



L to R: The Apollo Bay P-12 College crew of Meg (student), Denis (parent), Joey (student) and Sandy (teacher), who all worked the finish line at last year's Great Ocean Road Marathon to raise money for their school.

# THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD MARATHON

## Benefitting the Apollo Bay Community

**It's very rare these days to find a marathon or fun run that doesn't have some kind of connection to raising funds for charity. It's rarer, though, to find a running event where the majority of the money raised directly benefits the local community – but that is exactly what is happening in the small Victorian town of Apollo Bay.**

**S**ince 2014, the region's premier road race, the Great Ocean Road Marathon, has brought together a unique partnership between the event's official charity – The Apollo Bay & District Health Foundation – and the local school – Apollo Bay P-12 College.

### The Local School

In December 2013 the Apollo Bay P-12 College was demolished due to being in a state of disrepair. The Victorian Department of Education made funds available to allow for the construction of new buildings, which are due to be completed shortly.

During construction the school community endured 12 months of very challenging conditions. The Education Department installed portable classrooms and buildings, which resulted in the school being spread out and children having to trek through mud and rain-soaked fields due to

the area's wet climate.

With the Education Department only covering the cost of the buildings, the school was left to find funds to cover the cost of equipment and furnishings.

### Partnering for a Good Cause

As fundraising ideas were being considered, one of the school parents who is also on the committee of the Apollo Bay & District Health Foundation suggested to new principal Tiffany Holt that the school provide volunteers at the Great Ocean Road Marathon. With each volunteer receiving a donation from the foundation towards their community cause, it presented an ideal opportunity to raise funds for the school.

Being the entrepreneurial go-getter she is, Holt agreed to the proposal and with the Parents and Friends of Apollo Bay P-12 College enthusiastically set about finding the required number of volunteers. The school

targeting a fundraising goal of \$10,000 from the 2014 marathon and were successful in filling more than half the event's volunteer roles. Jobs performed by students, staff and parents included manning drinks stations, marshalling, distributing medals and assisting with baggage storage.

Many of the students and their parents chose to enter one of the events over the marathon weekend. This resulted in a rise in the number of runners out and about in the lead-up to the race and provided a positive impact on the health and fitness of the community.

### The Work of the Apollo Bay & District Health Foundation

The Apollo Bay & District Health Foundation was founded in 1999 to manage a public charitable trust to support promote and protect the health of people along the Great Ocean Road.



L to R: Apollo Bay P-12 College principal Tiffany Holt with year nine students Ruby, Ella Morgan and Cameron, who will work at the Great Ocean Road Marathon to raise money for their trip to India next year.



The Apollo Bay & District Health Foundation logo feature prominently throughout race weekend.



All hands on the deck at the Apollo Bay & District Health Foundation tent.

The foundation achieves its objectives by building an investment base managed by the trustees. Its funds primarily come from bequests made by members, and in its first 12 years it raised about \$1 million. Income generated from this base is made available through a grants process, with health and wellbeing needing to be the primary objectives of any grant application.

As a result of fundraising and the commitment of volunteers, the foundation was able to distribute more than \$37,000 back into local not-for-profit organisations after the 2014 Great Ocean Road Marathon.

Well-respected Apollo Bay figure Andrew Buchanan is chairman of the foundation and also chairs its Great Ocean Road Marathon Sub-Committee. Other members of this committee include trustees of the foundation, major sponsors and supporters and others with specialist skills such as marketing and administration.

Together these entities work to coordinate the hundreds of volunteers for the two days of the marathon. They also market the foundation's role as official charity, raise funds through runners' direct donations and fundraising activities and design and manufacture T-shirts and singlets for volunteers and runners to wear on the day.

The foundation endeavours to create an idyllic ambience for runners and their families and supporters during the

weekend's events. In 2015, the foundation is working with a local team to organise a Marathon Festival Weekend with a health-and-wellbeing theme, which will feature market stalls, music and activities along the foreshore. This festival is designed to cater for tourists who accompany runners into town on the marathon weekend.

### Channelling the funds to help the school

In 2014 the school did such a great job in organising their volunteers they were given an additional \$6500 for a total of \$16,500 to put towards their fundraising objectives. Instead of channelling all the funds into one area of the school community, it was decided to divide the total across a number of areas.

One of these involves a group of students who in 2016 are due to head to India, where they will combine sightseeing with working on a community project as part of a year 12 program. These students were instrumental in assisting in 2014 as well as rallying their parents and friends to assist and are once again keen to help in 2015 to raise further funds. They have seen the positive benefits the marathon brings to their local community and see their volunteering as an opportunity to work and give something back.

The local junior netball club also provided volunteer support and in return received a portion of the funds raised.

The school also purchased a number of exercise spin bikes to assist students affected by various health conditions who are not able to participate in regulation PE activities, thereby allowing them to maintain a level of exercise.

### 2015

With the long-term relationship between the school, the foundation and the marathon firmly cemented, the school community now views the marathon weekend as their number-one fundraiser for the year.

The core groups that have seen their areas benefit are once again keen to be involved. There are also plans this year to provide even more volunteers and to work with marathon organisers to improve the operation of certain roles, such as the baggage drop.

The exact nature of fundraising at the Great Ocean Road Marathon is relatively unique, but it is nonetheless reflective of the role of fundraising at events more broadly and the fact that, for some members of the community, a local event means far more than just a personal best. **FB**

The 2015 Great Ocean Road Marathon runs from May 16-17. To enter, or for more information, visit [www.greatoceanroadmarathon.com.au](http://www.greatoceanroadmarathon.com.au)