

Autumn Newsletter

Number 120

June 2021

Patron:

John Landy, AC, MBE



WOLLANGARRA

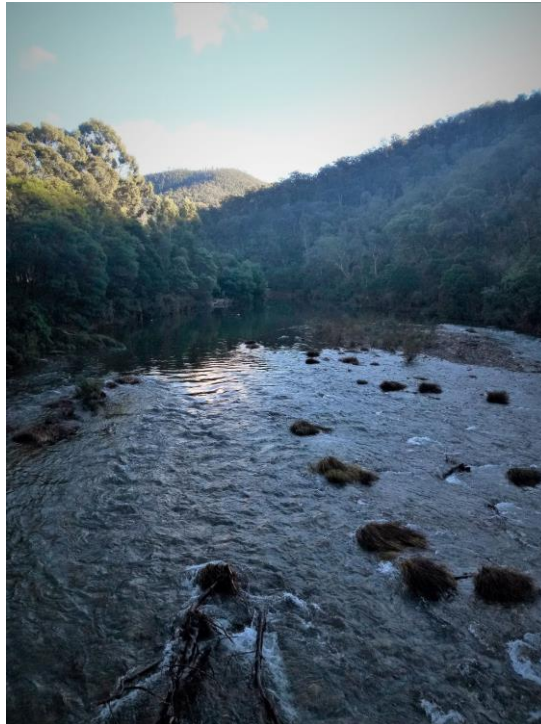
Licola, 3858

Ph: 5148 0492

www.wollangarra.org.au

I always thought I would love to reside in the tropics, where the sun always shines and I could be barefoot in a sarong and a t-shirt all year round. Yet I have come to love the change of season we get to experience here in southern Australia. At Wollangarra, with a change of season comes a change in pace of body and mind. The weather gets cooler bringing respite from blistering summer heat and indoor fires are lit more frequently. The days get shorter as the sun dips behind the mountains sooner, and as tools are put down with the sinking sun, more time is available for reflection in the evenings. Leaves of deciduous trees change colour from green to red, orange to yellow and brown and eventually fall to the ground. A beautiful frost slowly starts to paint the paddock lawns whiter and whiter each morning. Autumn is a time of reflection, of shedding the old, of transition and completion. While we have seen and felt these subtle changes at Wollangarra over the last few months, we have also gotten to experience change in a more abrupt and sudden way - as the mighty Macalister River showed us its full potential. Once a calm,

clear and steady river turned into a ragging, brown force of nature overnight. Water levels rose over 4 meters in height, sculpting the riverbank and



everything in its path, changing the natural landscape for good. In addition to natural change, we have also had to be adaptable to changes in our programs and events. Recent COVID

restrictions in Victoria meant we had to modify programs, sometimes last minute, to ensure the safety of all our staff, young people and teachers. And unfortunately, due to the combination of the flood and COVID restrictions we had to postpone Wood Chop 2021. Although we live in an unpredictable and fast changing world, we the team at Wollangarra will strive to continue to provide young people and the community with a safe, positive space to connect to nature and each other in a time when it is needed most. Thank you for all your continued support and understanding. ~Kay



Welcome Simbi!

Introducing the sweetest smooch-pooch on the block, Simbi. Simbi has come a long way to make Wollangarra her second home. She is a kelpie mix that almost certainly has some South African Ridgeback in her.. Only having been with us for two months, she is already an active member of the Woll family. She absolutely adores the young people and simply cant wait to meet everyone when a new group arrives at the fox. And visa-versa, the young people all love



Simbi. She brings a playful, loving, familiar feel to the place and is always up for a good cuddle or a game of tag. After having been a backyard dog on Sydney for her two years of life so far, the forest and river were a bit intimidating for her at first.

Yet with every passing week she has become more confident, leaping onto the fox on her own accord and swimming across the river with the young people. She has even been out on hike up to McMillians lookout, alerted the group to a fox running through the campsite in the night and kept her master Kay warm on the cold nights by curling up on her sleeping bag. To many more cuddles and hikes with Simbi, WELCOME!~Kay



