

Serenity and Support

in North East Tasmania



Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre

Contents

Something For Everyone	2
And Something For Your Soul?	2
A Big Vision	3
From Many Backgrounds To Many Destinations	4
Real Hope, No Hype	5
The Richness Of A Simple Place	6
An Example Of Balance	8
Open To Inspiration	9
A Quality Business	10
Services	11
Stephanie	12
César	13
Retreats – Goldilocks Style	14
Retreats For Larger Groups	16
The Spirit Of North East Tasmania	17
Hillwood – Much Loved	18
More For The Soul Near Hillwood	20
More Serenity In North East Tasmania	22
Inquiries And More Information	24

Something for Everyone

At the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre we have something for everyone, not just meditators. We do a mixture of teaching practical meditation skills and helping to meet the emotional needs of those who visit.

The Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre is a small, professionally run centre in a rural area of Tasmania close to the Tamar River and just twenty minutes north of Launceston.

Our services cater for both locals and travellers, including workplace and corporate groups.

The building is a comfortable, attractive setting for meetings, seminars and workshops, or to drop in for a cuppa and a quiet place to sit.

The Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre is a place where people can turn for leadership and inspiration on a wide range of sensitive matters.

Please contact us for teaching, group facilitation, counselling, therapy, ceremonies, retreats or fun. There is more information about our services later in this booklet and on our website.

And Something for Your Soul?

Many people feel that the meditation centre helps to meet their spiritual needs. But we understand that our visitors are very diverse in how they think about spirituality.

About half the Australian population believes in God and about half the Australian population believes in supernatural phenomena, so our teachers spend about equal time talking in spiritual and non-spiritual terms. If the conversation turns to abstract concepts such as God or a spiritual dimension, we point out that we are speculating and that there are alternative views.

We acknowledge the sense of other-worldliness that people often feel when they meditate and we encourage our visitors to speak openly about their inner lives. This includes spiritual experiences and mental health issues too. Group discussions are always regarded as confidential and the facilitator will guide participants to be sensitive to each other and avoid focussing too much on personal beliefs.

Our open yet judicious approach means that people from diverse backgrounds can enjoy harmony together. It's a place where people feel accepted, laugh a lot and make friends quickly. The social warmth at the meditation centre is enough to give you renewed hope.

Add to that the beautiful surroundings, the peace of meditation and our openness to discuss all sorts of spiritual concepts, you might agree that there is a kind of magic at the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre.

For the full impact, we recommend that you come for a retreat.

A Big Vision

"I think people underestimate how much society might improve. Good ideas can catch on fast. Not only is meditation a good idea, but it's a way of making your mind open to all sorts of good ideas."

My vision was to create a small meditation centre in the countryside - a place at which everyone feels they are welcome. A place which is so peaceful, loving, well run and broadminded that people will come to it from near and far, creating a vibrant community of locals and visitors who can meet, laugh and learn. With a modest but sufficient economic return. Modest because we want our services to be affordable for everyone, yet sufficient for the meditation centre to meet all requests for help (we want to employ more support staff and extend our opening hours). And as the centre grows in strength and reputation, I envisage that we will step up and advocate for inner peace and simplicity more widely in our society.



From Many Backgrounds to Many Destinations

The “meditation centre” banner gives us an opportunity to deal with all kinds of personal matters for people from all backgrounds. You can use meditation skills to address anything you want to change in your inner life. And you can ask a meditation teacher for advice about anything.

The word “meditation” can be used to refer to any way in which you consistently simplify what you are paying attention to, while being both focussed and relaxed. Meditation techniques vary in how you use your body, what you focus on, how you deal with distractions and emotions, how long you spend on it and what kind of setting you use. You may have heard of famous forms of meditation such as mindfulness, open-heart meditation, yoga nidra, transcendental meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, guided visualisation or loving kindness meditation. There are forms of meditation in many religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, as well as in Aboriginal traditions and contemporary psychology practice.

We help people to choose what type of meditation might help them to meet their goals. Goals might include stress management, reducing anxiety, dealing with physical health problems, improving relationships or pursuing spiritual interests. We can give tips on how to develop the habit, taking into account your lifestyle and tastes. But many of our clients are not interested in meditating at home or having a daily practice. Some attend meetings so they can relax in a group. Many of our clients are going through a period of transition, difficulty or soul-searching in their lives and are looking for a sense of community, depth or inspiration. Businesses and other organisations may ask us to teach meditation to their members to reduce their stress levels, or may ask for help with workplace dynamics.



Real Hope, No Hype

At the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre we try to keep things simple, practical and comfortable. It’s not about being fashionable, exotic, expensive, theatrical, strict or competitive.



