

1925-2025

Camp Manyung
Celebrates 100 Years





PLEASE NOTE: The information in this booklet has been carefully compiled from a wide range of historical documents, notes, artefacts, and first-person interviews. Many hours of volunteer effort have contributed to illustrate Camp Manyung's rich history over the past one hundred years. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, some errors or omissions may exist and we appreciate your understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

Camp Manyung is situated on the Traditional Lands of the Bunurong people. For thousands of years, First Nations people lived in harmony with this land, drawing on the seasonal abundance of local plants and animals for food and resources. They fished and gathered shellfish along the coast, crafted bark canoes for travel and transport, and built small shelters.

The Bunurong people maintain a deep spiritual and cultural connection to Country through ceremony, songlines, dance, and art. Camp Manyung continues to learn from and walk alongside our First Peoples, working closely with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and maintaining strong ties with the Willum Warrain Aboriginal Association.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

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How did “Manyung” get its name?

In 1863, about 280 acres of coastal land between Gunyong Creek and Manmangur Creek were purchased by Mr Richard Grice. Mornington historian Leslie Moorhead suggests that the name “Manyung” likely came from combining the first and last syllables of the two creek names. While the “yung” in Manyung differs slightly from the “yong” in Gunyong Creek, Moorhead believes this may have been due to a mishearing or variation in pronunciation, and it stuck.

YMCA Camp Manyung – Celebrating 100 Years

For 100 years, Camp Manyung in Mount Eliza has welcomed over a million campers. Managed by the YMCA for most of that time, Camp Manyung offers life-changing outdoor experiences for young people, families, and communities.

Founded in the 1920s on the Traditional lands of the Bunurong people, the camp has grown from tents to modern, accessible facilities. Much of this journey was only made possible from donations and the efforts of our volunteers.

Now Victoria’s longest-running camp, our rich history includes supporting WW2 troops and the evolution of now award-winning programs to support campers with special needs. Camp Manyung’s impact spans generations.

Thank you for being a part of it.



A Message from YMCA Victoria CEO and Chair

As we celebrate 100 years of Camp Manyung on 16 November 2025, we reflect on a century of community, connection, and wellbeing. This special place has brought generations together: children, families, schools, volunteers, and community groups to learn, play, volunteer and belong.

Some of these milestones are captured in this booklet, alongside the incredible efforts of the many people who have shaped Camp Manyung over the years. From the generosity of Thomas and Alice Baker, to the visionary directors and managers and especially the volunteer efforts of so many. In particular the members of the five YMCA clubs from their Young Men's Department: The Y's Men's, Saxons, Vikings, George Williams and Phalanx.

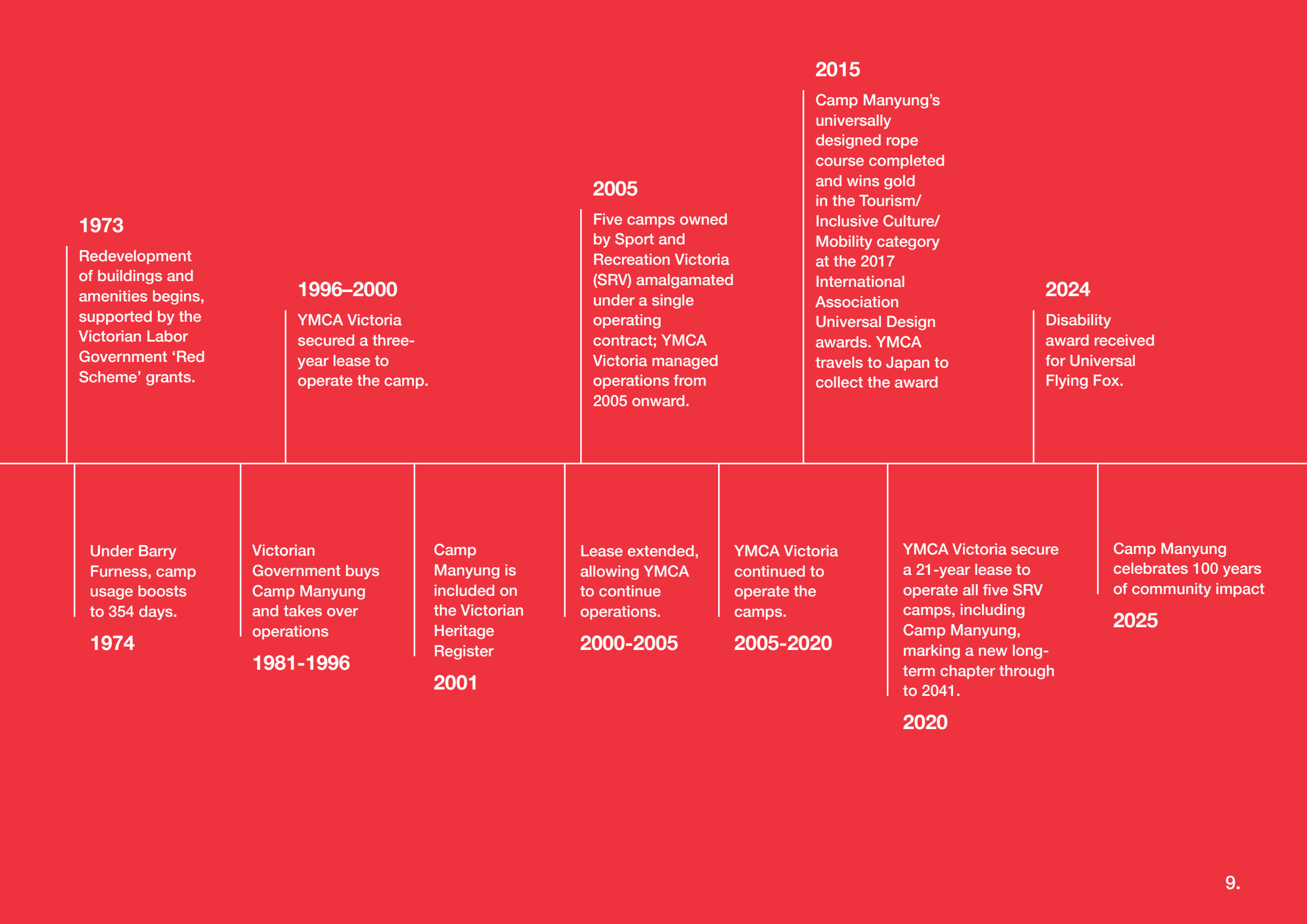
Today, Camp Manyung continues to embody the Y's commitment to community wellbeing, with award-winning inclusive design features that welcome people of all abilities and enable disability programs. Our dedicated camp team continue to host school and community celebrations, and inspire connection every day.

Thank you for being part of the Camp Manyung story. Stay connected through our website, and we look forward to welcoming you back for many more years of memories, friendship, and shared experiences.

Carolyn Morris, CEO, YMCA Victoria
Dr Lindsay McMillan OAM, Chair, YMCA Victoria



[illegible]





**Thomas Baker
(Camp Founder)**



Mrs. Alice Baker

Early beginnings

In the mid-1920s, the Melbourne YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) began running annual Christmas camps on the Mornington Peninsula for its members.

They used two main sites: Camp Buxton in Shoreham, a favourite for boys' camps (which closed in 2002), and Camp Manyung, which later became the main camp. The YMCA Young Men's Department especially favoured Camp Manyung and helped build and develop it over the years.

Mr Thomas Baker (a self-made man who made a fortune as a photographic manufacturer of Kodak fame) and his wife Alice Baker (nee Shaw), owned a seaside estate in Mount Eliza. They offered a part of their property to be used by the YMCA for 'camp purposes'.

Around 1926, YMCA volunteers built a camp kitchen with materials donated by Mr Baker. At that time the Melbourne Vikings Club – a part of the Y's Men's Department was holding regular camps under the canvas.

Further works, including a large recreation and dining Hall was built, again with donations from Mr Baker and through volunteer labour.

Camp Manyung Donated to the YMCA

Towards the end of 1928, Mr Baker called a meeting with the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and the YMCA, to arrange the use of the accommodation which had been erected. Two meetings were held, according to our records only Ivor Burge from YMCA attended.

Ivor sought an exclusive arrangement as he'd returned from America and had the idea of creating a permanent camp like the ones he had seen there.

After Mr Baker died suddenly on 4 Dec 1928, the executor of his will John Sutherland continued to make the site available to the YMCA.

By July 1930, Mrs Baker donated 4 acres of the land to the YMCA along with crockery ordered from England, "sufficient for a camp of 100 persons".



Built by volunteers

Ivor Burge's vision to create a permanent YMCA camp continued to take shape. The buildings and layout of the camp were designed free of charge by architect Eric Nicholls and his associate Walter Burley Griffin. All building and planting at the camp were carried out by YMCA members volunteering their time on weekends.

Nicholls, supported by David Matthews, a noted landscaper and curator of the Footscray Gardens, planned a tree-planting program that could serve as a 'miniature botanical garden' where campers could study different species.

Mrs Baker and her sister Marion Shaw donated the funds for materials to build the original five bunkhouses (1–5), which were built by volunteers. YMCA members volunteered a weekend a month on a roster. The concrete bricks and tiles were made by hand on site during these weekend working bees.

During the Depression years of the 1930s, Ivor Burge led groups of volunteer tradesmen to Manyung, where 33,000 trees and shrubs were planted on what had been a barren wheat field.

The "Builders of Manyung" were honoured by a memorial plaque in 1936, which is now in the Dining Room.





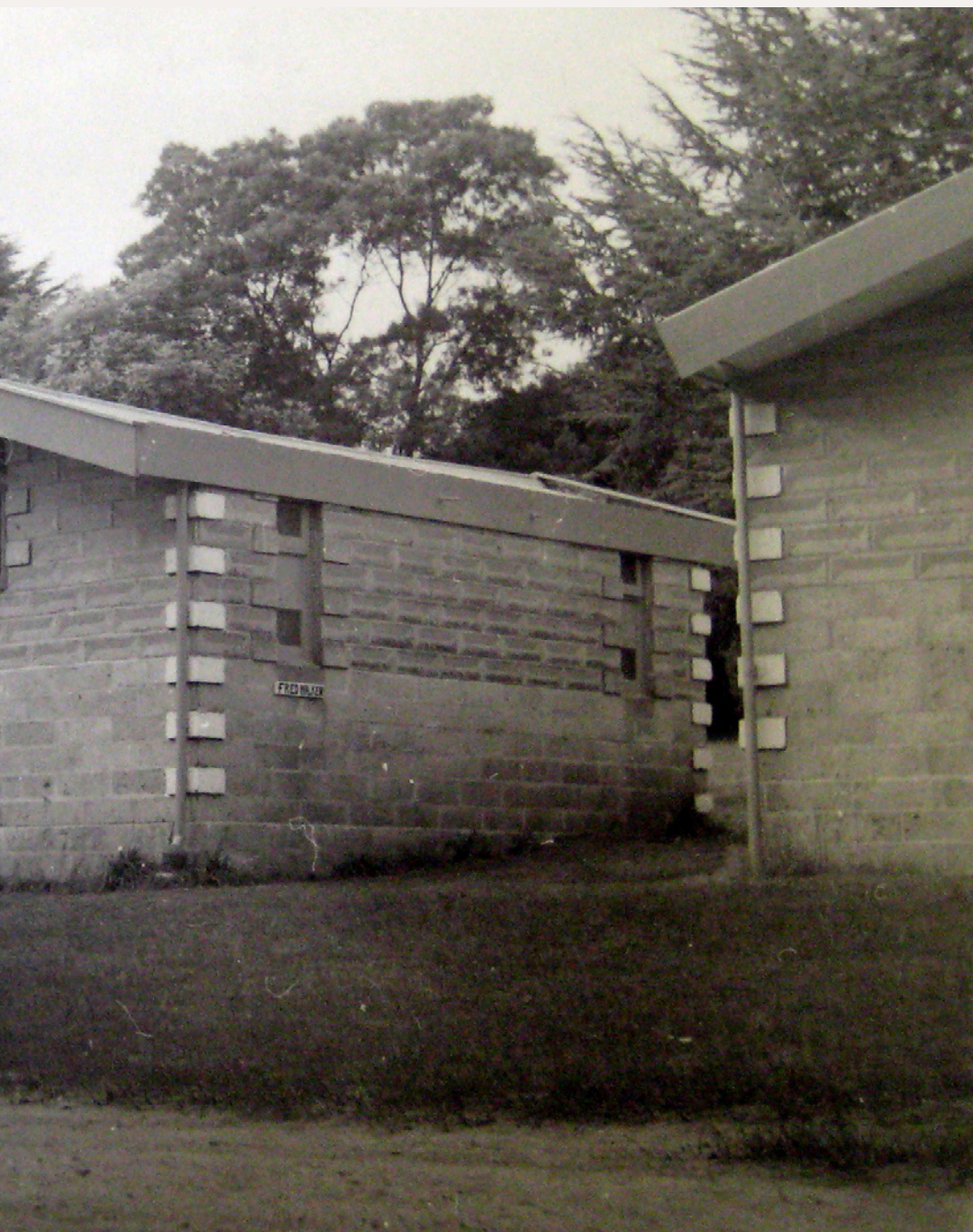
"During the depression years when young men felt hopeless because there was little or no work for them, I used to fill my car on my days off and also on weekends, drive to Manyung where these men, all of them tradesmen, revelled in the chance to use their skill and produce something that was worthwhile. My wife did all the cooking and many of these men.... [later known as] 'The Builders of Manyung' told me that this work at the Camp had meant a great deal to them at that particular time, and given them hope for the future."



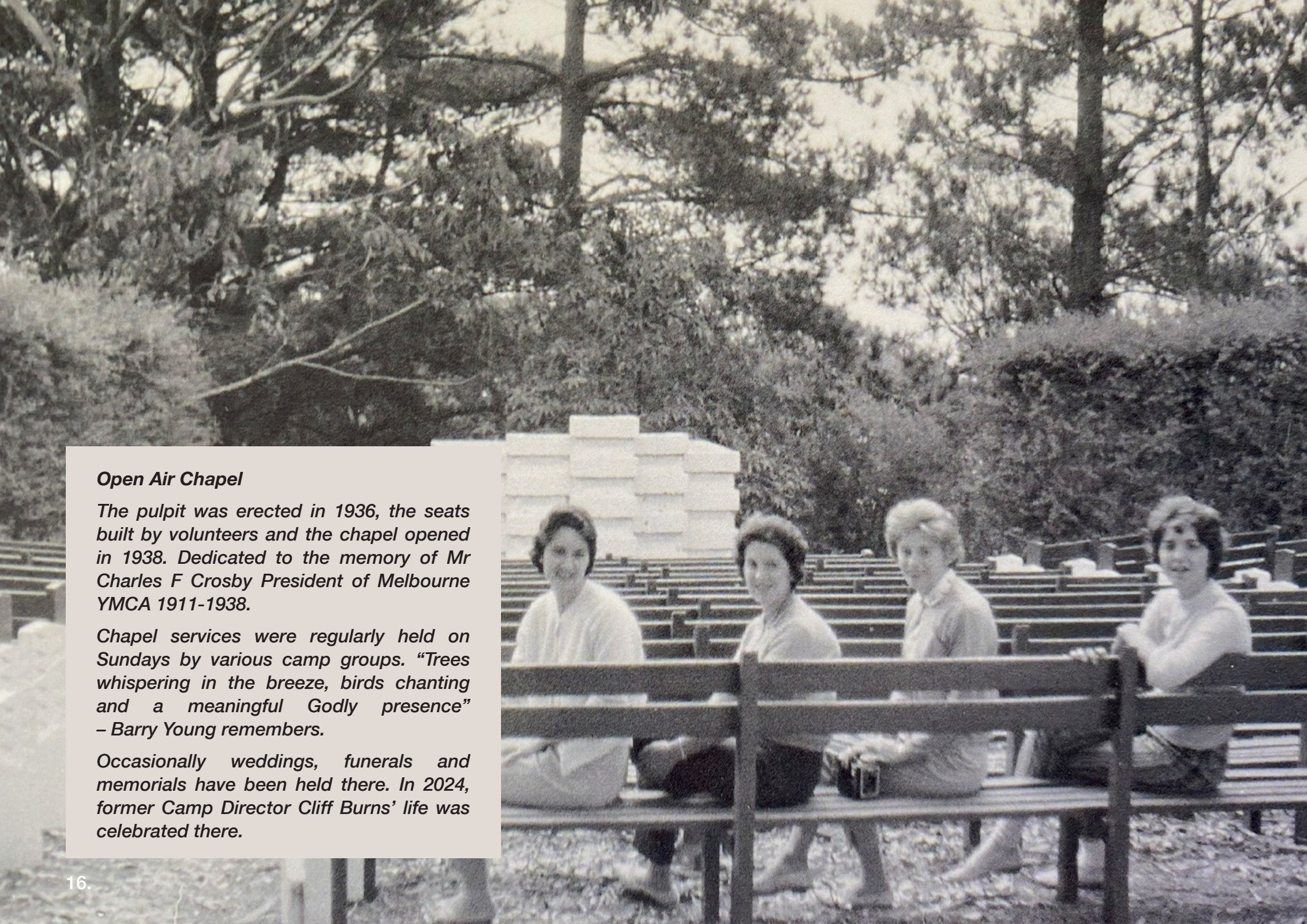
Open Air Chapel



Bunk Houses



Inside the Bunk House



Open Air Chapel

The pulpit was erected in 1936, the seats built by volunteers and the chapel opened in 1938. Dedicated to the memory of Mr Charles F Crosby President of Melbourne YMCA 1911-1938.

Chapel services were regularly held on Sundays by various camp groups. "Trees whispering in the breeze, birds chanting and a meaningful Godly presence" – Barry Young remembers.

Occasionally weddings, funerals and memorials have been held there. In 2024, former Camp Director Cliff Burns' life was celebrated there.

[press clipping 2.12.1932]

YMCA Plans for a perfect Seaside Camp



Work on the site is being done by members of the association. Volunteer parties, which include men skilled in different branches of the building trades go to the camp site for one week-end each month... the aim is to form a perfect seaside camp.

There is a large central hall which is used for dining and social purposes, a kitchen adjoining with a range, a stove, a cellar, and complete equipment.

There are two bunkhouses, each accommodating eight persons; a lavatory building erected in one week-end, with cement floor and a large shower room. The work was done by four men, who also dug 300 feet of drain to carry the water away.... With the Marquees on the site it is possible to accommodate 100 men in camp at present. With small tents the grounds will accommodate many more.



World War 2

During World War 2, the Australian Defence Force took over Manyung from 28 August 1941 as an intelligence training school. The site returned to the YMCA on 31 May 1942.

United States Army rented the camp from 1 November 1942 at £293 per annum. It was used as a recovery centre for American troops wounded in the Pacific.

Patients from Royal Melbourne Hospital were hosted during the week and during the weekends it was used for staff. This arrangement went for two and a half years until the USA Army returned the camp to the YMCA in 1944.

Family and community camps

At the end of WW2, Camp Manyung hosted the first community camps of the Y's Men's clubs and their families held 24-25 November 1945. These were held in between the Y's Men's Camps.

The late Cliff Burns, Camp Director during 1960s and 1970s, noted these camps as "being a chance for families to come together during summer holidays to enjoy each other's company, participate in outdoor physical activity and live together as a community with much fun and laughter, while upholding the YMCA philosophy of strengthening individuals in body, mind and spirit".

Family and community camps continue today.



An early family camp





YMCA Boys camps

After WW2, the YMCA Boys Department grew in popularity. Aimed at boys aged 10-18 years, more than a thousand members were part of these Saturday programs each year, and another 1,200 on the waiting list.

At the YMCA Melbourne's City Road campus members of the Boys Department would attend two-hour programs that ran all day. Boys were divided in age groups and would rotate as part of a 'four square program'.

The four areas: social, spiritual, educational and physical were seen as important training from a Christian perspective at the time. Gym sessions, the pool, guest speakers and worship and camps during the school holidays, were all part of the program.

School holiday camps were well attended. Boys would pile into borrowed furniture vans (like this one pictured) along with their luggage bound for YMCA camps on the Mornington Peninsula.

Barry Furness remembers:

"After 12 months, you'd move up to the next age group. And each level was led by YMCA members who volunteered their time and expertise. A sign as you entered the building said: "Think clean, speak clean and play the game,"

You were taught the principles of fair sportsmanship, caring for one another and it was all based on Christian values. During the school holidays we would attend camps on the Mornington Peninsula.

YMCA Men's Department camps

Aimed at men aged 18-30, YMCA Melbourne's Men's Department also thrived directly after WW2. Many members graduated from the Boys Department to the Men's Department. Volunteering was encouraged, including the continued tradition of volunteer working parties to maintain and develop Camp Manyung.

Inter-clubs Competition at Camp Manyung

Held each year for decades after the war, this popular all-round competition involved the five YMCA clubs from their Young Men's Department: The Y's Men's, Saxons, Vikings, George Williams and Phalanx.

Barry Young remembers these as a wonderful time, the clubs competed in: public speaking, singing, entertainment, tennis, tug of war, running, tennis, quoits and more.



Christian Youth Conference

Faith based conferences, like the Christian Youth Conference 1953 was held at Camp Manyung. "Young people from different denominations will meet to discuss many subjects of common interest at the weekend. [Argus Sat 7 March 1953 p6]

Mixed camps!

Around the 1960s camps with YMCA and YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) members were a highlight on the social calendar. These camps were full of fun, friendship and even a few marriages that began around the campfire.

The tradition of mixed camps has continued in various forms ever since.

Men's camps also ran for many years, offering friendship, reflection and service opportunities for men connected to the YMCA. While these programs no longer run as the YMCA has evolved beyond its men's club origins, they remain an important part of Camp Manyung's history and the Y's broader evolution.





80s 90s and beyond

In 1980–81, YMCA Melbourne, facing severe financial difficulties, was forced to sell Camp Manyung to the Victorian Government. For the next 16 years, the state ran the camp, updating programs and equipment to meet changing needs.

Under the leadership of David Strickland, Camp Manyung became the State Sailing Centre. Regatta House was built for groups and elite sailors, and sailing ran for several years while the bay conditions weren't ideal and the centre eventually closed, the facilities and large shed remained.

In 1996 YMCA Victoria secured its first lease and returned onsite. Building on this strong foundation and evolving programs in partnership with the Victorian Government to continue the camp's impact on communities.

Leading Camp Manyung

Since its transfer to the Victorian Government, spanning 44 years to 2025, Camp Manyung has had only five managers:

- **Maurie Anderson** (deceased) – Sport and Recreation Victoria
- **David Strickland** – Sport and Recreation Victoria
- **Matt and Maree Feutrill** – initially co-managed; Maree continued as Camp Manager from 2001 to 2018 YMCA Victoria
- **Jim Boyle** – 2018 to today, YMCA Victoria

The dedication of these leaders has provided Camp Manyung with remarkable continuity, helping to continue its strong community impact.

Maree Feutrill: “Around 2011 we were introduced to Universal Design and that really dialled up our mission. We became better at co-designing our equipment and programs so that everyone in all their diversity can participate.”

David Strickland: “from its beginnings through to today Camp Manyung has been a hot bed for development and innovation and a pioneering industry leader in camping and outdoor activity programs.”





Meet Jim Boyle

For Camp Manager Jim Boyle, the best part of leading one of Victoria's most iconic outdoor camps is witnessing the impact it has on people of all ages and backgrounds. *"From school groups to diverse community organisations, it's incredible to see the growth, confidence and connection that comes from time spent here,"* Jim says. *"It's not only the campers who benefit, but also the organisers, teachers, and our own team who keep learning every day."*

Jim joined Camp Manyung in 2015 as Operations Manager and stepped into the Manager role four years later, following the departure of long-time leader Maree Feutrill.

