

# Spring Newsletter

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WOLLANGARRA

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What a relief it always is to see and feel the first signs of spring around the Wollangarra property after what seems like a long winter; fruit trees and wattles blooming, welcome swallows sweetly awakening us to warm sunshine already on the flats, flies buzzing around the homestead, the river running quieter and clearer, green leaves growing back on vines, summer crop being planted in the Wollangarden and beanies being traded for hats and sunscreen.

Breath deep (sigh), new energy found.

It feels like Spring couldn't come at a more perfect time in the Wollangarra Calendar - after a busy year of events and programs, everyone fatigued yet happily welcomes the new energy Spring brings to see them to the finish-line for their year at Woll. We have hosted great events on which you can read more in this Newsletter and enjoyed showing so many new young people to the property and mountains on ripper programs on local tracks and further afield in the High Country.



What existed here this year, is, as it is in every year at Wollangarra, something completely unique and extraordinary. An experience worth remembering, a sense of magic, gratitude, connectedness, community and challenge.

As the 2022 Staff turn their sights to new adventures while relishing in the final programs for the year, we are on the hunt for the next amazing Woll team for 2023.

Wollangarra is a place that offers people an opportunity - to find themselves, to try something new, to know what it feels like to be a part of a community

and to connect deeply once again to our one true guide, mother nature. Thank you to everyone who made 2022 what it is! We look forward to seeing you all again in 2023, may the rest of your year be one to remember and revel in.

~ Directors

## Farewells of 2022 Outdoor Leaders

### Laurence Farr



The experiences I've had this year will stick with me forever. It's been simultaneously the greatest and hardest thing I've done thus far and it taught me a heck of a lot. Among many other things, I now understand some of the finer points old Ian was on about; the importance of the simple stuff like sharing a cup of tea at sunset or good food with good people. It reminded me not to take life too seriously and to chill out a little more. Work may be an adventure, but it is life's adventures that we are working for – I Thank Toby for that. Above all, I've learnt how powerful time spent in nature is and how the connections we find in these places are powerful enough to guide our lives in a virtuous direction. I'm proud to say I feel as though I've left this place just a little bit better than when I arrived 12 months ago and that I've contributed to something special.

I am immeasurably grateful to have spent the time I have with the people that inhabited the flats this year, Kay, Toby, Zoe, Maeve, Shaya and Max, you are all incredible people. Thank you for absorbing my failures and praising my wins, I hope we remember this year as it was.

The following is a poem I wrote in reflection upon my year at Woll:

*This magic mountain home to many is made of muscles, minds and mishaps.  
The mud, the mould, the marshland this year was managed by a marvellous team of Wollies that lived.  
Through challenge, we all grow stronger and through mighty challenge we did.  
May the Macalister flow through our hearts forever and may the mountains always call us 'kid'.*

~Laurence

### Shaya Kaartinen-Price



Earlier this year I arrived at an earthy river flat with little knowing of its essence, impact or community-cultivated magic. As months went on and Wollangarra became immensely familiar, many new faces became the best of friends and personal connection to the mountains was created via time spent immersed in it all. The energetic bliss of many, many days greeting unknowing, unfamiliar young people and the quiet solitude of nights spent staring up at the stars are some of my favourite things of this recent experience. Fires were lit within the open hearts of meaningful conversations and oh I do I love the heartbeat of this place. One can marvel at what brings together a team in any given year at Wollangarra. To this year's crew, Maeve, Zoe, Laurence, Kay, Toby, Meri, South. I'm spectacularly grateful for our combined dedication to living this life, and doing so with much humour, devotion and dagginess sprinkled throughout. Thankful for the Macalister, the meal thank yous, the fires, the smiles, the local community who shine so bright.

From my heart to yours, thank you, thank you, thank you. ~ Shaya



## Maeve Nunan



I've got a cuppa in hand, sitting in front of the stove on a surprisingly chilly spring day. I can't count the cuppas I've had and shared at this table, it is how we started every day and often how we ended them too, not to mention the 10-15 others throughout the day. This year has been more than 15-year-old Maeve could ever have dreamt of. Daily river dips, countless campfires, young people returning on stages, community weekends and our very own Wollangarra family. We've dined on Wheaties, giggled outrageously, cuddled, chased and wheelbarrowed Meri. I caught a mouse with my bare hands as captain vermin. I had the delight and pleasure of thanking wonderful supporters. I became an auctioneer and I grew armpit fungus. Wollangarra has been a wild ride and I truly couldn't have laughed so much and gone through this year without the effervescent, wonderful, strong and hilarious team that I was so lucky to share this mountain flat with. So here is to Zoe, Shaya, Laurence, Max, Toby, Kay, Meri and South. There is no one else I'd want to Wollangarra wallow with.~Maeve

