



tripping

The (very) young man and the sea

Anglesea is the ideal destination for families with kids on the go, writes Linley Wilkie

Anyone with kids knows there's a period in your holiday history when the entire itinerary is dictated by the little darlings. Romantic getaways are out of the question, as is anything with a remote sense of sophistication or class. Travel involving an aeroplane is best avoided, unless you like the idea of being stuck in a confined space and dealing with an overtired two-year-old who's doped up to the eyeballs on Chupa Chups.

So what's the alternative? Short of staying home for five years and building cubbies out of the furniture, it would seem there's not a great deal out there in the way of weekend getaways for mum, dad and those who are short in both stature and attention span.

Anglesea could be your answer. Only a 90-minute drive from Melbourne (plan your departure for when the kids will sleep), the quiet coastal town is more rug rat-friendly than its teenager-riddled neighbour, Torquay, and it's bursting with activities for those still aged in single digits.

Never underestimate the importance of accommodation when holidaying with toddlers. They'll inevitably want to be busy every waking moment, but it shouldn't be at the mercy of parents enjoying some sort of downtime. Keeping this in mind, it's no wonder Anglesea's Big 4 Holiday Park is considered a godsend by many mums and dads.

The accommodation is stock-standard for this type of holiday park, but it's the extras that'll keep the entire family happy. The tod-

dlers' playroom is littered with books, toys and climbing equipment, and although the adventure playground is constantly teeming with their older brothers and sisters, the huge sand-pit underneath (BYO bucket and spade) ensures no one misses out.

On weekends and public holidays, the adjacent laundry opens further to reveal a simple cafe, aptly called the Laundry Cafe, which serves real coffee (as opposed to the one-serve sachets normally found in the cabin). The beauty of this is it means you can sit and sip while minding the kids in the pit. A snow cone van visits the park during the warmer months and school holidays – great for the kids, not so great for mum and dad's hip pockets. Be warned, you will be pestered from the van's arrival until you succumb to the flavoured ice.

The indoor pool is also a hit for kids young and old, but the Finding Nemo characters emblazoned all over one wall serve as a reminder of this park's target audience. The park also has a games room, bike hire and an outdoor kitchen, which saves you from being cooped up in your cabin at meal times or taking the entire family out for what should be a simple bite. For the inevitable days when cooking is the last thing on your mind, Jums Chicken on the town's main shopping strip is your best bet for a takeaway meal that'll keep everyone happy.

Our visit included trips to Point Roadknight (otherwise known as Toddlers Beach) and Coogoorah Park, which sits on Anglesea River and



has barbecue facilities and playground equipment. Both places act as kid magnets, but although the beach resembled the crowd at a Wiggles concert, the park facilities are spread out and allow everyone room to play. As the weather starts to cool, indoor play centre and cafe Kids Runamuk would be worth a visit.

It's never going to rank up there with exploring Roman ruins or lying the beach in Costa Rica, but surely having the kids distracted and entertained (read: giving you some peace) from dawn 'til dusk is worth something. **mwm**

Linley Wilkie travelled courtesy of Big 4 Holiday Parks.

