

Autumn Newsletter

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WOLLANGARRA

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Is it June already? Where has this first half of the year gone? Wollangarra has been busy with programs and events and enjoying all the sunshine this year! It feels like this year is flying by on a high. Despite the icy winds and cold nights, it would seem this year's autumn has been dryer and sunnier with the shift to El Niño times. After so many wet months last year where the river was a raging force, it feels like a blessing to still be able to ford or paddle a clear Mac river at this time of the year.

We've seen many young people enjoy this space the last few months on programs; climbing mountains, swimming in the river and playing amongst the trees. The Woll community has really come together once again with the number of attendees to Wood Chop reaching figures similar to pre-Covid times, filling our hearts with purpose and nurturing the soul of

Wollangarra. We are so grateful to the team for giving their time and energy in making this magic happen and to the community for their continued support.



As we run our final School and Holiday programs before our winter brake, we feel we have achieved the primary goals of Wollangarra; to get young people into the mountains and to bring a diverse community together, thereby creating resilience in the youth of today and strength within community. A well-deserved rest will see us into the second half of the year in which we will

continue to strive to offer high quality Outdoor Education programs and public events to all.

Stay warm, stay connected to the fire - both the one that's warming your feet at night and the one that burns inside us all. Till we see you again! ~ Kay

Welcome to the team Aiden!



At the start of the year I bought a van to travel Australia, have new experiences and try different ways of life. So when I heard about Wollangarra from a friend, I knew it was a place I wanted to see and it grew on me quickly after I arrived. I love rock climbing, hiking and reading and have an appreciation for the beauty of nature and our place within it. While at Wollangarra I hope to share this love for nature with young people and inspire them to take care of this beautiful world we live in. All the while learning about myself and deepening my connection to nature along the way. ~ Aiden

We are super excited to have Aiden on the team for the remainder of 2023! Welcome! ~ Wollies

Programs Update

These flat days bring a quiet period, giving us the time and space to reflect on these past programs. The birds are zooming around gobbling up the insects that drift in the morning sun. The sheep gnaw on the grass in the paddock; Martha (the dog) has something strange in her mouth again. Ah, the serenity! About this time of the program we would be finishing up our morning podge and cruising on with the day. We've had some absolute firecrackers of humans throughout these past programs. We started with a stage 1, a rad group of people. I've never seen so much excitement learning how to get a fire going. There were many eye opening, thought provoking conversations around the Tussocky campfire – never stop asking questions! We all learnt a lot from each other, a whole world of new stories and cultural knowledge from the foundation house crew who joined the Stage 1.



Stage 2 flew into the flat like an excited kaleidoscope of butterflies erupting from their cocoons. They brought with them an abundance of enthusiasm. They scrubbed those black pots until you could see the gleam of your teeth reflecting back at you. The kazoo was introduced into the bird book as the loudest and most erratic sound in the Australian bush. The grand banquet was a thrill and the custard king and queen made the most royal of appearances.





The week of the Firbank program brought some drizzly days. We burrowed like the wombat under the shelter of the ODK and we all got to share our creative pizzazz! Painting using inspiration from the nature around us and connecting to our rhythms. Turns out old wooden axe handles make great clap sticks! From a session with Kay, where we learnt about the aquatic bio diversity, everyone's science mind was brought to life. We started the build of the worm farm - which is now complete and ready for the worms to move in, thanks to Emma and Sarah. It would be a nice life being a worm hey. Em shared her compost knowledge in a gardening session, and with keen hands, Cass and crew were onto the chook home fixing it up. Not a bad life, the chook life too. The sky somewhat cleared and the wombats emerged from the burrows. A short hike to the campsite and a day of blue skies followed. As the folk donned the highest of quality gowns for the great celebratory dinner, satisfaction filled the air.

Kardinia brought with them a vibrancy that ignited the air around the ODK fire. Songs and games were shared between these kookaburras as they hiked the Tussocky track. The characters came out on Thursday night and the feast began with a performance of a new Wollangarra song! Musical theatre meets mountain music.



The Foundation House weekend program left the homestead and our souls filled to the brim! This over 18 weekend's program introduced the Foundation House crew to the Australian bush and our way of life here on the flat. Incredible Afghan food was cooked and shared. We Wollies were given the pleasure of learning to cook their way. A smashing game of soccer was held at Cheynes's bridge and the post hike shenanigans of card games and Chasey filled the arvo. It was an absolute pleasure and delight having these folks here. ~Rose

We also had the Freshwater Creek Steiner year 6's join us for a week. This group was full of beans and all of them, including two teachers and two parents made it to the top of Macmillan's Lookout, what a day and what a view! There was also lots of crafting as well as games being played on this program with a bit of extra time of the flats - which always is enjoyed by the younger folk. Many even braved the cold water of the Mac for an icy dip. Good on ya FWC, we look forward to hosting you again next year. ~ Kay



Bushwalking Qualification

The Wollangarra staff began yet another qualification earlier this year – bushwalk training! We completed this rather extensive training through Outer Eastern Training Institute (or OETI), a Gippsland-based TAFE organisation. The training was split into a practical and a theoretical component which were both completed over the course of a few months.

