



Update

After 8 years of opening our doors, The Farmhouse is set to expand !

Currently offering childcare, three year old and four year old kindergarten, a free playgroup, before and after school and kinder care and an extensive school holidays program, The Farmhouse will once again invest in the local community.

"We always said we'd deliver what the community wants, and the community has spoken", said Founder, Kim Stoney.

The Farmhouse offered the first outside school hours care program for the Mansfield community when we started in 2011, and the popularity of this program has grown significantly over the years. No longer do our local children have to go home to empty houses and be 'latch-key kids', because two Farmhouse buses provide a school drop off service in the mornings and a school collection service in the afternoons on school days.

Mansfield's population growth and working parents has meant more children are in 'outside school hours care' (OSHC). This includes before and after school care and school holidays programs.

"We're big kids. We don't want childcare", one child was heard to say a few years ago. And so it was the program's name, SKIDS (skool holidays for kids), was formed, albeit The Farmhouse offers OSHC Mondays through to Fridays as well.

"SKIDS is currently run in our kinder rooms, now it's time to give these older children their own space", said Kim.

On 19th December Mansfield Aquatics will close it's doors for the last time and after a building conversion doors will reopen for the Autumn school holidays as the home of SKIDS, complete with a new outdoor yard.

"The enormous space will be perfect for school-age children's longer arms and legs", said Kim. "This dedicated area allows us to provide age-appropriate equipment and resources and give the children a real sense of belonging in their own space".

"This exciting transition sadly comes with a heavy heart because I know many people have relied on Mansfield's only year-round heated indoor pool", said Kim.

Mansfield Aquatics was Mansfield's first year-round heated aquatic facility, offering a range of programs that have been enjoyed by babies through to local residents in their 90s.

As a commercial business Mansfield Aquatics had to build to commercial standards and adhere to strict maintenance schedules.

"We're not a backyard operation so we've had to meet all the same rules and regulations that the likes of Melbourne Sports and Aquatics Centre (MSAC) has to meet", explained Kim.

"Despite this, and with no grants or government assistance, I'm proud we've provided a quality service for Mansfield and kept our prices down at the same time, making it accessible for all", said Kim. "Thank you to everyone who has been part of the Mansfield Aquatics family".

Conversion of the building will take place in the beginning of 2020.

The SKIDS menu at The Farmhouse offers an enormous range of activities both mid-week after school and in their school holidays programs. 'This isn't childcare – this is childhood' is a saying we live by at The Farmhouse.

This means that when term resumes and children have to write the inevitable, "What I did on the school holidays..." story, even if parents have had to work, their children didn't miss out.

There's lots on the menu to choose from; such as hiking up the bush, swimming in our local rivers, local sports carnivals, rollerskating and mini-golf, tree surfing and mazes, theatre productions and art shows, completing ninja warrior courses and even going to Funfields Water Park. Chocolate Classes at the Yarra Valley Chocolaterie is a consistent favourite amongst the children !

And now school children will also enjoy a huge dedicated space of their own too.