## Zoe Merrigan



I've been thinking a lot about what makes Wollangarra Wollangarra. How can we all rely on peoples love of the place to keep it going? How can we ask people to give up their public holiday and come split wood for three days? And... they actually do it. As a young person I did it as well. My answer is that I have no answer, its most likely a combination of things. I can only speak of my own experience. For me personally, I rang the heck out of being a young person. I absolutely milked it. Just like many other young people I took and took and took from this place. One of the most beautiful things about Wollangarra, is that it gives you an opportunity to hopefully provide for the next young person. To not just take, but also to give. That is what I hope I've achieved this year. Lately, every time I've walked out my room I've thought about how I am going to miss it (and the kitchen of course). But the other beautiful thing about Woll, is that it's not my room or my kitchen. It never has been. The person in that

room before me never owned it and the person who lives in it after me never will either. I've have merely just taken care of this place and in return it took care of me. So big thanks to Wollangarra. All my luv. ~ZoZo

## Max Tucker (Not a Farwell but a Hello from 2022 and into 2023!)



MaxiBon, we couldn't have ever guessed how much we needed this majestic blonde locked being until he waltzed knife on hip into our soggy flat. He came for a week and we made him stay 'til his socks stank. But we lured him back in with our devilish charm and now he is staying for ever (at least until the end of next year). He is a blacksmith, a cuppa killer, he makes a mean Gnocchi, and his eyes light up with a brush cutter in his hand. Maxi's here to stay and that brings us Maximum joy!

~The 2022 Wollies

# *Become a 2023 Outdoor Leader!*



Rewild your soul, become the Wollangarra team 2023. Live on the off-grid Wollangarra homestead delivering unique and deeply engaging outdoor education to young people. You will gain qualifications and experience in group leading, homesteading and bushcraft to name a few. Wollangarra has been using less to deliver more to connect young people to themselves, their communities and environment since 1989. In 2023, Wollangarra offers you the opportunity to take young people into genuine adventure. We are seeking mature, skilled and committed individuals willing to role-model the Wollangarra ethos as a tool to help foster connection to community, self and nature.

Position Length: January 2023 – January 2024

## **Desirable Qualifications**

- Current full manual driver's license
- Qualifications in outdoor education, outdoor recreation, the environmental sciences or education.
- Wilderness First Aid certificate
- Training in four-wheel drive or chainsaw use.

## **Selection Criteria**

- Personal outdoor experience – hiking, camping, cooking, knowledge of outdoor gear.
- Demonstrated experience in leading, teaching, and/or working with young people.
- Ability to complete tasks on time with minimal supervision
- Ability to work well in a team and ask for assistance – many hands make light work An understanding of Wollangarra's philosophy
- Desire to live and work in a small, remote location, without electricity, internet/mobile service.
- Ability to think on your feet and get things done with the tools and materials on hand.
- Practical skills in property maintenance (maintaining fences, vehicles, general fixing of things.
- Experience or desire to learn about the care of livestock – chickens, sheep.
- Experience in running a large productive garden or willingness to learn
- Experience in driving heavy vehicles on tight, narrow mountain roads full of young people

**If you are interested in becoming a 2023 Outdoor Leader at Wollangarra, please call Directors Toby or Kay on 03 5148 0492 or shoot them an email to [directors@wollangarra.org.au](mailto:directors@wollangarra.org.au).** for more information on the nature of the role and duties.



# Programs update



We have been thrilled to have so many rad young people come to join us for Stage 1's over the past few months! We started off with four Newhaven college programs which were packed with legends in not only the student cohort but in the staff team as well. Some highlights included: Mr Prideux playing lilted tunes for his crew as they sat resting their feet around the warm fire and Mr Scott showing off his trail running prowess as he dashed along the bush trails. The young people were also out to impress with their swift descents and the keenness of a brave few who decided to sleep under the dazzling stars.

Up next were the Freshwater Creek Primary crew who brought enormous amounts of energy and enormous amounts of fun! This was a group of young people who were keen to learn and keen to play endless games of camouflage. Does it get any better than that?



Our third school crew was St. Ignatius who we took out to Mother Hubbard campsite, a beautiful rock on Hickeys Creek amid a grassy plain. The perfect location for rock-skipping and relaxing. Although one of the St. Ignatius programs was cut short due to flooding, the time we did have was filled with ghost stories and good times. Hopefully we see them again soon for Stage 2 mountain time.



Our final Stage 1 crew was from Camberwell High despite a bit of rain, it was an absolute dream to get out to Kelly's hut in the High Country. When Maeve was asked how she would describe the young people from the city in three words she needed no time to ponder: Kick ass kids.