The theoretical component encompassed several modules of varying lengths that covered all the considerations that need to be made prior to the hike. Examples include food and safety planning, choosing an appropriate route, and writing packing lists. Some modules also went over things like topographical map reading, compass types, and GPS usage.

The practical component of the qualification was split into three sections – a training hike run by an OETI instructor, a practice hike where we practiced the skills learnt on the training hike, and a final assessment hike.

The training hike was run locally in the bush around Wollangarra but the other two hikes were more remote, allowing us to demonstrate our learnt skills in a less familiar environment. Such skills included safely making camp, group management, and navigational abilities. Overall this was a highly rewarding and well-rounded qualification which has allowed us the abilities and confidence to lead bushwalks very competently. A massive thanks to OETI for facilitating this learning, and we look forward to being able to use the skills regularly on program!~ Cass



Alpine Walk & Dinner

Twelve excited people started at Mittagundi, and with lots of walking and a troopy ride from Howitt Plains somehow ended up at Wollangarra 11 days later. The first week was wet and rainy “cold is a choice”, the sky started to clear up as we head headed to South Selwyn in the second week though. We were devoured by leaches on track 107, with fog and mist as far as the eye could see, “it was cloudy, wet, with a beautiful view of nothing” as some might say. The good chats, Lydia’s stories of Alice Springs, and Hazel’s massages kept the group alive that week. On walking down from Hotham on a 45 degree angle, we meet the famous Ian, who turned up in an old work shirt with the sleeves cut off whilst the rest of us were wearing all our clothes to keep us warm. He told us lots of stories about Mitta and Woll, which left us feeling inspired, and reminded us of how privileged we are to be part of it all.



Then came the FOOD DROP! Mossie and Emmah cooked up a feast, whilst we all appreciated Jaspers talent on the guitar. Ella collected her fresh new pairs of Toe Socks (by the end of the hike everyone wanted go buy a pair). The Viking views felt extremely rewarding, there was lots of scrambling to get to the top. We ate sushi for lunch, and a pineapple that Henry had been carrying since food drop.

On Day 10 we watched an amazing sunrise on Mt Spec before walking the crosscut and having the longest lunch on hike yet. Alex was always miles ahead of the group, probably just so he could be the first to use the dunny at Mac Springs if we're being honest, whilst Matilda started and finished a whole Harry Potter book. Maeve and Zoe kept us alive with all their surprises and their



on point Kiwi accents. From the swim at Dibbins, the 12 people in a 4 man tent brecky, Mossie Brady's funny voices, Will's wood collection and stories, the sunrise at Mount Spec to marvelling at the stars, "it was the little things that made it" (Henry). ~ '23 Alpine Walkers.



After ten days in the Alpine wilderness, the people here on the flat half expected the Alpine Walkers to mosey through the homestead gates, ready for a shower, tired and keen for a good night sleep on a decent mattress. Well let me tell you – this was not the case. Springing with life, the ten stinky scallywags bounced on in and with warmth, accepted the open arms of their family members. Was it relief? Excitement? Or perhaps just pure delirium? Maybe all of it, but they were buzzing. The tables were set with native flowers and tea light candles, and of course – it wouldn't be a celebratory evening without bunting flying overhead. As the sun fell behind the tree line and tummies started to rumble, the Brady's swooped in yet again; Hazel and John cooked up an absolute storm. Delectable aromas swirled through the homestead and called the crowd in. It was just what everyone needed – especially the walkers. Once plates were full and seats were occupied, it was time for some words



from Maeve and Zoe (Alpine Walk leaders and 2022 Woll staff). A poetic letter to the young people showed off they're rhyming skills as they recounted the weeks that had past. As the group reminisced, their faces lit up. You could feel the joy flowing out of the adventurous bunch.

They accepted their honorary Alpine walk picture frames. Smiles were contagious and belly's sore from laughter. It was really something to witness the comradery within the group unfold before you. You could feel it - the friendships and community within them that had formed on hike. There was a deep knowing within all there that night, that alike most Alpine walkers, they now had memories that were etched into their lives for years to come. Thank you mountains. And a warm appreciation to all who contributed to the hike as well as the celebration dinner!! ~ Emmah

Wood Chop

Wood chop would not have happened without a tonne of work from a group of dedicated folks and the staff crew over the last six months. Chainsaws, 4WD's and lots of lifting, to the Glenfalloch Station many thanks for their generous support to access their property and harvest wood. To the 70 or so people and 5 K9s rocking the Woll flats this long weekend past, you are legends, this is what makes Woll happen!

Nothing like the meditation of swinging an axe. The regular whomping cracks of splitting wood settles the monkey mind. This, followed by a great harmony around the fire on a full bell with old and new friends,... Where would you rather be?

