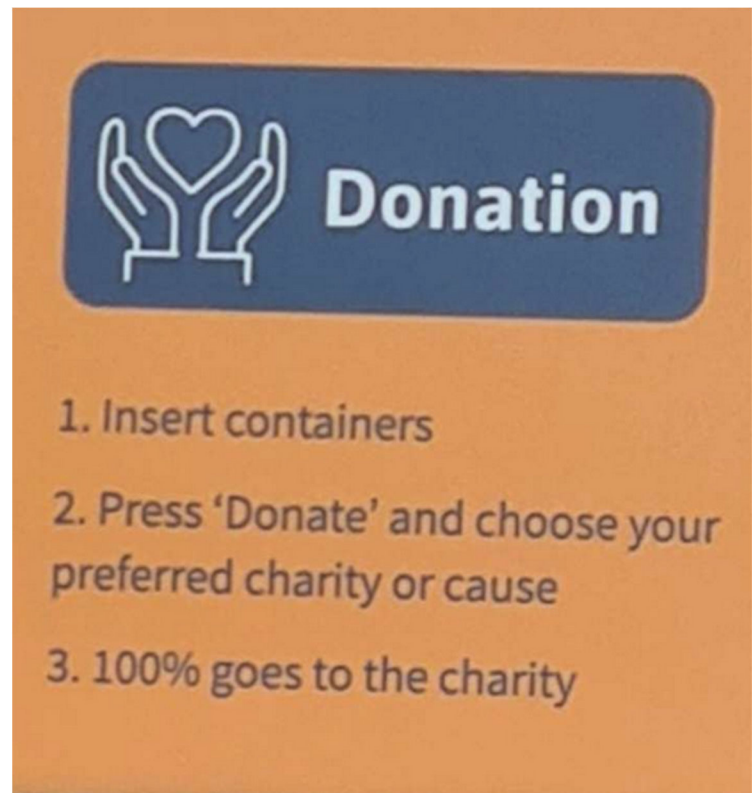
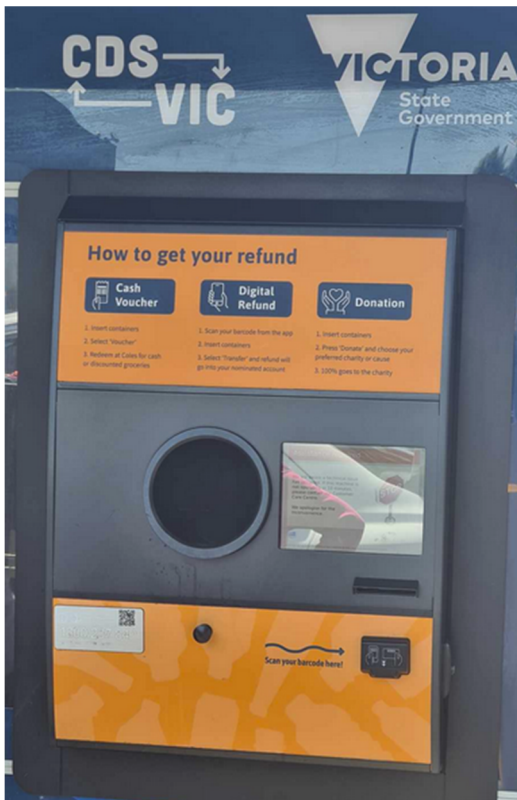
Operated by [TOMRA Cleanaway](#)



This is what a Reverse Vending Machine looks like



To donate, follow the prompts on the deposit station. Simply deposit your containers, then select "Donate" and choose Mending Casts Inc from the donor list. All funds will then be directed back into our cancer retreat programs.



You can also download the app on this link and select Mending Casts Inc as your preferred donation recipient.

<https://www.vic.gov.au/container-deposit-scheme>



WE'RE LAUNCHING SOON!!

THIS EXCITING NEW PROGRAM

Keep an eye on our media and socials for more details
about our expansion plans for retreat programs
in Tasmania



Casting for Recovery

Tasmania





FLY CASTING TIPS

- Improving your casting skills is the single most effective thing you can do to improve the quality of your fishing as good, accurate presentations are of the utmost importance when trying to entice the fish to take your fly. Improve your casting skills by practicing correct techniques before you go fishing. When you are fishing you are focused on catching fish, not casting. This is no different to a range of other sports such as golf, basketball, netball, cricket, football, etc.
- When practicing your casting watch all of your back-casts by swiveling your neck, not your shoulders. This is necessary to ensure that you can see any faults – if you are not aware of them you can't fix them. However, when fishing, focus your attention on your target (the fish).
- How you stand while casting can assist in making a successful cast. There are two basic stances to use when casting each with some pros and cons i.e.
 - An "open" stance where the casting side foot is dropped back a little and the line of your shoulders is facing more or less to the target. This stance is good for distance casts and makes it easier to watch your back casts.
 - A "closed" stance where the casting side foot is a little in front of the non-casting side foot. In this case the line of the shoulders tends to be square to the direction of the target. This stance is good for accuracy and helps to eliminate tracking errors.
 - There is a third type of stance which should generally be avoided if possible and that is standing with your feet level with each other (or worse still, together). This type of stance will compromise your balance and will make it very difficult to include some weight transfer with your casting stroke.

By Bob Young FFI Master Casting Instructor

Cane Day on the Pine - January 2024 The Fly Fishers Club of Tasmania.



