



Welcome

We hope you enjoy reading our 2023 Winter Snapshot with positive stories about the impacts your support is helping to achieve.

The Summer Snapshot shared our focus on four Impact Areas to achieve change; 1. Dolphins and Whales, 2. The Environment, 3. The Community, and 4. A Strong Organisation.

An important outcome of 'impact thinking' is the completion of the 2022 Impact Reports for Research and the Institute as a whole. The key points are summarised on the next page.

This process has challenged our thinking and reinforced the importance of synergy and integration across our organisation. For example, Citizen Science and *i sea, i care* relate to all impact areas.

Of course, we still work through our core activity areas of Research, Education and Leadership.

We are on a journey, and these first reports already influence programs and have set the foundation for future reports – but most importantly – we will achieve a more significant impact.

A strong organisation is a crucial foundation for all we do.

Our staff, volunteers and supporters are the key to success. Our board directors, all volunteers, guide strategy, manage risks and work to achieve sustainable funding. Many also contribute their time and skills to help with day-to-day needs.

We welcome four new directors; Trudy Ararat, Rebecca Rawlings, Melody Horrill and Dr Jo Klemke. They all bring essential skills and experience to strengthen our organisation. Find more about all our team at: <https://www.dolphinresearch.org.au/about/>

Many find it surprising that we receive little government funding. Three decades have taught us that government funding always stops – so independence is the best long-term path.

Your support has been crucial to creating a solid foundation we can build on. The future needs us to do more – so please support our Next Generations Appeal.

We wish you and your families the very best.

Paul Ramadge, Chairman Jeff Weir OAM, Executive Director



Above – DRI's team at a workshop in April 2023. Front left to right: Marie Ritchie (Deputy Chair), Trudy Ararat (Director), Rebecca Rawlings (Intern Director), Melody Horrill (Director), Jo Klemke (Director), David Donnelly (Research Officer), Jacqui Younger (Education Officer). Rear left to right: Jeff Weir (Executive Director), Paul Ramadge (Board Chair), Leanne Nguyen (Research Fellow), Rebecca Moore (Director). Absent: Joel Hanna (Director), Mandy Robertson (Education Director) and Jenny McLennan (Relationships Manager).

Cover image: Two of the third-generation common dolphins (story p4-5). All images of dolphins and whales are taken under scientific research permit.

Highlights from 2022 IMPACT REPORT

Our 2022 Impact Report highlights three key things:

1. The synergy in our impact and activity areas: our research informs and enriches education programs, and our education programs provide the impetus for further knowledge.
2. The positive impact we have on the community and the lives of our ambassadors, interns and supporters.

3. The importance of three decades of long-term, integrated programs.

Above all, DRI's work shows that we have a remarkable success story with communities of dolphins in Melbourne's coastal backyard that seem to be thriving.

However, we have no room for complacency. A future with a rapidly changing climate and human population will make our work more crucial than ever.



1. Dolphins and Whales

Port Phillip and Bass Coast dolphins - outcomes for 2022

Two highly significant findings:

1. Evidence of a third generation of common dolphins born in Port Phillip.
2. The first evidence of common dolphins moving between Bass Strait and Port Phillip.

Whales

In 2022, the Two Bays Whale Project received 178 validated sightings of 315 whales across three species – humpback, southern right and killer whales. 46 new flukes were added to the Victorian Humpback Whale Fluke Catalogue.



2. Environment

2022 Key Outcomes

- Submission of research data to the Port Phillip Environmental Management Plan.
- Twelve catchment workshops for *i sea, i care* Ambassadors and the messages being shared with an audience of 84,000.
- Aligning our programs with six of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Providing input into the City of Kingston's catchment management strategy.



3. Community (Post COVID)

2022 marine education programs

- Formal education programs with 3,880 children and adults.
- Informal talks to audiences over 2,000.
- Community engagement at 7 festivals with a reach exceeding 15,000.



i sea, i care School Ambassador Program

- 8,000 Ambassadors since 2001.
- 500 new Ambassadors from 91 schools.
- 62 Ambassador workshops.
- 45,000 engaged by Ambassadors speaking at their school assemblies.
- 84,000 audience of *i sea, i care* News.
- 22,000 P-2 children peer-taught by Ambassadors.
- More than 25,000 volunteer hours contributed by Ambassadors.

