

Floods at Bear Cottage



On Tuesday 18 May, the day began just like any other day at Bear Cottage. Then at 6.45am, just as our night duty nursing staff were preparing to hand over to the morning staff, a wall of water came gushing through the front of Bear Cottage, flooding 80 percent of the first floor.

Many of you may have heard about this unexpected incident. Whilst this was not the first time Bear Cottage has been flooded, mitigation work two years ago to build a flood retaining wall was thought to have resolved the problem. Unfortunately, the sheer volume and force of the rain proved too much for the wall, causing significant damage.

Sadly, Bear Cottage was forced to evacuate children staying at the time and cancel all upcoming admissions – a huge blow to many families. For ten days, we had over 30 blowers and dehumidifiers positioned around the Cottage in an attempt to dry the place out. We were thrilled when we received the all clear from Disaster Specialists so we could re-open the doors to our precious children – the place just wasn't

the same without them.

Fortunately, most of the internal damage has been covered by insurance and we have been able to save the parquet flooring and carpets. We are now in the process of having skirting boards and door frames replaced and we hope to have this finished in the coming weeks.

Naturally, our main aim now is to ensure we do not sustain flooding again. Never again do we want to be in a position where we can't care for the families who need us most. We are working with specialists on a flood mitigation solution and hope to begin work within the next six weeks.

The work required is significant and will involve the construction of a bigger retaining wall, as well as additional drainage options. We will also look at the possible reshaping of our land to better direct the flood waters.

With every dark cloud comes a silver lining and we have been overwhelmed with wishes of support, pledges of goods and services and cash donations to aid our recovery. Because we rely entirely on

the community to keep our doors open as it is, we were very concerned about how this would impact us financially. It has been humbling to realise that the community are behind us every inch of the way.

As we enter the next financial year, we are thrilled that we are back on track. Yet we wouldn't be here if it weren't for the continuing support of all our wonderful donors. This year it will cost over \$2.5 million to provide our very special care to children with life-limiting illnesses and their families and we will rely entirely on people like you to keep our doors open. So on behalf of everyone at Bear Cottage, thank you for your generosity – you are truly wonderful. 🐾

