

Winter Newsletter

Number 130

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Patron:

John Landy, AC, MBE



WOLLANGARRA

Licola, 3858

Ph: 5148 0492

www.wollangarra.org.au



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Director's Report

A lot has happened on the flat since our last writing. The ground is crunchy underfoot with frost, the swims are cold in a fuller Macalister, the mountains are misty and we welcome the mid-afternoon sunshine on our backs whilst we hike and tend to projects around the flat. Our favourite things that have kept us busy on the flat recently are – resurrecting the garden and building a beautiful staff shower.

Directing at Woll keeps you nimble; both mentally and physically. The challenging moments are softened by moments of beauty, and we are bolstered by the unwavering support of the Wollangarra Council and community. For us, it's the community; the people we visit and the people who visit us who have been the biggest highlight of the last few months. We have enjoyed so many laughs and yarns over delicious meals and Bengal spice teas with incredibly inspiring people.

Programs have been epic! It is such a buzz to see young people return to the flat on a Thursday with their hearts full of adventure and glowing with accomplishment. It's undeniable that the Wollangarra program and experience is unique and so fulfilling in this modern world. We are working hard in the background organising some pretty special programs later in the year.

Our team have hosted an incredible woodchop weekend, filling the sheds and dotting the property with intricate beehives of wood to keep us warm and fuel our stoves over the next year. We delighted in seeing faces from long ago and welcomed new families. There were so many joyous moments shared.

When we sat to write this, the biggest feeling we had to share was that of gratefulness. Thank you to all the people who have met us with warm hearts, helped, supported, donated time and things, laughed with us, shared words of support, given guidance, showed kindness, invited us to dinner, opened their homes to us, and all of the other wonderful Wollie things that Wollies do in this community, we are so very grateful for you all.

Katie and Smitho xo

News from the flat

In between programs we've been getting busy around the flat, with the zhuzhing of Woll still happening. The forge got some attention from the amazing Jett and Ivy and is looking very tidy, and... there's a new staff shower at Wollangarra! We've also finished the last of our training, spending a very fun week learning and practicing 4WD and chainsaw skills to get us through the year at Woll.

The biggest project we've been working on is the garden!! The garden is looking amazing, ready to sit tight over winter with a few crops hopefully withstanding the cold and frosts that have begun to set in. Thanks to the amazing effort put in by the community over the Woodchop weekend the whole garden is ready to go for spring, and we're all super excited to fill it with seedlings as soon as the weather's warm enough again.

We've also had a new addition to the Wollangarra family... chickens!! Thanks to Simo & Josie, Woll now has 12 lovely ladies :).



Collecting sawdust for the garden



The transportation method for said sawdust



Wollangarra's lovely ladies



Re waterproofing the tents for winter



The new staff shower!



The garden transformation... many, MANY people have helped us bring the Woll garden back to life over the last few months.



Chainsaw training! (I promise in reality we were all very safe and reasonable)

Programs!

April Holiday Stage I



Kicking off the year of programs strong with a group of amazing young people keen to get out into the mountains and have an awesome adventure. Easter cut the program short by a day, but we still managed to squash in a beautiful hike from Wollangarra, with both groups camping together at Burgoyne's Hut. Highlights include... Pearl Girl coming on hike!!, Maya's amazing sense of direction, Mad Dog coming on hike!!, a delicious Thursday night stew made by Katie & Rosie, swims in the river! And I'm sure many more that I can't think of right now. Seeing 20 young people leave Wollangarra with huge smiles was an amazing feeling for us as a new staff team, and we can't wait to see what the rest of the years programs bring.

April Holiday Stage II



What could be better for a second program than a fantastic group of Stage II legends! Thanks to some incredible volunteers (Emma, Tex, Essie, Charlotte and Liz) we were able to get up into the High Country for a sweet adventure. Both groups hiked up and over the Crinoline, camping at the beautiful rock shelter, and meeting each other for lunch on the middle day. Highlights include: the sunsets & sunrises at the rock shelter, crocs being used as hiking boots, sweet views from the Crinoline and having a wonderful Stage II crew back at Woll. Back on the flat, Katie, Essie, Emma, Frankie, Floyd and Pearl spent some productive days in the garden soaking up the amazingly warm weather.