Meditation is getting a lot of good press these days. Hype and commercialisation aside, it’s true there is strong research evidence that meditation can help to reduce anxiety, depression and high blood pressure. Evidence also suggests that meditation may help with a wide range of other physical and mental health conditions.

We’re excited by the huge possibilities meditation gives us. Meditation is a great outlet for anyone who feels oppressed and who longs for freedom. And it is also a great tool for those who are in positions of power – because it helps you to manage your stress and make insightful decisions.

While some forms of meditation have been around for thousands of years, the age of experimentation with

ways of changing our thoughts is still in its infancy, now spurred on by research in neuroplasticity, neural imaging techniques, and the ease of sharing ideas around the world. Who knows how much you can change your inner life through practice and self-awareness? Maybe you can invent a state of mind which will help to solve major world problems. Or maybe you will find a rabbit hole into a wonderland.

At any rate, if we can help someone to have half an hour of peace and quiet, we feel we have achieved something.

The Richness of a Simple Place

We feel it is a mistake to assume that wealthy or powerful clients want luxurious destinations. Anyone can enjoy a getaway which is simple and unpretentious.

When developing the site of the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre, Stephanie decided to retain much of the existing appearance of the building and grounds. In the spirit of keeping life simple and keeping our consumerism in check, Stephanie believes in “beautifully making do” rather than totally “making over”. And she believes that earthy, humble places strike a chord with people from all walks of life.

So far we have resisted every suggestion from clients to use crystals, salt lamps or singing-bowls, or to install gongs, pyramids or labyrinths at the meditation centre. We want to assure you that all you need for meditation is a comfortable place to sit. We add good quality teaching and support, and tea and coffee facilities.

The meditation centre building used to be an apple shed when the property was part of an orchard decades ago. Much of Hillwood and other areas of the Tamar Valley were used for apple and pear orchards during the twentieth century. The original weatherboards and beams of the apple shed can still be seen in the meditation centre. The building has been decorated with artwork and memorabilia which honour its history as an apple shed, including a three metre high apple mandala in the largest meeting room.

Behind the meditation centre is a creek which flows seasonally, and during winter you can sometimes hear it chuckle while you meditate. At the northern end of the meditation centre, the creek is lined with *Melaleuca ericifolia*, also known as Swamp Paperbark, trees which are native to the area. Animals and birds on the property add to the ambience.



An Example of Balance

The development of the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre has been a story of balance. Balance continues to be a big theme in our lifestyle and the way we think.

The meditation centre was established by Stephanie after she raised two children single-handedly as a widow. Both her children have severe disabilities, and she suffered from chronic pain and fatigue for over ten years while parenting.

Stephanie moved to Hillwood in 2015 because of the opportunities she saw for herself and her two daughters. The setting has enabled them to live life at their own pace, develop self-employment, integrate into a supportive community, and get plenty of exercise and fresh air on the land. Stephanie is a strong believer in village-style living as a way of meeting the needs of people of all abilities.

Stephanie and César strike a balance between working at the meditation centre, working on the land, helping family members and mixing with the local community. On the same property as the meditation centre, they tend a hobby farm known on Facebook as “Michaela’s Village”. You can get a glimpse of the animals and the large organic vegetable garden as you approach the meditation centre.

Stephanie and César are happy to explain more about their lifestyle to visitors.



Open to Inspiration

Perhaps our over-riding message is the importance of being mentally free and open to inspiration at any time as a tool for tackling all of life’s challenges.

At the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre we have such broad aims, diverse clients and flexible services, we sometimes wonder if we need to write a definitive policy document about our approach to life – some kind of manifesto or mission statement to steer us. But perhaps the greatest gift that meditation gives us is the thirst to seek inspiration for every new situation rather than having to resort to pre-conceived policies. We try to cut through our pre-existing attitudes and face each experience afresh. It doesn’t make sense to turn this openness into dogma.

In our society the art of being open to inspiration might not be getting the attention it deserves. You need good ideas to solve practical problems and also to

help steer you through relationships. We believe that you can train your capacity for inspiration by learning to calm your mind and focussing on things which can lead to inspiration – such as joy, compassion, fun, natural beauty, and the feeling of inspiration itself. Many forms of meditation achieve these aims.

Openness to inspiration also has huge spiritual possibilities. We could spend hours swapping stories about epiphanies and good ideas which feel miraculous. Spiritual or not, we highly recommend the quest for inspiration.



A Quality Business

The Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre is an Accredited Tourism Business. This means that our business practices have been found to be of a sufficiently high standard to assure visitors of a quality experience.