On Sunday 21st January the club held its third annual Cane Day. We had twenty-one participants who filled out the registration book on the day. The day was well supported by eleven members of the Fly Tyers of Tasmania, six from our club and several fly fishers from around the state and interstate. The event commenced with a dinner at the Lodge on Saturday evening kindly organised by Anna from Tas Fly Tyers with fifteen in attendance. There was a collection of old and modern rods and Peter Rasmussen even brought along his \$80 Chinese road and caught fish! There was a variety of classic reels. The day began with calm and warm weather with many fish rising across the lake. Then the cold southerly came up but fish continued to rise. Most fishers caught fish on nymphs and dries. The cost was \$20 this year with money to be donated to Mending Casts Casting for Recovery program for women with breast cancer. \$450 was collected and after some expenses it should still be a substantial donation. We look forward to seeing you next year.



UPCOMING RETREATS



**April 22-23-24
2024
Marysville**

REEL RECOVERY:

FREE FLY-FISHING RETREATS FOR MEN WITH CANCER

Reel Recovery is a national non-profit program run by Mending Casts Inc that conducts free fly-fishing retreats for men recovering from all forms of cancer. Combining expert fly-fishing instruction with directed "courageous conversations", these retreats offer a unique experience for men with cancer; a time to share their stories, learn a new skill, form friendships and gain renewed hope as they confront the challenges of their recovery.

**"This was the best time of my life!
It's by far the best thing out there for men with cancer."
Retreat Participant**

Retreats are conducted over a two-and-a-half-day period at an accommodation with onsite or nearby fishing access. All meals, lodging and fly-fishing equipment are provided at no cost to the participants. Retreats are led by trained facilitators & expert fly-fishing instructors. A maximum of 12 men are invited to participate, to maintain the quality of the instruction and to create a powerful small-group dynamic.



**"I discovered that while fly-fishing, I was in another place. In this place there was no cancer, no pain and no fear."
Retreat Participant**

**"This retreat was so much more than fishing; this was a life-changing experience."
Retreat Participant**

GOALS

- Provide a safe, reflective environment for the participants to discuss their cancer experience with other men who have gone through it too, thereby providing support and information to help them in their recovery.
- Provide introductory fly-fishing instruction that enables the participants to learn a new skill, form a healing connection with nature, and participate in a sport they can continue throughout their recovery and lifetime.
- Provide participants information about cancer-related resources, both in the local community and nationally to facilitate networking and enhanced management of their recovery

If you would like to be a participant, please contact us.
Mending Casts Inc email : admin@mendingcasts.org web : www.mendingcasts.org
FB: https://www.facebook.com/reelrecoveryaus



To find out more and apply to participate click [HERE](#)

REFLECTIONS ON CABIN LAKE - NONI'S SEAT

In our last Mending Casts newsletter, we shared the sad news of Noni Wilson's death on 30/3/2023. Many of you knew her as a highly committed member of Mending Casts and as a wonderful and kind volunteer at our retreats. She was universally loved and admired by all who met her, and knew her.

Noni loved fly fishing, and for several years she came to a twice-yearly fly-fishing weekend for women at Millbrook, where she rapidly developed her skills and caught many trout, with great excitement. As with Mending Casts, this group of women colloquially known as the "Millbrook Girls" had great affection for Noni; for her friendliness, beautiful smile, great sense of humour and the happiness that she exuded.

The group decided that they would like to create a permanent memorial for Noni at Millbrook. Placing a seat beside the home lake there seemed appropriate. Kiel Jones, one of the Millbrook guides and also a fabulous tradesman, was engaged to build the seat, and a plaque was placed upon it.



An unveiling ceremony was held in December last year, during the weekend of the Millbrook Girls fly fishing weekend. Several members of the Mending Casts committee including Noni's beloved partner Eric, came up for the event and some beautiful words were said. Noni would have very much enjoyed the festive and delicious dinner cooked by the incredible Jenny Girvan (who has catered for Reel Recovery retreats in Ballarat), which was held following the ceremony. Many happy memories of Noni were shared that evening, and the cabin was festooned with Noni's favourite sunflowers.

As you can see from the photos, the seat is in a picturesque and peaceful location by the lake, and is a work of art in itself. When people sit down for rest or reflection, Noni will never be far away, and memories of her will live on for a very long time.



MY CASTING FOR RECOVERY RETREAT

Merrijig - March 2024

Recently, I had the great good fortune to attend a Casting for Recovery Victoria retreat. This amazing volunteer organisation runs programs for women with breast cancer, taking them to beautiful outdoor spaces, to rejuvenate, to rest and to reconnect with nature, under the guise of learning to Fly Fish. It's also an opportunity to spend time with other women who understand what it's like to walk in your shoes.



The retreat is completely free for participants. I didn't expect to particularly enjoy the fishing bit, but thought I could suck it up for the chance to engage in all the other goodness on offer. Much to my surprise, and with a huge amount of credit to the world's best fly-fishing guide Louise Christison, I am now hooked (see what I did there?)



Today I went out with my own rod & reel, set up by me, and showed my saltwater fishing spouse a thing or two about casting. Who'da thunk? Certainly not me. But so much gratitude to the amazing folks at Mending Casts who run the Casting for Recovery program, without whom I would never have found this healing space.



Look them up ladies, I promise you'll be glad you did.