Thanks for an awesome few months to all Legends who joined us on Stage 1. We had a blast.

~Max

## Holiday Stage 1 & 2



School holiday programs have been firing on all cylinders this year and our September holidays stage 1s and 2s were no exception. Backing onto our open-day community event, the holiday programs felt like the windup of a water bird taking flight. Foundation House students visited the mountains as part of an amalgamation of young people from all over Victoria for their first taste of Wollangarra on the Stage 1. We were lucky enough to snag an extra 3 volunteers in, Meghan, Rowdy, Laura and Sean, who all took groups out on hike and freed up more staff to prepare the flat for our upcoming event. A huge thank you to these folks, I'm not sure what this year would have been like if we didn't have people taking time to come to help out!

Foundation house students

brought campfire songs from their homelands and used the provided hike food in a brand new way to create a traditional Afghani rice dish. From what I saw on Thursday night all stage 1's got a proper dose of Woll magic.



For us staff, if the holiday stage 2s were food, they'd be the cheese on the nachos, the lamb in the stew or the sultanas in porridge and the second week of holidays didn't disappoint. After a hiatus during Covid, Wollangarra re-established its relationship with the local parks office and ran our first project with parks in 2 years. Thanks to our new local Ranger Alex, the stage 2's put their hands back into some practical conservation and removed a number of old

fences from the Alpine National Park. Despite some seriously wet weather the team achieved all set works and carried out all fencing material on foot.

In addition, a day of labour was offered to one of our local dairy farming families, the Neaves. A group of young people experienced an operating dairy farm and were put to work in removing weeds. Smiles on the faces of young people as they find meaning in hard work is the remuneration we work for here at Woll and this week was the payload. Another big thanks to many stage 2's who stayed at Woll at the end of their program and pitched in to set up what was a feast to remember. What a week.



~Laurence



# Garden Party



One of many lovely highlights of the weekend was introducing raised beds to the Wollangarra garden space. These were created by Max and Toby in the days leading up to garden party and were built out of old roofing iron, timber and piping. They are a



perfect height for Meri to participate in leisurely gardening.

Another highlight was the GOOORRRRGGGEEEEEOUUS cake Conrad carried through the front paddock to be shared in the garden space. Made from an eclectic mixture of beetroot, avocado, cocoa (was it ceremonial? We just don't know) this cake was fancier than a duck in a tuxedo. Fancier than Stapo with a chicken on top of a mountain. Thanks Conradical!



There was a fabulous and well-utilised propagation station (thanks Greg from Useful Seeds for a generous donation of some wonderful heirloom seeds that are beautifully popping up in our prop shed as we speak, weeding and

clearing galore (a beautiful base for the lovely raised beds), soil moving, filling wombat holes (with our wombat friend watching) (how rude of us). Thanks to everyone who came along! We so enjoyed sharing our weekend with Wollies old & new.



~Shaya



# Open Day



Wowee Open Day, what a time to be had at Wollangarra!

The flat was absolutely buzzing after 100 people muddied their boots and braved the puddles. Leo Butler took the crown of prodgie eating champion. The crosscut comp was smoked by our very own Maxi and Laurence.



The auction brought in a mountain of generous cash, as auctioneer I was blown away by our amazing community contributions. Meg Hynes was the owner of a brand new hand-carved carrot car. the Neaves won a trip down the Macalister with Paul Nichol. It goes without saying that Jack Gilbert, Bryan Beasley and Wayne McCallum threw in some master pieces and if I named them all this article would become a short novel.



After a feast to remember prepared by Kate Tucker and John Brady as cooking captains, we boogied hard to Mr Alford Country. Knees were popping, arms were linking, I think I might have even seen the worm attempted in the mud.



We were totally overwhelmed by the love, joy, amazing vollies and kickass Stage 2 crew that made the day happen. With bellies full of cake, tea cups full and hearts overflowing, it is with a mighty big smile that I thank everyone that contributed.

~ Maeve

Maeve Nunan, you spectacular human – I appreciate in particular all of your support with planning Open Day. You were an epic auctioneer who brought out so, so, so many belly laughs within all of us.

~Shaya





# Melbourne Cup Weekend



Cup weekend. Pretty much just like being at the races. The same amount of funny hats, just a little more chainsawing. Community chipped in for some epic thistle bashing missions (many still have remnants of thistles in their hands, brave soldiers). Folks galloped in to help maintain the Tussocky and telephone tracks (more thistles were invoiced). A few helped out the Staff with some off-property chainsawing. Conrad provided a feast of potatoes and snags, while we worked on our wood pile for the summer. Hazel Brady continued making her fluffy pillowy flat bread. Max (MaxiBon) made bulk Gnocchi with a factory crew in the kitchen table, turning out a different kind of fluffy pillowy dough.