2022 Intern Program

- 9 interns hosted, contributing ~1,200 formal hours plus volunteer time.
- Students from Monash, Melbourne, Deakin and Federation Universities.

2022 Citizen Science

- 441 sightings of dolphins, humpback, southern right and killer whales.
- 363 hours of timed surveys.



4. A strong organisation

Key organisational outcomes - 2022

- Two significant projects:
 - Renewal of our website to improve functionality, security and stability.
 - Database migration to Salesforce Not-For-Profit Success Pack.
- Maintaining key partnerships with four councils and companies.
- Establishing the Research Fellowship Program for young career scientists to build research capacity.
- Securing funding to expand DRI's Two Bays Whale project to two additional segments of Victoria's coast.
- Bringing the Killer Whales Australia citizen science program into DRI.
- Recruitment of skilled directors and establishing an Intern Director role for a Monash University M.Env.Sust. student.

To access the full reports:

1. 2022 whole-organisation report: <https://www.dolphinresearch.org.au/impact>
2. 2022 research report: please contact us to be sent a 2022 Research Impact Report.

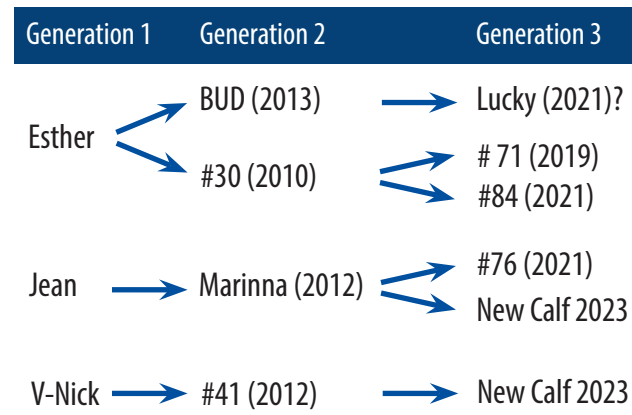


Image: Marinna and second calf (front) with Criss Cross and calf (rear) (May 2023)

Three Generations and Detective Work

The discovery of the third generation of Port Phillip common dolphin community is a success story for our dolphins and also for our Research Fellowship program.

We think we have **six calves** of the third generation since these normally oceanic dolphins came into Port Phillip in 2005. The following diagram shows the family tree.



It's a challenge to determine mother-calf relationships. We rely on having multiple images of the adults with the same young calf by their side from several surveys. The question mark on 'Lucky (2021)?' indicates that more data is needed to be sure BUD is the mother.

Until we captured a series of images during a survey in May, #41s new calf also had a question mark. Part of the doubt was fueled by images of #71 with the same calf. It's common for other dolphins in a maternal group to 'baby-sit'. We often see Tall Fin with little calves - he certainly can't be a mother!

In March this year, #71 was not quite 4 years, so couldn't be the mother. Common dolphins become mature at about 7 years.

The adjacent images show #41 and #71 with the same calf in March.

We have Leanne and Ella, our Research Fellows, to thank for helping our understanding about these very special dolphins.



#41 and calf (March 2023)



#71 with #41's calf (March 2023)

A Story of Success

Of the nearly 150 individual common dolphins that we know use Port Phillip, one stands out, Marinna, mother to two of the third generation and survivor of a horrific injury (inset right).

Why is this knowledge crucial?

One of the most crucial measures for the success of wildlife communities is their reproductive success and the subsequent success of future generations. Also, their resilience to disease and recovery from injuries. These reflect the health of their environment - as they are at the top of the food chain.

A South Australian parliamentary committee found that the declining health and death of bottlenose dolphins close to Adelaide was likely due to the high levels of toxins in their environment. This may be only part of the story, but the fact is that many calves are dying before they reach two years.