May Open Stage I



This Stage I was particularly special... Casper, Jayda and 2 amazing vollies (Sam & Alec) took a little group of young people up to the Wellington High Plains. They base camped at Nyimba and headed down to Lake Tali Karng on day 2. The traditional custodians, the Gurnai Kurnai people have a deep and long connection to the lake and ask that no one camps there. As soon as the Wolly group got down to the lake, leaders and YP became silent. They spent time exploring and soaking up the sun and beauty of the lake. They ate their lunch, said thank you and goodbye as the sun was setting, lighting up the Sentinels as they walked. A full moon, stoic kids and a few lollie snakes got them back to camp where the fire warmed their toes and their dinner...

Holiday & Open Programs – put out the word!

HOLIDAY STAGE I

Places are currently available on our 5-day holiday program for any 14 – 17 year old. Meet new people, have an incredible time, try out hiking and camping and experience the Victorian high country, spend time on a beautiful working property, take a break from phones and computers... it's an adventure!

The dates for the rest of this year are: **23rd – 27th September** | **2nd – 6th December**

If you're keen, book in on the website! We're always happy to have a chat too, just give us a call.

STAGE II FOLLOW UP PROGRAMS

Been to Woll before and keen to return? Yay! Get into some hands-on practical conservation projects, help us out at Woll, get away from your phone for a week and spend time with friends in the mountains. We've got some ripper programs lined up for 2024!

July Holiday Stage II: Sunday July 7th - Friday July 12th... a day on the flat doing some much needed farm work! We'll also go for a hike, and try to reinstate an old Woll track along the Macalister, yay :)

September Holiday Stage II: Monday September 30th - Friday October 4th... track work program!

10 Day Stage II: Wednesday October 9th - Friday October 12th... something amazing and incredible! We have a big open space in our calendar and we'd love to have some Stage IIs who are keen for a 10 day program up here! There'll be some flat time, and definitely an amazing hike.

Open Stage II: sometime in October (dates TBC)... working with Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC)!

December Holiday Stage II: Sunday December 8th - Friday December 13th... big hike! Fun times high country hiking week :).

Book in on the website, and come spend a week with us!

Freshwater Creek Steiner School



A memorable program to say the least! 12 awesome Year Six young people, and their legendary teachers, joined Smitho, Jayda, Maya, Frankie, Floyd & Pearl for a crazy adventure in the high country - hiking to Guy's Hut and Conglomerate Falls. Magic moments include: some FREEZING nights (with tarps and water bottles freezing before we went to sleep... thankfully we survived the cold), some sparkly morning sunshine on the frosty grass, perfectly sunny days, seeing Starlink, lying on stomachs looking over the cliff edge at Conglomerate Falls (and having lunch looking out over the sweet view), picking flowers and nights around the campfire. Coming home from a very cold hike to dinner cooked by Casper, Flynn and Katie, hot showers and a cozy debrief ended the program perfectly.

Firbank Grammar School

A beautiful bunch of Year 8 girls, and three fun teachers, joined us Wollies for a week and embarked on an adventure out to Burgoyne's Hut, camping along Hickey's creek on the way. A pretty hike, with beautiful weather, and some freezing cold river swims was the perfect way to kick off school programs for the year.

Plenty Valley Christian College

An absolutely amazing program, we headed down to the Avon River to avoid the frosty weather promised in the high country. With two spectacular groups of young people led by Flynn, Maya, Meg, Jenna, Emma & Ness – thankyou legendary volunteers - a wonderful week was had by all. Beautiful weather, beautiful views, many a challenging hill, a Woll-ympics, and a delicious (as per usual) Thursday night feast... thanks PVCC students and teachers for an absolute blast.

(I promise these programs existed! The group camera's battery was dead...)

Woodchop Work Party!

What a weekend! Wood was chopped, wood was carted around the flat, pizza ovens were demolished, fruit trees were pruned, heaps of people got in the garden and smashed out the bulk of the weeding, gravel was shovelled... and probably more jobs I can't remember right now. Having the flat buzzing with over 100 people, lending helping hands, was incredible.

But possibly even more importantly than getting jobs done over the weekend, is the other side of a community event. Delicious food was cooked, cups of tea were drunk, music was played, and there were many, many, many chats around the fire. Woodchop weekend was an amazing showcase of the beautiful Wollangarra community, and the general good atmosphere we can create. This place thrives when it's full of people, and it was heartwarming to see everyone reconnecting with a place they've loved for years, and with familiar faces they haven't seen in a while.

So from all of us here at Woll, thank you to everyone who joined us for the weekend. You make this place what it is, and we are so grateful to have such a supportive and wonderful community. The weekend truly filled our cups (as well as our wood shed yay!) as we head into winter.



Save the date for more Woll community events!