The building was redeveloped as a meditation centre in 2016. Redevelopment included a disabled toilet and disabled parking, new carpets and original murals. The centre has a choice of attractive meeting rooms and furniture for different purposes, including a variety of chairs, couches, mattresses, cushions, and a lectern for talks and ceremonies. The lobby has a tea/coffee area, microwave oven, washing-up facilities, inspiring books and informative posters.

For speaking engagements in any venue we have a good quality portable PA system and digital projector. With sufficient notice we can produce professional

booklets for learning materials. Our rule of thumb, though, is to keep the equipment and materials as simple as possible for the job, both to save you money and to reduce the complexity of everyone's lives.

Our management team (Stephanie and César) have excellent organisational skills, high IQ and a passion for helping people to flourish. There is information about their qualifications in the pages ahead.



Services

For your workplace or organisation, we can teach a wide variety of topics - not just meditation. Consider bringing your colleagues out to Hillwood for a staff development event. We can design a workshop, seminar or course to suit the needs of any group.

Running the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre is a way for us to combine our expertise in mental health, group dynamics, social science and lifestyle management. We can apply our understanding of mental processes to all kinds of problems. Here are just a few of the topics we can teach, with or without focussing on meditation:

- Stress Management
- Communication Skills
- Coping with Uncertainty
- Confidence
- Spirituality in an Australian Setting
- Developing New Habits

Services for individuals and community:

- Meetings and workshops: Please see our website for our program.
- Personal support: Counselling, therapy and personalised tuition are available.
- Ceremonies: All kinds of ceremonies are available.
- Social Meditation: Low cost meetings are held every Sunday and Thursday at 10.30am.



Stephanie

The proprietor and principal meditation teacher, Stephanie Legg England, has two science degrees (BSc with Honours in Psychology; MSc in Human Sciences) and a Certificate IV in Celebrancy. She worked for several years in psychology and social science research. She has won awards for academic work, speaking and writing, and joined Mensa in 2009. Her life experience includes raising two children with severe disabilities after her husband died of cancer.

Stephanie began practising and studying meditation intensively in the year 2000. She has had her qualifications for teaching meditation and practising

therapeutic meditation recognised by registration with the Meditation Association of Australia (MA). MA registration requires an academic and professional quality of teaching and ongoing professional development. Stephanie is training other meditation teachers to reach MA standards for working at the centre.



César

César Luzardo has an academic background in science, cross-cultural communications and applied linguistics. He has worked in academic research and has served as a sworn officer in operational areas with the Queensland Police Service (QPS). More recently, César has occupied leadership positions in a Canberra-based Australian intelligence and security organisation. César has been recognised for Outstanding Service by the Department of Defence, for Operational Valour by the QPS and for Academic Excellence and Community Service by the University of Western Sydney. His life experience includes migrating to Australia from a non-English speaking country in his early twenties, parenting of a child with special needs, and working in jobs which involve dealing with trauma, long hours, high pressure and effectively leading teams.

César offers insightful mentoring and consultancy services at the meditation centre, drawing on his experience with workplace management and communications. He has prior experience in a variety of types of meditation. César is particularly interested in operationalising the benefits of meditation – or in other words, how to make one's meditation practice useful and relevant in everyday personal and professional life. Having chosen a simpler and spiritually rewarding life in Tasmania over a career in Government in Canberra, César is keen to share his own story with others, particularly those who may need guidance and perspective to navigate their own life choices.



Retreats - Goldilocks style

Accommodation in a country house - and your choice of activities

For people who want a spiritual getaway, this is an opportunity to stay in a picturesque setting, attend meditation meetings or get personal support, and experience a special lifestyle.

These are retreats for 1-6 people, starting and finishing on dates of your choice. For larger groups, please see later in this booklet.

We describe our retreats as “Goldilocks style” for a number of reasons. The house looks like it jumped right out of a story book, your hosts are never too far away (in a good way!), and it’s a place where you can try a few different things in your search for something which is “just right” for you. There’s porridge available, a variety of enchanting places to sit, and a variety of bedrooms – but more importantly, you might like to try a variety of meditation, counselling or therapy sessions, and try out the country lifestyle. It’s also a great base for exploring the profoundly peaceful environment or North East Tasmania.



Your retreat hosts, Stephanie and César, are the managers and teachers of the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre. They live in an attractive timber-lined country house just 3km from the meditation centre, and they make one large section of the house available as accommodation for their clients. The guest quarters include four private bedrooms, a well-equipped guest kitchen and a guest lounge. There is also a verandah and extensive gardens which guests are welcome to enjoy. Linen, towels and wifi are included. Bathroom and toilet facilities are shared. Guests do their own cooking and clean up after themselves, and are asked to be generally quiet and considerate during their stay.