Chainsaw training

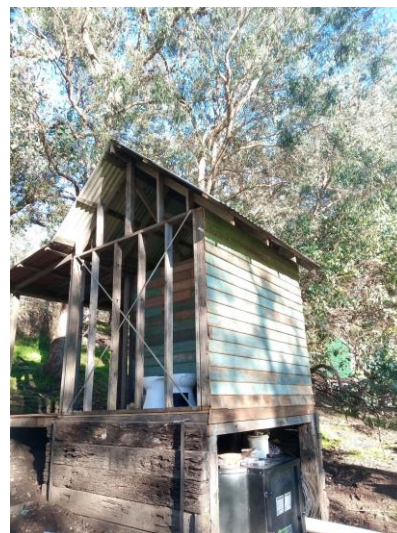
With winter fast approaching and our wood supplies dwindling fast, it was time to call in the expert and start upskilling us Wollie's. Under the tutelage of Conrad McKee, Ferg, Sarah and Oli began their quest to tame the orange beast. First, we had to spend a day at the flat, taking apart our saws and taking notes. Once Conrad deemed us ready, we donned all the correct PPE, including a smile; and set off for Glenfalloch, who had generously donated us a paddock full of dead trees just begging to be sliced. Cautiously and sensibly, we made our way through 5 tonnes of logs, only stopping for a small lunch of Roo steaks, Vitaweats, Alphaggetti and tea. A productive day, and a strong sign future wood collecting attempts. From all of us, a big 'Thank you Conrad' and I hope everyone reading this will come up to help chop.~ Oli



Work in progress - second Rotaloo



Exciting times at Wollangarra with more dunnies in the making! After sourcing materials from an old house in Cowwarr last year, followed by some serious de-nailing sessions and foxing everything across to Woll, Wayne McCallum, John Brady and Paul Whiley made a solid start on the new toilet block at the start of this year. Since then, Wayne has donated lots of time and materials (and great company as always!) to continue the project. In between programs and other flat jobs, it has been slow going, but the progress is definitely there! With a verandah, tin roof and recycled wood for walls, the dunnies are developing the



true Wollangarra look. It surely won't be much longer until we will have four instead of two cubicles to indulge in some serious quote-reading and other dunny-related business! ~Issy

Wollan-garden update

Coming into winter the garden has fought valiantly against harsh frosts and plagues of mice and bower birds. With the help of many nurturing hands and numb fingers we have pulled out the summer crops, turned, composted,



and mulched the beds, and filled the sunny beds with winter crops. There has been lots



of construction happening in the garden to help nurture it through winter; from creating mouse-proof boxes to protect seeds in the prop shed, netting all the garden seedlings before the bower birds can devour them, raising beds, and most recently turning the river side of the garden

into a winter chook tractor. The garden is currently producing a steady supply of pumpkin, kale, chard, rocket, and Asian greens, along with its usual constant bounty of rhubarb and herbs. ~ Sarah

Programs so far!

After a long year of isolation, the flats of Wollangarra have now once more felt the drumming of young people's feet as they scurry about to pack and cook and otherwise partake in the experience of being on a stage 1 program. The weeds that grew in the fire pit have all been burnt out, the outdoor kitchen stove has actually been lit, and after a year of living at Woll I've finally made munchies. In fact, all Wollangarra feels like it's had so much life and love breathed back into it now that it's finally fulfilling its intended purpose once more, and I too feel like that warm feeling that being at Woll used to give me has returned. We were really fortunate to start off with a holiday stage 1, which was followed by a stage 2 full of people that some of us staff had met at events, the experience of talking about what drew those young people to Woll was a great insight to have in mind for the school programs that came up next where it felt like people weren't already sold on what we're all about.



The school programs have been exciting and challenging in their own ways, I'd come to expect them to bring a sense of routine when we started doing programs, which I suppose they delivered to an extent, however what strikes me more about the experience of running programs so far has been the extent of how much they can vary. We have had groups that would show up with all the presence of a flock of sheep, standing in silent judgement and uncertainty that slowly grew into a noisy rambunctious crowd that was perhaps livelier than we could deal with, we've had groups that have been noisy hellions from the moment they come across the fox to the moment they walk out. We have had evacuations and extended time on the flats due to weather and sickness, we've had groups punching out k's and groups just enjoying spending long peaceful idle hours in camp. The only things I could describe as constants across all programs in my eyes so far would be this:

All groups have learned or changed or grown throughout the course of a week
All groups have had a unique experience
And all groups have asked for the recipe for munchies

It feels like things were really taking off when this next lockdown hit, and we had to evacuate a program a day short of their intended departure time after they had already been called off hike. Which was a real shame as the group seemed to be really getting a lot out of their time here, but it seems it is only the state of the world that we all have to be ready to head home at the drop of a hat. The evacuation of the group was handled with more efficiency than had been seen at Woll for a long time and as far as we know neither us nor the young people have contracted COVID so I suppose it's the best outcome of a negative situation and it's only fair and reasonable to be glad for everyone's safety. Thankfully, after the lockdown programs were able to continue. ~ Ferg