I would like to end the article about Cup Weekend with a song. Sing this to the tune of 'Home among the gumtrees'.

If it is not flowing for you feel free to call 51480492, ask for Zoe and I'll sing it for you:

*Give me a home among the wattle trees  
With lots of plum jam  
A sheep or two and Simbi dog  
A veranda out the front  
Meri pooping out the back  
And an old bossy Boss-man.*

~Zoe



## Upcoming dates 2022/23

With the year coming to a close, here are some last program dates for the year 2022 and then looking ahead at 2023:

<b>6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022</b>	-	<b>Skills Weeks (Open to Stage 2's &amp; 3's)</b>
<b>12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022</b>	-	<b>Holiday Stage 2</b>
<b>26<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023</b>	-	<b>Fruit Bottling</b>
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Mar 2023</b>	-	<b>Locals Lunch</b>
<b>10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Mar 2023</b>	-	<b>Labour Day weekend</b>
<b>10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Apr 2023</b>	-	<b>Holiday Stage 1</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> Apr 2023</b>	-	<b>Holiday Stage 2</b>

Keep an eye on our Wollangarra Outdoor Education Facebook page and website for updated details on the events closer to the time.

WOLLANGARRA  
STAGE II + III



IF YOU ARE  
INTERESTED  
IN DEMONSTRATING  
CALL WOLL  
ON 51480492

DECEMBER 6-10<sup>TH</sup>

A collaboration of pioneer skills  
and modern skills being shared on the  
flat, with the vision of passing on skills  
to young generations!



# Fox Flyers 2023

Wollangarra is so grateful for all of your donations throughout 2021/22. Your donations have directly enabled Wollangarra to continue operating throughout the uncertainty of lockdowns and the ups-and-downs of COVID restrictions in Victoria.

Thanks to your help, we were able to maintain the property to appropriate standards for running programs, finish projects on the flats and run much loved Holiday programs; offering sponsored spots to those young people who really need it. Reconnecting young people to the mountains and the basics of living with nature has never been more important than in the times young people find themselves.



Given then invaluable help Fox Flyers donations provided Wollangarra in 2021/22, we have decided to run the Fox Flyers Members program for another 12 months in 2023, as we are still in a phase of recovery from Covid times.

**Please Note:** Your membership will automatically be cancelled after 12 monthly payments from the date you became a Fox Flyer. So, if you would like to support Wollangarra for another 12 months in 2023, please sign up again here:

<https://wollangarra.org.au/register/foxflyers/>

THANK YOU for your support. We hope to see you up at Wollangarra soon at one of our community events. ~ Directors



# 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).

- 2L Drybags
- 4L Drybags
- Thermal Bottoms
- Mulch for the garden
- New home-made munchie bags
- Decorations/art work for the new toilet

### 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

**Greg Useful seeds**

A great bundle of seeds and tips

**St Phillips Group**

A delicious treats package

**Conrad McKee**

A shovel load of treaties, tools @ garden party, Auction items at Open Day & Chainsawing on Melbourne Cup

**Alex Duncan**

Best AirBnB (Wollies Staff crashover) in Briagolong

**Margaret Becket**

Pillow cases \$ sheets

**Mitta**

Open Day Vollies

**Jack Gilbert, Brain Beasley, Peter Frost, Wayne McCallum, Claire Mosley**

Demonstrator & auction items

**Neil Barraclough**

Tree grafting & auction items

**Steve Currell**

Demonstrator Open Day

**Paul, Ally and Hazel**

Rafting donation

**Emma Ward, Lotus Wintersea, Meg Hynes, Laura Gale, Jen Gao, JoJo Beard, Charlie & Harry,**

Open Day vollies

**Ross Richards**

Sheep shearing

**John Brady**

Food at Open Day

**Eva Healey & Orla Brady**

Café Queens Open Day

**Kat Tucker**

Open Day Food Prep

**Annabelle**

Volunteer Stage 2

**Storm**

Auction Pottery & food prep at Open Day

**Meaghan, Rowdy, Laura and Shawn**

Stage 1 vollies

**Kara**

Sticker drop off

**Sam Shaw**

Backed goods & auction items

**Tegan**

Beeswax wraps

**Monica Nitz**

Auction item - Buff

**Will Hynes**

Auction item - knife

**Allen Rundall**

Donation

**Marion**

Auction donation

**Mali Booth**

Auction donation- jewellery

**Ross Davis**

Donation

**Frank Gordon**

Donation

**The Neaves**

A day on the farm Stage 2

**Charlie Brown**

Volunteering

**Emma Ward**

Volunteering for a month in Nov



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