The personal space of guests (and hosts) is highly respected at the house, and yet it is also a homely experience. The guest quarters are decorated in a friendly style and while your hosts are unintrusive, they can be there if you need them.

There are plenty of options during your stay and it’s up to you how much (or little) you do. This retreat does not impose any routines on the guests. We recommend that you allow about an hour each day to receive support from your hosts in one way or another, to help you with your personal challenges or to talk about your spiritual journey. Stephanie is a therapist and counsellor, and César also provides mentoring and meditation tuition.

We also recommend that you allow some time to enjoy the natural environment, either in the garden, around the meditation centre, around Hillwood or further afield. It’s a great idea to hire a car so you can explore the beauty of North East Tasmania (see the sights listed later in this booklet).

Please ask for more information if you are interested, and phone us to discuss what you would like to include in your package.



Retreats for Larger Groups

For larger groups we recommend that you use accommodation in Launceston, George Town or scattered in other nearby towns, and you can make whole or half day trips to the meditation centre for a program tailored to the needs of your group.

There is a wide variety of topics we can teach on request if you come to us for a group retreat. We have a lot of experience at helping groups to relax and be positive, so we can help to facilitate sessions such as think-tanks and planning days.

Sessions at the meditation centre could be interspersed with outings to some of the beautiful sights around North East Tasmania. Time outdoors in our peaceful environment is a great way to reward your staff and to help digest and reinforce

the messages that your group is learning at the meditation centre.

Please contact us to discuss what kind of itinerary would suit you.



The Spirit of North East Tasmania

We think the peaceful environment of North East Tasmania is the perfect setting for our meditation centre. The vast water views, open spaces and friendly people add enormously to anything we could teach you in a building.

While visiting the Hillwood Road Meditation Skills Centre, we recommend you take some time to enjoy the natural environment – maybe exploring Hillwood on foot or taking short outings by car from the meditation centre, or make day trips to explore further afield.

East of Devonport and north of Launceston, Tasmania is sparsely populated. The largest town is George Town with less than 7000 residents. The other towns

are considerably smaller. There are no traffic lights in this region.

With such a country lifestyle, North East Tasmania fares well in community spirit and life satisfaction. It's quite normal to say hello to people when you walk past them and to have a little chat in every shop. But it doesn't take much effort before you find yourself alone beside the water or on a hilltop, imbibing the special serenity of this area.

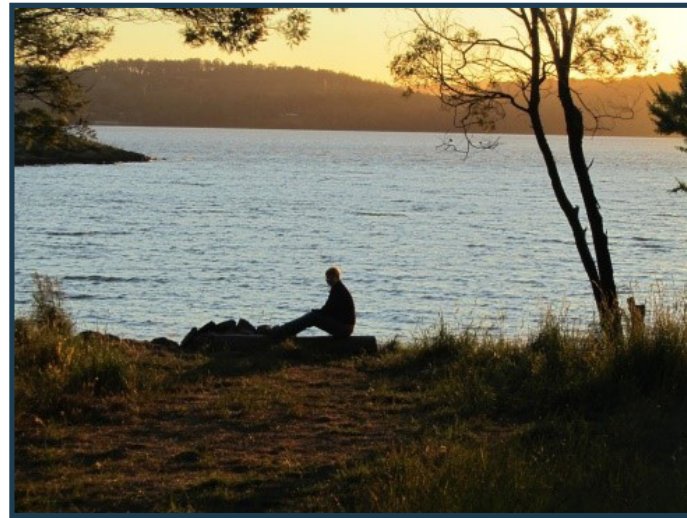


Hillwood - Much Loved

Hillwood is a small town of only about 300 properties, many of which are small farms or hobby farms. Looking across the wide Tamar River to the west, Hillwood enjoys spectacular sunsets. With forest near the farmland, there is plenty of wildlife such as wallabies, echidnas, bandicoots and kookaburras. There are some food-producing businesses in Hillwood where you can buy fresh produce (such as Millers Orchard and Hillwood Berry Farm) but very few other opportunities to spend your money.



Hillwood Pontoon Reserve just 2 km from the meditation centre (on Hillwood Jetty Road), has barbecue facilities and disabled toilet.



Egg Island Point Reserve is 2 km from the meditation centre (on Craighburn Road) and is a great place to explore rocks and a small sandy beach on the river bank.



Hillwood Crag, about 4 km from the meditation centre on Craighburn Road, is well known for rock formations and rock climbing. Located on private property, visitors are usually welcome to enter via a stile over the fence.