Upcoming events

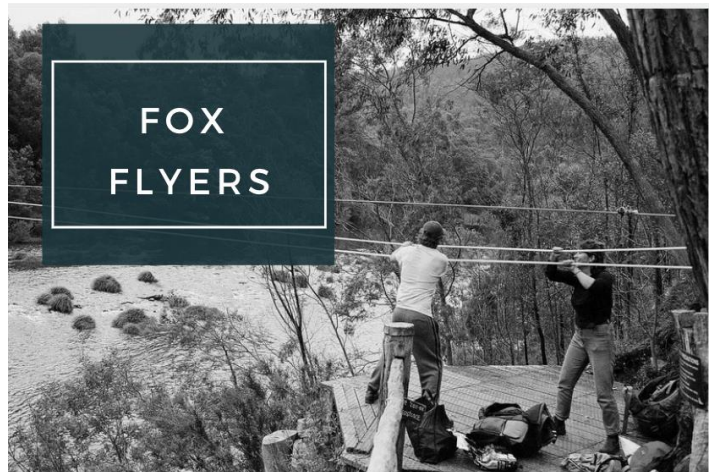
Please keep an eye on the upcoming dates for holiday programs and events at Wollangarra:

- 4th - 9th July - Combined stage I and II holiday program, as well as a Stage III induction
- 20th - 24th Sept - Stage I holiday program
- 26th Sept - 1st Oct - Stage II holiday program
- 2nd Oct - Open Day!
- 30th Oct - 2nd Nov - Cup weekend work party



Fox Flyers

We started up the Fox Flyer initiative at the end of 2020, asking for financial support from our community to help us get back up and running after having no programs in 2020. We have been so humbled by the support of our Fox Flyers, who have come from across Australia to support Woll. Some of our Fox Flyers have never been to Woll but have heard of the programs and opportunities we offer young people and see us as something they want to support. Others have been young people, parents, staff, active community members, and council members. All in all, a diverse and great group of people, and we are stoked and thankful to have them on board.



As Fox Flyers they committed to donating \$50/month across 2021, and their combined donations have already supported running staff training such as the Bronze Medallion, as well as purchasing materials for the new rota-loo toilet. Across the year they will also support us to continue running low cost and accessible school holiday programs, and maintenance costs of the infamous flying fox into Woll.

Keen on being a Fox Flyer? It is definitely not too late, and we would love to have more people join. If you are keen, head to www.wollangarra.org.au/foxflyers for more info and sign-up options, or chuck us an email to donations@wollangarra.org.au

~Annabelle

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 got 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 off of you. Please call if you have any questions about anything (03 5148 0492).

- Garden Hand Shovels x 5
- Good secateurs
- Pole pruning saw
- Star pickets
- Dorper Wire
- Weatherboards or other timber cladding
- Foam camping mats
- Large & Small screw-top jars
- Rolls and ROLLS of flyscreen
- Garden Hose 15+ metres
- Gloves/mittens
- Fleece/Down Jumpers
- 3" and 4" Phillips head wood & board screws
- Stainless steel bowls to take on hike

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.

Wayne & Fam

Toilet building and great company!

Woll's Young People

Coming back to Woll in 2021! We have missed you

Rita

Supporting Staff in 2021

Lucy

Donations of second-hand raincoat and waterproof pants for use around the flats

Ian & Liv

Always thinking of us, supporting us, checking in on how jobs are!

Conrad

Chainsaw training and helping with wood sourcing and chopping

Josh & Annabelle

Continuing help where needed

Council

Availability, help and support

Fox Flyer Donors

For the donations and ongoing support

The Brady's

For all the babysitting, the help in the garden and over fruit bottling!

Terry

Help getting the Gliders paddock road fixed up

Ralph

Keeping us updated on local weather

The Heyfield resource centre

Holding parcels for us and printing the Newsletters that go out via post

Issy, Isaac, Dan and Hagan

For your company and support

Jen Gao

Babysitting over July holidays

Anyone else

Many thanks from the Wollies!



***If undeliverable, please return to:
Wollangarra
Licola 3858***

Print Post Approved PP 381667/00516

***Surface Mail
Postage Paid Australia***

Wollangarra Spring Newsletter 2020