Rebekah Smyth







NATIONAL PROSTATE AWARENESS MONTH (September)

Let's have an important conversation about prostate cancer

Prostate cancer in Australia

- Prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia, claiming the lives of ten men every single day.
- Over 25,000 Australian men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year.
- Many of these men will experience anxiety and depression as a result of their cancer, facing a 70% increased risk of suicide death.
- 72% of men do not reach out for help with what they are going through.

A SNAPSHOT: Prostate cancer in Australia

-  Most commonly diagnosed cancer
-  70 men diagnosed a day
-  10 deaths a day
-  250,958 men currently impacted
-  1 in 5 chance of diagnosis by age 85
-  70% increased risk of suicide

The facts



If your father or brother have ever been diagnosed with prostate cancer, your risk of prostate cancer doubles.



If two or more close male relatives have been diagnosed, your risk increases five-fold.



If you have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer, and/or BRCA1 or 2 genes, your risk is also greater.



Other risk factors

- Your risk of prostate cancer increases as you get older.
- Prostate cancer is unique among cancers – we have not yet found a way of preventing it, and we do not know what causes it.
- Scientists have not yet found any strong links between diet and lifestyle and prostate cancer.



Be proactive about prostate cancer. Talk to your doctor about PSA Testing, and call PCFA for information and a [free info kit](#).



Call 1800 22 00 99

How you can get involved

Every 20 minutes, one of our fathers, sons or brothers will be diagnosed with prostate cancer. When prostate cancer threatens the men you love, join the team that can save a life. Download and share our awareness posters and join the [PCFA-Team](#). You'll be making a measurable difference for the 1 in 5 men in your life, diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime.

Go to <https://www.pcfa.org.au/>

20 YEARS OF REEL RECOVERY

Two decades, 4000 anglers and countless 'courageous conversations' later, Reel Recovery Global looks forward to the next historic milestones

In 2023, Reel Recovery celebrated 20 years of providing expenses-paid fly-fishing trips for men living with cancer with its biggest season ever – 30 retreats across 20 US states plus four retreats in New Zealand and Australia. The program has already helped over 4,000 men around the world find peace in the face of a cancer diagnosis; and now, we've set our eyes on the next 4,000 with an expanding, international program to include Iceland and Argentina which will see a record-number 37 retreats delivered this season. Reel Recovery programs in Australia are run by Mending Casts. We have run 5 retreats since 2019 serving nearly 50 men from all over the country, with another two retreats planned for 2023/24.



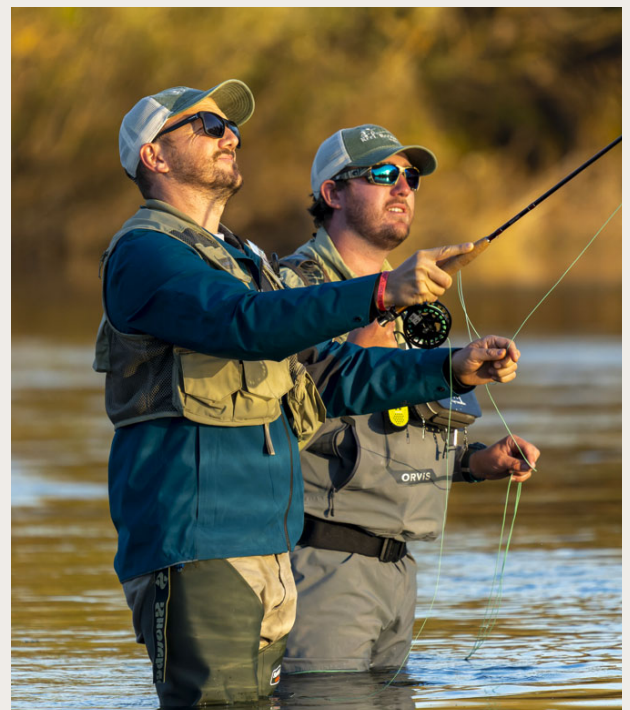
IN THE BEGINNING – Stu Brown



“Your greatest gift is what you give of yourself”.....Stewart Brown made this comment to a group of men gathered at the first ever Reel Recovery Retreat in Loveland, CO, just three days before he was to go into surgery on his brain tumour. Inspired by his vision, passion and courage, a group of men joined with Stu to establish Reel Recovery in May, 2003. Though his health was beginning to deteriorate, Stu was able to attend the first Retreat in June, along with his son Tyson, who served as volunteer staff. The two were able to share moments of joy, pain, fear and love as they fished together and shared their stories with the rest of the group. Reel Recovery is dedicated to Stewart Brown and the legacy of his vision that has lasted for 20 years and will continue beyond the next decade.

THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM – TIME ON THE WATER

Reel Recovery has found success by putting time on the water at the forefront of a program specifically tailored to men living with cancer, with no previous fly-fishing experience necessary. “Getting out into nature is such a relief from the confinement and sometimes isolation that can come with cancer treatment,” said Reel Recovery Executive Director Stan Golub. “We’ve heard it time and time again from men who’ve attended our programs: When they’re out on the water, it’s as if their cancer drifts away.” By providing a peaceful, reflective environment that gets men away from the stresses of their day-to-day responsibilities, Reel Recovery creates the opportunity to gain a fresh perspective on living with cancer. Along with time on the water, the men take part in professionally facilitated “courageous conversations” that allow them to share their cancer related experiences with other men in similar situations. “Many of our participants have never tried fly fishing before, nor have they talked much about their cancer,” said Golub, “but learning something new and feeling the support of the other men can lead to a new outlook and hope for the future.”