Honestly, this community weekend I only split one round for the initial induction. Max (current staff) and Zoe (22 crew) seem to think that these days I enjoy watching people working but actually I especially enjoy watching people working hard! Once again, big ups to everyone who came, chopped wood and did the immensity of other things to make the magic happen, especially the amazing food crews doing service 5 times a day to fuel all the people. We even have most of our handled axes still intact, which shows you all have great style!

~ Toby



Wollangarra Council

Are you a lover of Wollangarra? Would you like to be a part of the behind-the-scenes crew that support current Directors and the organization as a whole? The Wollangarra council is seeking to recruit more council members. If you think you have a skill you would like to share with us and gain many more skills, friendship and community in return, please get in touch with the chair Ross Richards (rossrich1@hotmail.com) to find out more about the current positions available on the Wollangarra council.



Upcoming dates

Join us for the upcoming events in the second half of 2023 at Wollangarra:

The Hop	9 th September
September Holiday Stage 1	18 th -22 nd Sept
September Holiday Stage 2	25 th -29 th Sept
Open Day	30 th Oct - 1 st Nov
Melbourne Cup Weekend	3 rd -5 th Nov
December Holiday Stage 1	4 th -8 th Dec
Skills Week	11 th -16 th Dec



Support Wollangarra

Wollangarra is a small outdoor education centre situated beside the Macalister River in Gippsland. We pride ourselves on the high quality outdoor education programs we have run for young people aged 14-22 since 1989. Through outdoor education, Wollangarra provides a small step to a healthier environment, stronger communities, and happier young people. Wollangarra runs approximately thirty programs throughout the year, as well as several working bees and community events. When young people come on the property there are no timetables, bells, watches, or mobile phones. The living is simple and these young people get the chance to discover Victoria's mountains in small, well-supervised hiking groups. They are then given the opportunity to return on follow-up programs and become involved in a vibrant community and with our ongoing conservation programs. We strongly believe that our programs help young people see environmental issues as exciting and demanding challenges to the way we live, rather than as depressing and negative threats to our future.

Wollangarra's programs are available to schools and community groups. We offer both fully and partially sponsored places to any young person who needs financial assistance and we run many programs at or below cost-price and have worked with many different groups from diverse backgrounds. A non-profit organisation registered with the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission, Wollangarra is independent of any school, religious or government funding. That means we rely on the generosity of our community and supporters to keep us keeping on. Your donation will help Wollangarra continue to deliver programs that get young people inspired to care for our environment in a hands-on way. Extra funds mean we can offer sponsored spots in our hike programs for those who cannot afford it, maintain our stock of hiking gear, and manage our beautiful property.



If you would like to support Wollangarra, here is how you can.

Resources we need: If you have any of these lying around, we would love to give your second-hand goodies another lease on life. Give us a call if you have any of the items that you are happy to part with, and we can organise the best way to get it from you. Please call if you have any questions about anything (03 5148 0492).

- Pillows
- Tupperware
- Art for New Toilets

Financial assistance:

Wollangarra has deductible gift recipient status (DGR) and is on the Register of Environmental Organisations (REO). our ABN is 44 395 948 159. Donations can be made on the website and are tax deductible.

Or if you would like, you can mail us a donation cheque to our postal address to Wollangarra, 3439 Heyfield, Licola Rd, Glenmaggie VIC 3858.

You can also donate to Wollangarra by making a direct transfer to the Wollangarra Public Fund. Just email our Business Manager (businessmanager@wollangarra.org.au), after you have donated to get a receipt.

Wollangarra Public Fund
BSB: 633-000
Account Number: 139 880 017

Any financial assistance is greatly appreciated!

To book into a program or get involved with Wollangarra, please visit our website <https://wollangarra.org.au/> or contact us on 0351484092.

Thank You

Volunteers

Cailey, Sarah, Emma, Gypsy, Dante, Charlie for helping out and being absolute Legends!

Babysitting

Hazel and Joe for looking after the place for winter holidays

Murray Tucker

Chain sawing, wood prep, helping with getting tractor on and off the flats and much more

Robyn

Amazing munchie bags

Wood splitters and stackers at Wood chop

Thank you for filling the wood sheds

Cooks at wood chop

Thanks for all the delicious foods

Alpine Donations

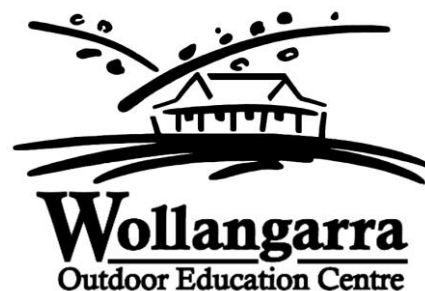
Thanks to all who supported a young person and Woll through Alpine Walk

Donations

Equity Trustees, Mutual Trust

Fox Flyers

Continued support



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