Mount Direction (5 km from the meditation centre) has a walking trail to its summit starting from Dalrymple Road. The walk, which goes up to convict ruins and a historic Sempahore tower, takes about 90 minutes return and is steep in parts. There are barbecue facilities at the start of the walk.

Many people become passionate about Hillwood. Glimpses of animals or of people enjoying the outdoors are common – and they are more numerous than any evidence of the retail world.

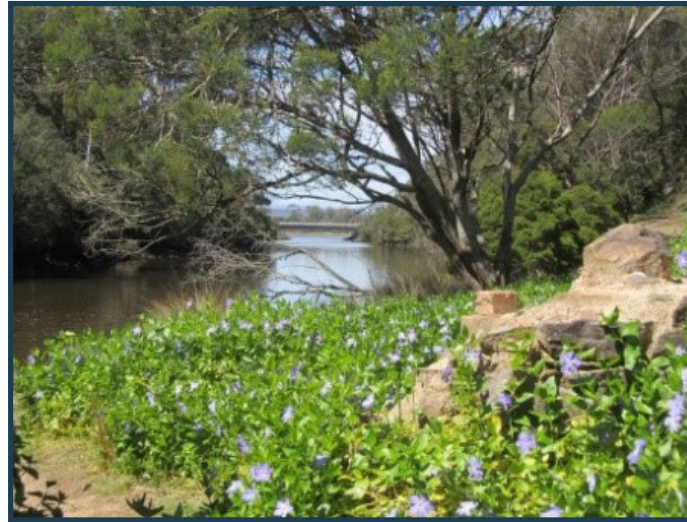


More for the Soul Near Hillwood

You only need a couple of hours for a beautiful side-trip from Hillwood. These outings are a great way to supplement your activities at the meditation centre.



Notley Gorge at Notley Hills (near Glengarry) is a 35 minute drive from the meditation centre (35 km) and has a 45 minute loop walk.



Supply River Mill Reserve at 197 Deviot Road, Robigana, is a 16 minute drive from Hillwood (16 km) and has a 25 minute return walk to the mill ruins.



Low Head and East Beach are a 26 minute drive (27 km) and then you can explore the rocks and beach on foot.



Beechford is about a 30 minute drive from Hillwood (33 km) and has a large beach which you can explore on foot.



Lulworth is a 35 minute drive from Hillwood (36 km) and then you can walk along the beach and headland.



Lilydale Falls on Lilydale Road is a 26 minute drive from Hillwood (27 km) and there is a 15 minute return walk to the waterfall.



Tamar Island Wetlands on the West Tamar Highway, Riverside, is about a 35 minute drive from Hillwood (40 km) and has various easy walks.



Lagoon Beach at Low Head is a 25 minute drive (27 km) and provides a sheltered swimming spot and picnic area.

More Serenity in North East Tasmania

We highly recommend you visit one or more of these beautiful locations to get a taste of what it feels like to be far away from the hubbub of modern life. Meditation comes naturally when the environment is calm!

Exploring further in North East Tasmania means getting away from traffic, supermarkets and cafes. But the area is relatively easy to explore, with mostly sealed roads, a sprinkling of hamlets, shops, petrol stations and other facilities, and less extreme weather than Tasmania's other regions. Before you set out, please check that you have adequate maps and that you know where to buy petrol or food if you need it.



Tomahawk: One hour and 20 minutes drive from Hillwood, the scenery includes beach, dunes and views of Mount Cameron. There is a small settlement, caravan park and shop.



Mount William: Two hours and 20 minutes from Hillwood, the features include forest and the mountain summit with extensive views of North East Tasmania and Flinders Island (one hour return walk, medium grade). Facilities include walking trails and toilet. It is a national park (fees apply).



Quamby Bluff: One hour and 20 minutes from Hillwood, the scenery includes forest and a rocky mountain. There are spectacular views from the summit (4+ hours return walk, hard). There are no facilities except walking trail markers.



Narawntapu: One hour from Hillwood, the scenery includes beach, inlets, wetlands, dunes and low coastal ranges. Facilities include toilets, camping, BBQs, kiosk and phone. It is a national park (fees apply).



Eddystone Point: Two hours from Hillwood, the scenery includes rocky coast, beaches, historic buildings and a lighthouse. Facilities include a toilet and picnic tables.

Inquiries and More Information

Please don't hesitate to contact us to find out more or to make a booking. We look forward to hearing from you!

Follow us on facebook:	facebook.com/HRMSC
What's on at the meditation centre:	gracejunction.com.au/whats-on
More information about Hillwood:	hillwood.org.au
Prices and bookings:	some prices are listed on our website

Please contact us for more information and to discuss your particular needs.

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