20 Years of Giving. 20 Years of Good.

When I reflect on the past 20 years, I keep coming back to the Dave Matthews quote I wrote in our Newsletter way back in 2007: "When you give, you begin to live." So simple, so true, and still so very central to our mission. And no one has better described what Reel Recovery "gives" than David, a participant in Arkansas:

"Reel Recovery staff and volunteers:
You give hope where there is hopelessness,
You give strength where there is weakness,
You give caring when it seems that no one cares,
You give joy when everything may look so sad,
You give fun and pleasure when life can be so unpleasant."

Hope, Strength, Care, Joy, Fun, Pleasure. To men coping with cancer. We offered 34 Retreats this year, our most ever, and at every one, this magic happened. Hundreds of volunteers across the country and across the globe, gave these gifts to our participants. And the participants gave back: Inspiration. Motivation. Courage. Resilience. Wisdom.

We have had so much to celebrate over these 20 years: so many lives changed, friends made, cancers beaten. And we have grieved as well, too often, but that's the nature of the cancer beast.



Such good people like Norm, Loran and Bruce, who touched hundreds of lives with their kindness, care and humanity; so many courageous men who graced us with their honesty, warmth and dignity. For 20 years, we have welcomed and embraced the full gamut of life's experience with respect, empathy and compassion.

When, often of late, it feels like the world is dominated by rancor and division, Reel Recovery is an antidote, offering kindness and connection. Genuine connection. Together, we have created a sanctuary, where goodness dominates. I may be sounding a bit preachy, but it's only because my belief in what we do is so strong; Reel Recovery is more important than ever right now, to the men who attend, and to all of us who help it thrive.

But better than hearing it from me, listen to the voice of one of our participants

this year. In our Closing Circle, we ask the question: "What are you taking away from this Retreat?" His simple but powerful answer was not about cancer, not about fishing, but far more profound: "Being here has restored my faith in humanity."

I return to that comment time and time again; such a testament to the power of what we do, and how we do it. I hope all of you in this great community can appreciate what you are giving to these men, and to each other; nothing short of sustaining the goodness in humanity, and demonstrating the best of what we can be.

On to the next 20 years!

Be Well! Fish On!


Stan Golub, Executive Director

REEL RECOVERY AUSTRALIA

Mending Casts has an exclusive agreement with Reel Recovery USA to run this cancer retreat program in Australia. These retreats are for men with any type of cancer and who may be at any stage in their cancer journey. We held our first retreat at Omeo in 2019 and have since hosted nearly 50 men. They are life-changing events for all who involved, be they participants or volunteers as the focus is on fun, fishing, food and friendship. We are very proud to be associated with this wonderful organisation and look forward to another 20+ years of retreats in Australia.

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY – OUR GROUND-BREAKING RESEARCH

Understanding the Impact of a Fly-fishing Retreat for People Living with Cancer

As researchers at Deakin University we are excited to have partnered with Mending Casts to evaluate the retreat programs offered to both men and woman who are living with cancer. My name is Loch Forsyth, and alongside my colleagues Vicki White and Arlene Walker our involvement with Mending Casts began in early 2023 and has since progressed to the first phase of our collaborative research journey.



Past research tells us that many things can be good for our overall emotional, psychological, and physical wellbeing. These may include (but are not limited to) time in nature, speaking with others, social support, and exercise. The Mending Casts retreat programs offer the opportunity to engage in several of these experiences, including the unique activity of fly-fishing.

Members of the fly-fishing community have long known and enjoyed the benefits that engaging in this pastime brings. Evidence of this is demonstrated within much of the fly-fishing literature. One such pertinent example can be found in Harry Middleton's book "The Bright Country." Harry penned the following passage to convey how fly-fishing during challenging times in his life made him feel.

"Whenever I was along the river, fishing its bright water, I let myself go, emptied my head, let the moving river soothe my ache for contact and connection, ease my hearts ancient longing for its legacy of wildness."



As researchers, we can only theorise as to the reasons why fly-fishing can help us gain clarity and disconnect from our troubles. This is because in the scientific literature there is a paucity of robust empirical studies that examine the effects it may result in, and more importantly the underlying mechanisms that contribute to these outcomes. The truth is that the specific ways that fly-fishing helps people likely varies, depending on the individual and their unique needs. That is what we seek to learn as part of our broader research effort to evaluate the Mending Casts retreats. We are seeking to hear from retreat participants, so that we can learn from their experiences by understanding their views, attitudes, and feedback around all aspects of the retreat (including and beyond the fly-fishing component).

Through learning about the thoughts of past participants on the Mending Casts retreat programs, we hope to inform how these retreats are delivered for others in the future. With our findings, we also hope to continue to build knowledge about how to support the wellbeing of those living with cancer.