In contrast -the situation in Port Phillip with



We first sighted Marinna in October 2012 as a very young calf with her mother, Jean (above). When she was only four, a severe injury to her back nearly ended her short life. The image from 2017 (above right) shows the massive scar left after a year of healing. Marinna's ability to heal - fighting off infection and keeping up with other dolphins - is a testament to her resilience.



Then in 2021, something incredible happened! Marinna became a Mum!

The great news is that she has had another calf in February 2023. They are shown in the large image on the previous page taken in mid-May.

bottlenose and common dolphins, and the latter growing in numbers is truly remarkable. The Institute's long-term monitoring provides a snapshot of the numbers, calving success, and the monitoring of injuries and skin health.

All our findings are reported to the Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action, and are available to influence environmental decision-making.



A Successful Experiment

Pictured are Stuart and Sandra from Bay Fish 'n' Trips on-board their lovely vessel with our Research Fellow, Leanne Nguyen.

Leanne presented them with a new 'Dolphin Distancing' poster to share with their customers on fishing trips. This has been part of Leanne's responsibility.

The Research Fellow experiment kicked off in May 2022 and has outstripped our expectations for the impact it would achieve for the Institute as well as Leanne and Ella.

We are seeking funding to ensure that this important program becomes embedded in the Dolphin Research Institute's DNA.

Two Bays Whale Project

DOLPHIN RESEARCH INSTITUTE



The Whales are HERE!

The first report of whales came in through our PodWatch app on 15 May off Venus Bay.

The Two Bays Whale Project is a citizen science program that has concentrated on capturing whale sightings in the region from Barwon Heads to Inverloch since 2015.

The key strength of the Two Bays Whale Project is that each sighting is validated by speaking to the individual and ideally

having a photograph. This avoids multiple sightings being recorded for the one event and confidence in the species.

The geographical coverage of the Project is being extended in 2023. More details will be featured in our next Snapshot.

Please report sightings through our website.

The Island Whale Festival



30 June -
2 July 2023

Phillip
Island

Join us at the 2023 Island Whale Festival. DRI was an instigator of the festival and is proud to see it grow into an award-winning event.

This year we will be based at the Woolamai Lifesaving Club where our educators and researchers will be running programs.

We will keep you posted through all our communications.



Engaging the Young and Young at Heart

You can tell the success of education programs by the looks on faces, the heads focused, and the necks craned so as not to miss a single thing.

This page shows early-childhood education (above) and community education at a festival and library (below).

It's not about information but structuring fascinating experiences in nature or through rich storytelling.

The next page shows our *i sea, i care* Ambassadors at work.

Firstly, their swim workshop, where they get wet with seals, seadragons and dolphins - if they are lucky.

For many, it is their first experience on a boat, not to mention jumping off one!