"The mentoring of Maree her strategic planning, and the opportunities her leadership provided to me and other camp managers were incredible,"

Now, as custodian of the century-old camp, Jim takes pride in continuing its YMCA legacy while preparing it for the future. *"There's something special about being part of a place with such a rich history, and the role it has played in so many people's lives,"*

With 26 years of experience in outdoor education, Jim has always lived and breathed the outdoors. He grew up on family getaways that inspired a lifelong appreciation for nature and adventure. This passion drives his leadership and commitment to creating meaningful, life-changing experiences for others.

Living onsite with his young family, Jim enjoys the unique lifestyle Camp Manyung offers; especially an evening paddle.



"Camp Manyung has always been about people, the connections made here last a lifetime."



Reimagining Regatta House at Camp Manyung

We have a bold vision to redevelop Regatta House as an inclusive, modern and purpose built centre to support campers with diverse needs.

For more than a century, Camp Manyung has evolved to meet the changing needs of schools, families and community groups, and its next chapter is already taking shape.

Regatta House, whose name nods to the camp's brief period as the State Sailing Centre, has served many purposes over the years. Today, it provides accommodation for small regional schools and disability groups, offering a welcoming lounge, dining area, kitchenette and sleeping space for 36 guests.

While the building has seen various updates, its design now limits how it can be used. Reimagining Regatta House presents an exciting opportunity to create a space that opens Camp Manyung to an even broader and more diverse community, including the potential to become a true destination camp for disability groups seeking fully accessible, inclusive outdoor experiences.

Preliminary plans are underway for this new centre to reflect universal design principles. This multi room accommodation will cater to people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds. It will provide flexibility and independence for groups who may not suit the traditional dorm-style accommodation.

We will need help to make this vision a reality. We will fundraise to ensure Camp Manyung continues to grow, adapt and inspire for the next 100 years. If you want to join our vision and support this new space, please contact Camp Manyung.



Open Doors support

The Y's camps run an ongoing contribution to support those in need. A dollar from every camper goes towards supporting those in the community who may not have access to camps or cannot afford to attend. Schools and groups are made aware and can nominate individuals or groups in their community who may need to be subsidised to benefit from the camp experience. In this way, no one misses out.

Donations can also be made via our website:
victoria.ymca.org.au

As a member of the
of the YMCA George
Williams Club we spent
many memorable times
there, I still have contact
with several of my friends
and manage to catch up
for a reunion each year.
(Graeme Barnes)

"Over the past 28 years, YMCA
Victoria together with partner
Sport and Recreation Victoria,
has created a wonderful
inclusive setting at Camp
Manyung that offers campers
from diverse backgrounds, the
opportunity to fully participate
in the outdoor camp experience".
Maree Feutrill (1997-2018)

A few notable stewards

Ivor Burge First Camp Director "Building a camp to build men"
Sam Martin regular camp attendee became its first caretaker in 1937
Jack Handley Camp Director resigned in 1945 after 8 years
Barry Young Chairman of Camp Manyung committee
Barry Furness First appointed Camp Manager 1972-1979
Maurie Anderson 1981 -1991
David Strickland 1991-1997
Matt and Maree Feutrill co-managed 1997-2001
Maree Feutrill (full-time) 2001-2018
Jim Boyle 2018 to now

I spent my formative years
under the tutelage of James
Fisher and Alisha Douglas
living the dream. At Camp
Manyung, I exclusively ran
OWLE and Sea Kayaking (even
in the winter months), as I
would always program myself
onto those activities (like
nepotism). Excited to see Jim
Boyle who was my manager.
(Jack Dunstan)



Barry Furness (pictured in 1959 when he worked in the YMCA Boys Dept). Barry was a former Camp Manyung Manager and continues to volunteer his time with the Y today.



Thank you

Thank you to our past and current campers for contributing to our 100 year celebration. If you have any photos or memories of Camp Manyung you would like to share please email campmanyung@ymca.org.au







victoria.ymca.org.au