*Dr Loch Forsyth
PhD, Mpsych (Org Psych), B.Psych.Sci (Hons).
Lecturer | Organisational Psychologist
Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), UK
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Deakin University*

CATERING for RECOVERY

Rainbow trout with almonds, bacon and green beans

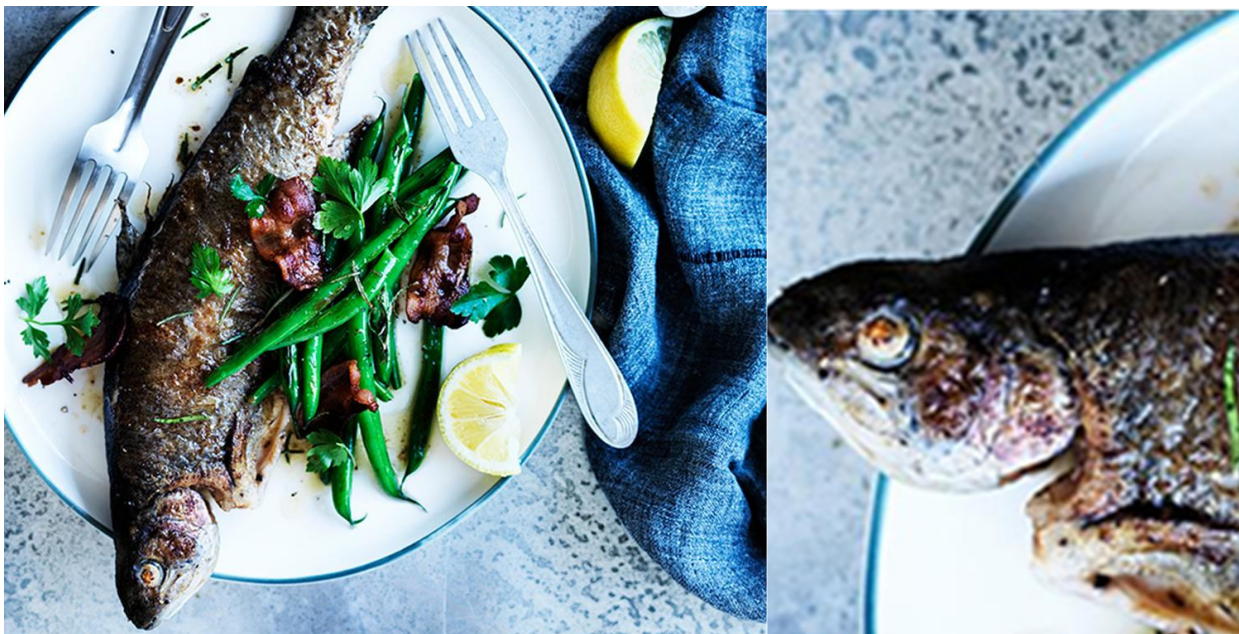
This buttery rainbow trout recipe is full of summer flavour with fresh lemons, almonds, bacon and rosemary. Use the best smoked streaky bacon you can find to take this dish to the next level.!

Ingredients.

- 2 rainbow trout (400gm each), scaled and gutted
- Seasoned plain flour, for dusting
- 150 gm butter, chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 6 rashers streaky bacon, cut into pieces
- 2 tbsp rosemary
- Finely grated rind and juice of 1 lemon
- 60 gm roast almonds, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup (loosely packed) flat-leaf parsley, torn
- Steamed green beans and lemon wedges, to serve

Method.

1. Preheat oven to 180C. Heat a large frying pan over medium heat and dust trout with flour, shaking off excess. Add 50gm butter and half the oil to pan. When butter foams, add trout and fry, turning once, until golden brown (2-3 minutes each side). Transfer to a roasting pan and bake until just cooked through (3-4 minutes).
2. Meanwhile, heat remaining oil in a clean frying pan over medium heat, add bacon and fry until crisp (3-4 minutes). Transfer bacon to a plate, drain oil from pan, return to heat, add remaining butter and stir until starting to foam. Add rosemary and cook until butter is nut-brown (2-3 minutes). Stir in lemon rind and juice, and almonds, then remove from heat. Pour butter over trout, top with bacon and parsley and serve with green beans and lemon wedges.



MENDING DONATIONS

We would like to acknowledge the exceptional contributions made by the following donors and publicly offer our sincere gratitude for their generous support of our programs.

Tasmanian Fly Fishers

\$500 donation collected from their "Cane on the Pine" fundraiser. See article



Donation of a 12 Primal fly rods for use at our retreat programs.



An amazing donation of \$25k as part of a world-wide promotion with Casting for Recovery entitled "Portraits of Courage". We have continued to enjoy a wonderful relationship with Yeti, who are now regular donors of tumblers and drink containers to our retreat programs, which are then passed on to participants in their "goody bags".

Anonymous Philanthropist

The remarkable generosity of complete strangers never ceases to amaze us. This was evident when we received an anonymous donation of \$50k towards our retreat programs from an anonymous benefactor. Such extraordinary support for our work is truly humbling.....

Monika Tonner

Donation of \$13,500 raised as proceeds via the GoFundMe page setup in support of her solo swim of the English Channel.

Nth Qld Saltwater Flies : Fly Tying Team

A big "Thank You" goes out to Dave Little and his team from @nqsaltwaterflies for the dozen filled fly boxes we received that were used at our recent CFR retreat in Merrijig Victoria.



Generous provision of pro-bono accountancy services, software and business guidance.



Ongoing assistance with strategic planning, business development, marketing and grants.

THE VIEW FROM HERE

Donation of significant in-kind support for our marketing, branding and website development



Financial support to fund up to 3 participants to the Casting for Recovery retreat in Merrijig

Victorian Fly Fishers Association

Donation of \$1500 received following the auction of trout paintings created by Mending Casts volunteer Charley May.



Personal Donations:

Michael Young - \$700 CDS (Vic) - \$16
 Peter Clayton - \$350
 Ian Harrison - \$650

Victorian Fisheries Authority (VFA)

Stocking of public waters in support of our Casting for Recovery and Reel Recovery retreat fishing days.



Thank You

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH (October):

Call Breast Cancer Network Australia helpline on 1800 500 258

This may not be one of the more exciting articles in the newsletter but it is one of the most important!

Many of you will be aware **October is Breast Cancer Awareness month.**

In Australia breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer for women aged 40-59 and the second highest for all other age groups. Around 28% of the estimated cancers diagnosed in females will be breast cancer. This doesn't sound like much but it equates to over 20,000 women's lives turned upside down and that doesn't include the impact on family and friends. The expected death rate from breast cancer in 2023 is 3300.

Many people are surprised to learn that **men can develop breast cancer.** Fortunately, breast cancer in men is rare and it accounts for less than 1% of all cancers in men. The good news is that most men survive breast cancer. In Australia 87% of men diagnosed with breast cancer are alive five years later. Most men fully recover, and the breast cancer does not return. Men of all ages can be affected by breast cancer however the average age of diagnosis is 71.

There are two types of breast cancer: Invasive and Non-invasive.

Invasive breast cancers have spread outside the ducts or lobules of the breast into surrounding breast tissue. If not treated early they have the potential to spread into the lymph nodes and other organs.

Non-invasive breast cancers are abnormal cells that are contained within the milk ducts or lobules in the breast. They have not grown into or invaded normal breast tissue. Non-invasive cancers are called "carcinoma-in-situ" and are sometimes referred to as "pre-cancers".



Symptoms

Not everyone who is diagnosed with breast cancer has symptoms. Breast changes may not mean cancer but see a doctor if you have:

- a lump, lumpiness or thickening especially in just one breast
- a change in the size or shape of the breast or swelling
- a change to the nipple – changes in shape, crusting, sores or ulcers, redness, pain, a clear or bloody discharge or a nipple that turns in (inverted) when it used to stick out
- a change in the skin – dimpling or indentation, a rash or itchiness, a scaly appearance, unusual redness or other colour changes
- swelling or discomfort in the armpit or near the collarbone
- ongoing, unusual pain not related to your monthly menstrual cycle that remains after your period and is in one breast only..

This October, Get involved. Get screened. Take action !!!

Check out the Cancer Council, Breast Care Network Australia and the many other helpful cancer websites for more information. Most hospitals that offer cancer treatment will have a Wellness Centre or similar with rafters full of information and support.

OUR WISH LIST

As a not-for-profit charity run by volunteers, Mending Casts is always on the lookout for assistance in securing a range of items which are needed for its day-to-day activities. Some of the major items required at the moment are listed below. The majority of funds raised by Mending Casts is directed toward paying for accommodation, meals and other items at retreats. Sponsorship of retreat participants by companies, individuals or other organisations is high on our Wishlist and would enable us to expand our retreat program. Currently (March 2024) the direct cost for one participant to attend a two-and-a-half-day retreat is around \$1300.

MATERIAL GOODS:

- ◆ Transit Van or similar commercial vehicle for the transportation of equipment, members and volunteers to and from our retreat programs.
- ◆ 240V petrol generator with a minimum 2kW continuous output.
- ◆ Portable data projector for use at retreats and presentations.



Currently all of our funds are utilised for the direct costs of running each retreat and any assistance with the above list would be greatly appreciated. Please email us at admin@mendingcasts.org if you can help.

MENDING MEMBERS:

Mending Casts is also seeking to add several additional members to its Committee who have skills in the IT and Marketing areas and possess “Can Do” attitudes. A love of fly-fishing is preferred but not essential, however you must be someone of the highest personal and professional integrity. Anyone with these skills and attributes who is interested in joining a dedicated committee of volunteers should apply by submitting an application with references. Please email us at admin@mendingcasts.org for more information.

THE NUMBER CRUNCH by Jonathan Myers

Hello again. Notwithstanding the excellent content already provided in this issue, surprisingly the editors have asked for another “exciting” (??!!) update from the Treasurer’s desk.

I guess the biggest thing to report this time is just how much we have been blown away by people’s generosity and kindness. I wrote last time about Magnificent Monica Tonner, whose English Channel swim raised more than \$13,500 for us. We also held the amazingly successful trivia quiz night (\$16,000) and the Fishmas auction, which, thanks to the generosity of both the donors of the items and those who bought them, raised a fabulous \$5,500 before Christmas. Our health providers (Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre and Bendigo Health) have provided nearly \$10,000 for sponsorships of participants. We were also successful recently in applying for a grant from Victorian Fisheries of \$5,000. And on top of all that, we have had a steady flow of donations from individuals, businesses and clubs this year which in total has provided more than \$60,000 – just incredible! In addition, we have also received a whopping gift of \$25,000 from Yeti (as well as some equipment to use at retreats). In total, our revenue for the year to date has been well over \$130,000. This has been such an amazing boost to our funds, it provides real financial security for the organisation and means we can plan for the future with confidence. In terms of retreats alone, it represents enough for six retreats. We have already run two retreats this year, with another two planned currently.