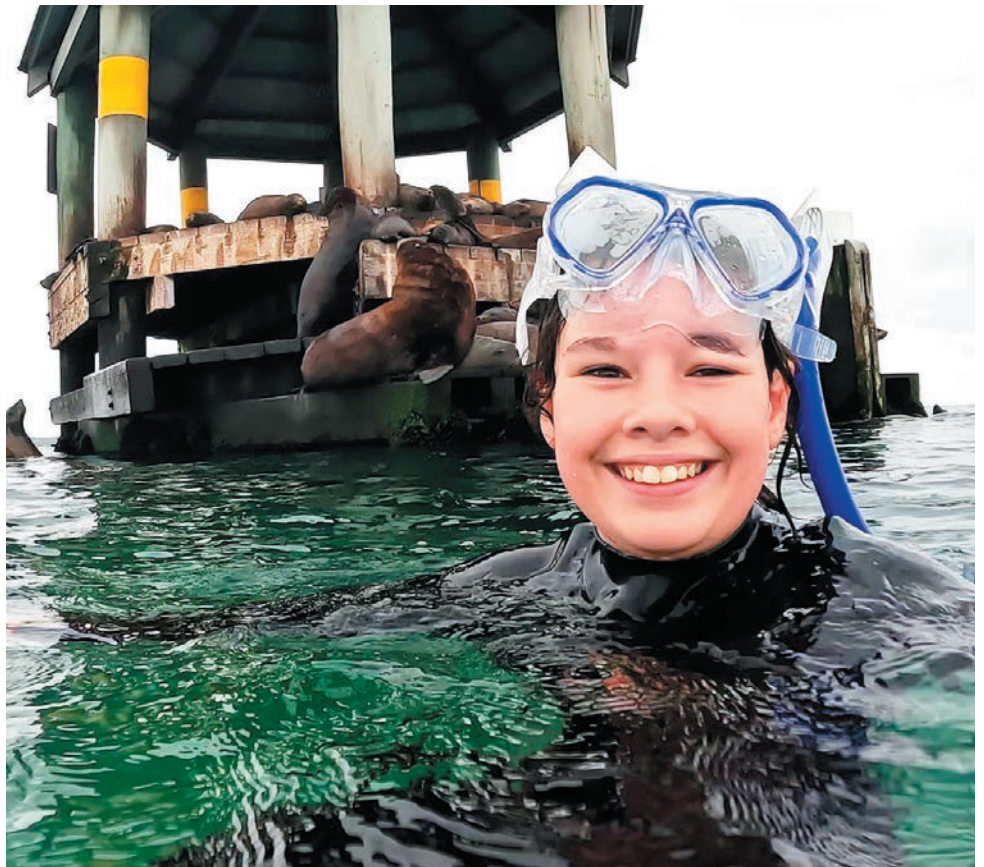
For some, it is scary, and our team, working with the great staff at Moonraker Dolphin

Swims, will provide one-on-one support to ensure everyone can benefit from the experience (upper-left image, next page).

Ambassadors are training for their work as Peer Educators (lower image, next page).

We provide programs for early-childhood, primary, secondary, post-primary and mature groups. Details and forms to contact educators are on our website.







We hope you enjoyed reading the stories of achievement and impacts in this edition of the Snapshot.

The story of Marinna's recovery from injury and becoming a mother of two third-generation calves is heartwarming. But more importantly, the knowledge about her community's calving success and survivorship provides valuable insights into the health of their ecosystem. We regularly share our findings with environmental managers to influence decision-making.

At the moment, for our dolphins, we have a good news story, but we have no room for complacency.

Future generations face the threats of climate extremes and human population growth, making long-term monitoring crucial for the early detection of issues already being seen in other states and around the world.

The common thread that runs through all our work is the focus on creating a lasting impact and working in the community to develop the next generation of young environmental leaders and scientists.

Your support of the Future Generations Appeal will give us the power to build on the programs that are proven to achieve change.

Over the next three years we aim to permanently fund two Research Fellowships and double the number of Ambassador schools.

Our goal is to raise \$50,000 in our Winter Appeal - \$25,000 is already committed by a donor. Every gift will take us closer to achieving our goal.

Our promise to you is that we will always strive to achieve a lasting impact on behalf of our donors and the communities we serve.

On behalf of everyone at the Dolphin Research Institute, thank you for your support.

The QR code takes you directly to our appeal page



THANK YOU Ambassadors!

Leadership is one of those things where you know it's working when your students start to develop their own ideas. That's common for our i sea, i care Ambassadors who last year contributed over 25,000 volunteer hours through their leadership role.

Thank you to all our Ambassadors.

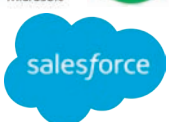
A Big Auction THANK YOU

We are humbled and grateful to nearly 100 local businesses who donated goods and services - especially in these unsettled times - for our recent online auctions.

The auctions are driven by loyal volunteers with a bit of help from staff.

Of course, nothing would happen without your interest to bid on items - thank you.

Thank You To Our Valued Supporters



Jeff Wignall Ford

JMS Foundation
JIW Foundation

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This document is available as an e-book to consider the environment and maximise our audience. When we do print copies to reach all our audiences we use paper stock that is PEFC and Carbon Neutral Certified.

All dolphin and whale images are taken under the authority of a Scientific Research Permit from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning