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Glen Osmond Farm

Peter Jackson Design Pty Ltd won *Best Design of a Special Project* in the BDAV's 2014 Building Design Awards for their Glen Osmond Farm project. They also achieved a commendation for *Excellence in Use of Timber*. The project also won *Best Special Project Design* in the inaugural NABD Awards presented last year by the National Association of Building Designers.

Glen Osmond Farm is a farm-stay facility at a peaceful 33-hectare property outside Woodend donated by Janet and Bernard Hawkins for Very Special Kids. The project comprises two cottages and a barn. Very Special Kids is a unique not-for-profit organisation that supports families facing the challenge of caring for children with life-threatening illnesses. Focusing on the quality of life, Very Special Kids provides free practical and emotional support for the entire family. Glen Osmond Farm features purpose-built holiday cottages that can sleep up to eight people in three bedrooms.

The cottages have been built to accommodate families with a child fighting a life-threatening illness, providing some relief with a country getaway. While the cottages provide comfortable and practical accommodation, the barn presents a rustic style play area to keep children entertained while still lending a genuine 'farm feeling' to the experience.

Designer Peter Jackson donated his time to the project, along with many other



locals who contributed to the planning and construction of the development.

Peter said Glen Osmond Farm balanced the need to give practical accommodation to families with children who have special medical requirements, with a luxurious farm holiday spot to give those families a chance to relax and enjoy the rural landscape and majestic scenery surrounding the property.

"The brief was to design a farm-stay accommodation, but it evolved over 12 months. A big part of this job was just analysing the brief. Once we figured out

what we wanted, it became a fantastic and enjoyable design process," said Peter.

"After 20 years of experience on regional and rural properties, we understand that, by spending enough time to tune into the land, we can pick up the site's best energy. This is an area where our technical knowledge is backed by an innate 'feel' – a sixth sense – an empathy with the land which enables us to find the best place to site the buildings."

"We focussed on the cottages that would blend in with the farm architecture, but as a modern version of farm architecture with a luxurious and modern interior.

The cottages have wheel-chair accessibility, tracks in the ceiling to lift children, and a disabled access bathroom which looks and feels nothing like an institution."

Peter said the cottages with views to Hanging Rock and Mt Macedon were designed to be restorative and relaxing for often time-



The cottages enjoy a northerly aspect, communal walking track and play area.



poor, stressed and financially challenged families.

The cottage accommodation is not only luxurious and practical, but highly efficient. The cottage buildings earned a commendable 7-Star energy efficiency rating, with features like orientation, positioning of windows and insulation to ensure the building retained a comfortable temperature and minimised the need for heating or cooling.

The barn is also being acknowledged for its sustainable design, as it is fully built from recycled timber, metal and fittings, and even roof bracing made from a combine harvester's cutting blade.

Peter Jackson said that he was extremely pleased, not only with the end result, but the efforts of those who contributed to realising the concept of a much-needed relief for families supported by Very Special Kids.

“Lots of people offered to volunteer – in fact, most of the consultants were volunteers. People came from everywhere

to donate their time and services, including interior designers, civil engineers, structural engineers and numerous local business people,” said Peter.

“We met some of the most beautiful people along the way. In 35 years of work, this is the best and most satisfying project I’ve ever been involved in, because of the benefits so many families will get from it.”

Acknowledgements

Designers:	Peter Jackson Design Pty Ltd www.peterjackson.net.au
Builder:	Anthony Galle (cottages) and Ron Howard (barn)
Interior Designer:	Austin Design Pty Ltd
Landscape Design:	Naturform
Building Surveyor:	Mike Neighbour
Structural Engineer:	Mark Steller & Associates
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