The success in fund raising is a credit not only to the generosity of the donors and supporters, but also to the incredible work our volunteers and Committee do in organising events and promoting Mending Casts to potential donors. To all of you, on behalf of Mending Casts I say a huge and heartfelt “thank you”. To be honest, I was a bit unsure as to whether I should write about this topic. I was worried that people might feel we do not need any more funding or we have now had our fair share. But then I remembered the remarkable impact that your money has on our retreat participants. The photos in this newsletter (of our most recent retreats) speak for themselves, as do the testimonials of the participants. With your help, we really can change lives, one cast at a time.



"THANK YOU" to all our Sponsors

We gratefully acknowledge the help and support of the following organisations (see <https://www.mendingcasts.org/sponsors>)

The image displays a grid of logos for various sponsors. The logos include:

- Victorian Fisheries Authority**: Logo with a fish and the text "Victorian Fisheries AUTHORITY".
- Aussie Angler Fishing Tackle**: Logo featuring a fish and the text "Aussie Angler Fishing Tackle".
- MILLBROOK Lakes**: Logo with a fish and the text "MILLBROOK Lakes".
- YETI**: Large, bold logo for the brand YETI.
- essential FLYFISHER**: Logo with a fly and the text "essential FLYFISHER".
- VFFA**: Logo with a fish and the text "VFFA".
- TROUT ON FLY FLIES & SUPPLIES**: Logo with a fly and the text "TROUT ON FLY FLIES & SUPPLIES".
- HARFIN FLY REEL COMPANY**: Logo with the text "HARFIN FLY REEL COMPANY".
- mayfly**: Logo with a mayfly and the text "mayfly".
- TroutFlies.com.au**: Logo with a fly and the text "TroutFlies.com.au Quality Flies at Wholesale Prices".
- FlyLife**: Logo with a fish and the text "FlyLife".
- Troutlore**: Logo with a fish and the text "Troutlore".
- Untamed**: Logo with a fly and the text "Untamed".
- Galey MsGuided Fly Fishing**: Logo with the text "Galey MsGuided Fly Fishing".
- Hurley's FLY FISHING**: Logo with the text "Hurley's FLY FISHING".
- FLYFINZ fishing tackle & books**: Logo with a fish and the text "FLYFINZ fishing tackle & books".
- NILLUMBIK CELLARS & The Vines Cafe**: Logo with a fish and the text "NILLUMBIK CELLARS & The Vines Cafe".
- Epic**: Logo with the text "Epic".
- pizzini**: Logo with the text "pizzini".
- Antiquarian Angler**: Logo with a fish and the text "Antiquarian Angler".
- Lobster Cave**: Logo with a lobster and the text "Lobster Cave".
- BRIDGE ROAD BREWERS**: Logo with the text "BRIDGE ROAD BREWERS".
- Brunch.**: Logo with the text "Brunch.".
- HAMPER WORLD THE GIFT SPECIALISTS**: Logo with the text "HAMPER WORLD THE GIFT SPECIALISTS".
- FONDATA AT WELLERS 1872**: Logo with the text "FONDATA AT WELLERS 1872".
- PENNYWEIGHT**: Logo with the text "PENNYWEIGHT".
- LAROSA LEATHERGOODS**: Logo with the text "LAROSA LEATHERGOODS".
- drummond golf AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST**: Logo with the text "drummond golf AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST".
- The Lost Fly**: Logo with a fly and the text "The Lost Fly".
- Lily Fields Distilling Co.**: Logo with the text "Lily Fields Distilling Co.".
- YARRA VALLEY GOURMET FOODS**: Logo with a tomato and the text "YARRA VALLEY GOURMET FOODS".
- Ammo Flies**: Logo with a fly and the text "Ammo Flies".
- GEE LONG CATS**: Logo with a cat and the text "GEE LONG CATS".
- RICHMOND**: Logo with a tiger and the text "RICHMOND".
- BRISBANE LIONS**: Logo with a lion and the text "BRISBANE LIONS".
- ZEN BAR**: Logo with the text "ZEN BAR".
- Compleat Angler Geelong**: Logo with the text "Compleat Angler Geelong".
- Wildfish with Peter Morse...**: Logo with the text "Wildfish with Peter Morse...".
- Geelong Lodge Of Unity And Prudence**: Logo with the text "Geelong Lodge Of Unity And Prudence".
- FMV**: Logo with the text "FMV".
- LE BAR**: Logo with the text "LE BAR".
- MOONAH LINKS THE HOME OF AUSTRALIAN GOLF**: Logo with the text "MOONAH LINKS THE HOME OF AUSTRALIAN GOLF".
- THE ROSANNA GOLF CLUB EST. 1927**: Logo with the text "THE ROSANNA GOLF CLUB EST. 1927".
- MANIC TACKLE PROJECT**: Logo with the text "MANIC TACKLE PROJECT".

IN MEMORIAM

Vale Sherryl Taylor : 5th Sept 2023



We were so very sad to hear of the death of Sheryl. Sheryl attended Casting for Recovery in Ballarat 2022. She was a beautiful woman with a positive, wise, humorous and happy outlook on life, determined to live colourfully and to the fullest, and also to help others with breast cancer along the way in her home town of Bendigo.

Sheryl's kindness was no more evident than when she declared that she didn't want to fish (she was happy just to be there) because it would cause pain and suffering to the fish.

After much discussion of what catch and release meant, Sheryl was happy to have a go, and indeed as the day at Millbrook went on, she became very enthusiastic indeed. Alas the fish weren't being cooperative that day, however she went home with a whole new appreciation of what fly fishing could be. In addition, she also became a strong advocate for Mending Casts.