WOLLANGARRA OPEN DAY October 5th-6th

Come spend a weekend at Woll filled with music, fun people, good food and more. Give us a call if you're keen to volunteer and help us put the event on ☺. Save the date, there's more info coming soon.

MELBOURNE CITY HOP September 14th

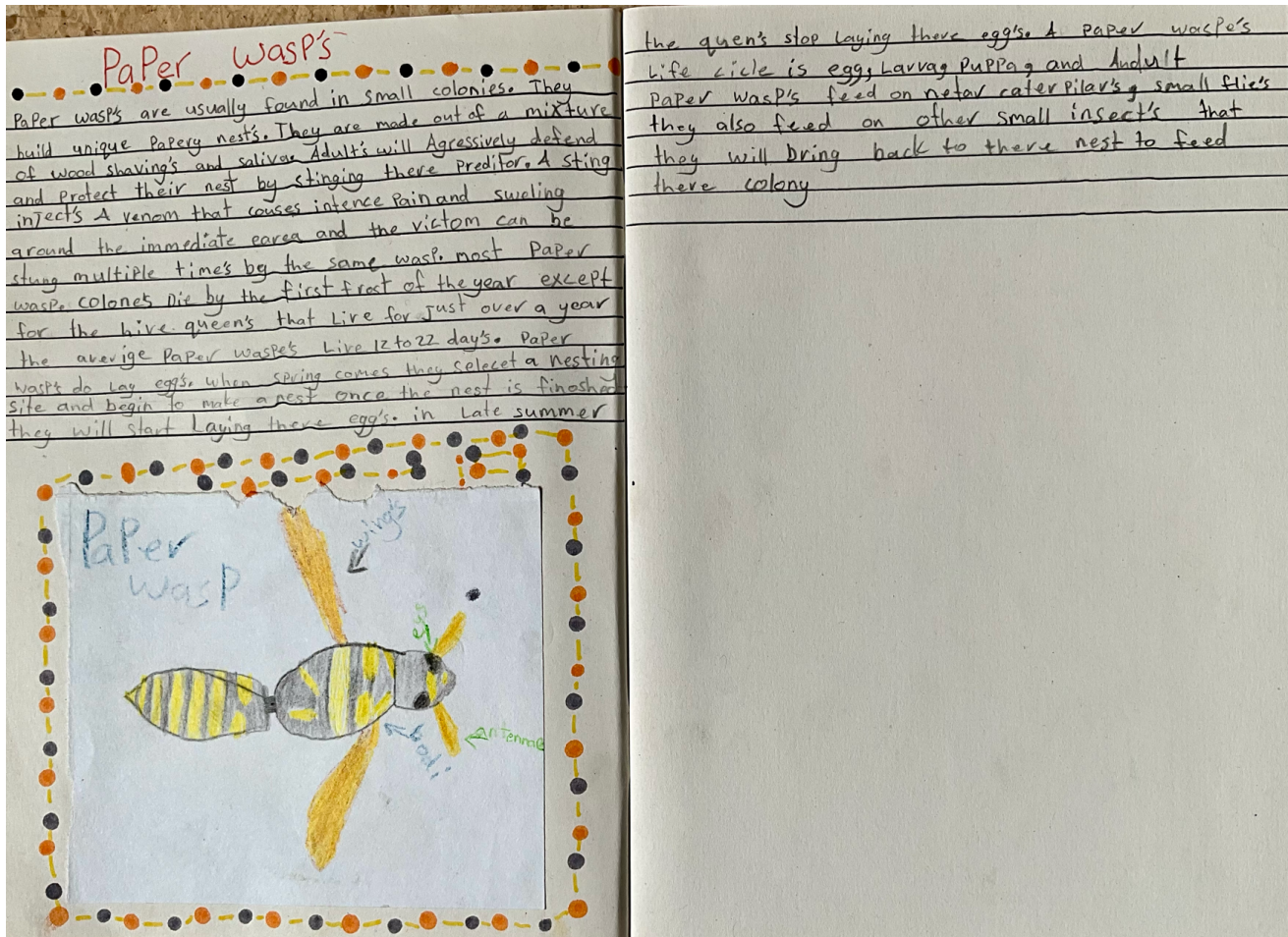
Save the date, and more info will be out soon!

MELBOURNE CUP WORK PARTY November 3rd-5th



Around the Wollangarra Flat

Paper Wasps – by Pearl Smith



The Road To Patagonia

What an absolutely epic film and what a great turnout!

A couple of weeks back (in late June) we held a Wollangarra fundraising event showing the highly praised, award-winning film, "The Road to Patagonia".

