February 2021 REPORT: Volmoed Retreat Centre Programs for Reconciliation

Thank you for your ongoing support for Volmoed Retreat Centre! Keeping to Covid-19 regulations under level 1, we were thankfully able to hold a one day youth event in late November, and a fundraising Christmas Carol picnic in December. After Christmas, lockdown in South Africa went back to level 3, which added further restrictions, so once again, we had groups planning to hold week-long programs who postponed or canceled.

However we do have some individuals, couples and families who come for rest, quiet, isolation, respite from the difficulties of life in Covid-19 times, and to enjoy the beauty and the peace. We are grateful even though the bookings are slow, and we are mostly less than half full at weekends and often empty during the week. This means that our staff are still paid at 60% and working 3 days a week. Given the large property and upkeep needed, we are behind in our maintenance but we hope that during 2021 we will be able to raise enough funds to go back to paying full time salaries and 5 days work a week. Staff morale continues to be high and they give their all to their tasks and their work. They make Volmoed the special place it is.

Big news is that the founding directors Bernhard and Jane Turkstra retired at the end of November, after thirty-four years building Volmoed into what it is today. They did an incredible job over the years. The new director Tony Schnell began in January, and is the perfect person to take Volmoed to the next level. We are also pleased to report that we have new members on our finance committee and our fundraising committee. Both these groups held meetings in January. We have added two new trustees to our board, including a staff representative and a graduate of the Volmoed Youth Leadership Training Program.

Volmoed is on the move and the future is hopeful despite the enormous challenges. Thank you to all our donors and all who support Volmoed Retreat Centre so generously.