Sheryl lost her battle with breast cancer on 5/9/23. Some members of the Mending Cast committee had the privilege of visiting her a few days before she died, and found her being her usual beautiful and caring Sheryl self. Vale Sheryl, you will be remembered with great fondness.

Vale Colin O'Dell : 31st Dec 2023



We lost one of our Reel Recovery brothers in December with the passing of Colin O'Dell. Colin participated in our inaugural Reel Recovery retreat at Omeo in 2021 and had been a fabulous supporter of our programs ever since.

A beloved husband, father and grand-father, he was a respected and decorated soldier, having spent much of his life in service in the Army.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife Anne and their family, including son Eugene who is a close friend and a regular volunteer at our retreats. Be Well Fish On friend!

Vale Wayne Hollis : 18th Jan 2024



Sadly, we lost another one of our Reel Recovery brothers in January with the passing of Wayne Hollis on Jan 18th. Wayne attended our Ballarat Reel Recovery retreat in 2023 and then joined Mending Casts as a volunteer. He loved his fishing and we really valued the time he spent with us as he made a memorable impact on all of us at the retreat (we loved his hat 😊).

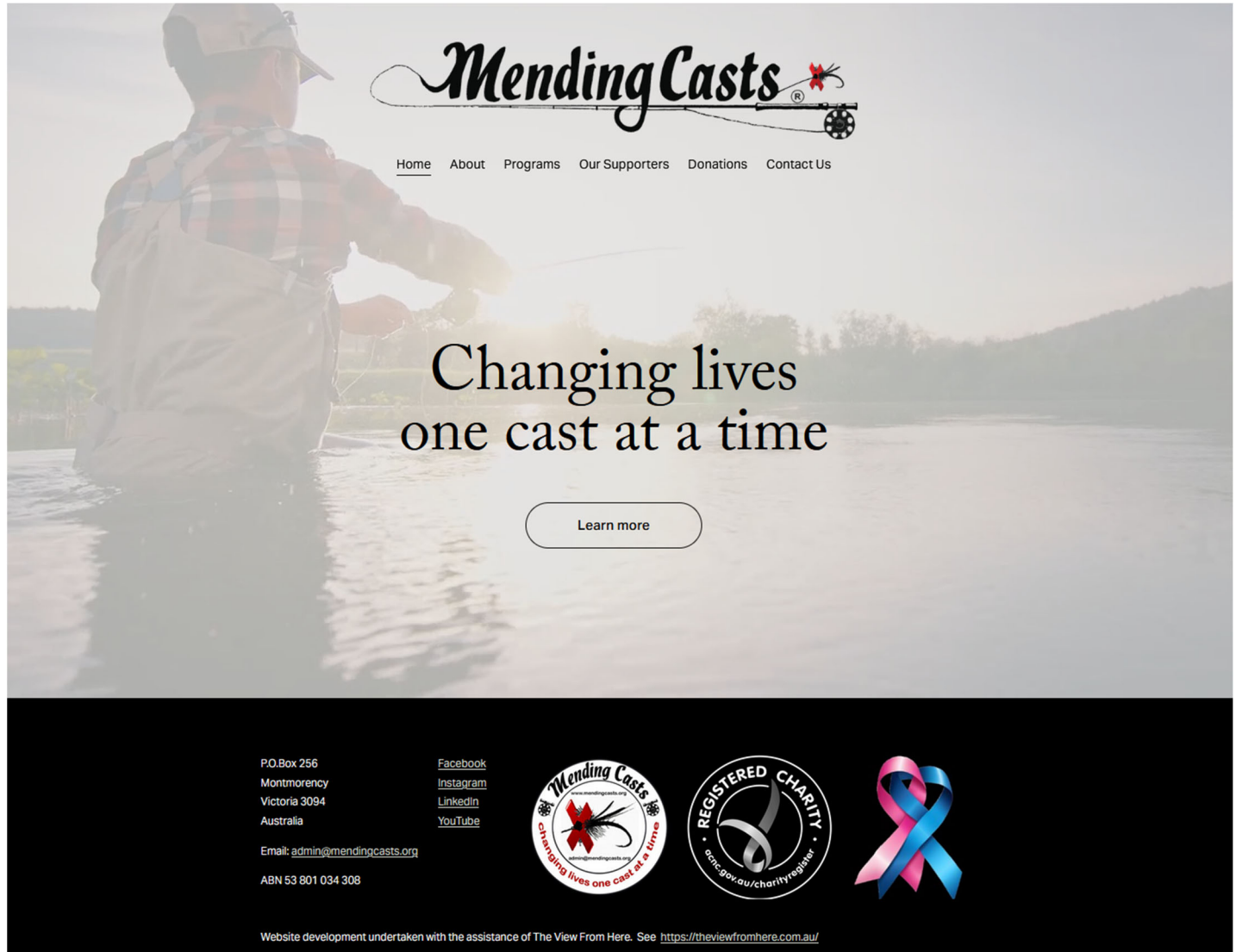
He was a special person and a unique character who will be missed by everyone who knew him. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his partner Kath and their family. Be Well Fish On friend!

WEBSITE RELAUNCH

www.mendingcasts.org

A new year and a new website. We are pleased to release this upgraded site which we feel better represents the organisation and its programs. Please take the time to check it out and let us know if you agree.

We are grateful for the assistance provided by The View From Here with the redevelopment.



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