I can honestly say that it's one of the greatest films I've ever seen. Filmed over 16 years it's a story about one legend on one legendary adventure. The film by Matty Hannon follows his journey from Alaska through to Patagonia, partly on motorbike and partly on horseback with surfboards in tow.

Myself and everyone that came along to watch were blown away by the magic of it all. It's sort of hard to describe what the film is about but you could say it's an adventure crossed with a love story crossed with a powerful message about the importance of humans connecting with nature and each other. It's well aligned with what Wollangarra is all about!

I want to give a massive shout out to Matty for giving us the opportunity to screen the film and wish him and Heather best of luck with the new bub, Alby Mar Hannon!

Smitho and Katie! xo

Stage III Update



The Stage Threes are busy bees! A group of us got our business suits on at the Off Grid Living Festival and we drove a hard bargain to sell the merch we made. Rosie and I joined Smitho up on stage to chat about why we love the Woll community as young people, and I think it is safe to say that by the end of the weekend everyone there knew of our existence! Lots of planning for various happenings with the addition of our monthly meetings, some of which become dinner parties which always makes them more fabulous, the last one even included apple pie for dessert thanks to Essie. We've got a Stage III flat week this July holidays to help tick off some Woll projects and hike ideas are being thrown around for a Spring weekend getaway. Trivia night is coming up and we are hard at work organising to ensure it will be a blast. We are all excited seeing our efforts start to pay off as Stage III keeps getting bigger and better. If you want to see what we are up to follow along with us on the Stage III insta and I hope to see lots of youse at trivia so sharpen up those quiz skills!

How to get involved

Follow us on social media! Smitho loves the instagram (@wollangarra), and is always sharing little snippets of life at Woll, funny photos of our crew, and important info about working bees and programs :).

Also, Woll has a blog now! Who woulda thought. Blogangarra is a collection of articles all about Wollangarra, and the stories that make the place what it is. So if you're keen to read even more about this crazy place, go check it out at <https://wollangarra.org/blogangarra?blog=y>.



Volunteer at Wollangarra in 2024...

You don't have to be a young person to experience all that a Wollangarra program has to offer! We're passionate about providing opportunities for everyone to get involved and fall in love with the mountains (or just spend some time there if you already love them as much as us). A week at Wollangarra can be filled with so many things, from being involved in a quality outdoor education program hiking in the high country, to spending time in the garden, or cooking in the cozy Woll kitchens and getting dressed up for a Thursday night feast! If this sounds like your kind of adventure, then volunteering at Woll may be your cup of tea.

We would love to welcome you into our community, or have you back if you've been here before, so if you're interested - give us a call! We love having vollies around, and programs are running most weeks for the rest of the year so there's no shortage of chances to get involved.

Program Leader 2024

Keen to join the team!?

We're on the lookout for someone up for a bit of a life adventure! We've got an opening for the right person to join us for the rest of 2024 and/or potentially someone to stay on for a full 12 month stint (mid year to mid year).

If you're interested, please let us know! For details on the position and what's involved etc., please check out position description on the website at <https://wollangarra.org/jobs-at-wollangarra>

How can you help us out?

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 hiking groups. They are then given the opportunity to return on follow-up programs and become involved in a vibrant community.

However, in order to continue running these programs we need your help! A non-profit organisation, 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 us 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:

STUFF WE NEED (AKA THE WISHLIST)

- A hills hoist clothesline
- Woolly Jumpers (must be 100% wool, and we need more of the larger sizes)
- Thermals! (we need either polypropelene or wool thermals of all sizes... especially bottoms, and the larger sizes)
- Standard wheelie bins
- Decent head torches for the gear store
- Watering cans
- Sewing needles
- Decent hiking boots (in small sizes!)

If you've got anything on this list lying around that could find a new home at Wollangarra, give us a call! Also check the website (<https://wollangarra.org/wishlist>) for updates on the wishlist.

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

**Fox Flyers**

The Fox Flyers are a community of Wollangarra supporters who are pledging to donate \$50 a month. This consistent support helps contribute to the stability of Wollangarra to ensure we're able to keep doing what we do. Your donation will support us to upgrade our homestead, provide volunteer experience for students and industry newcomers, and, most importantly, continue to bring young people back into Victoria's mountains.

The Fox Flyer program will help us with major projects such as:

1. Replacement of floor boards (\$25k)
2. Upgrade and maintenance of kitchen and wood stove (\$15K)
3. Installing a new tank stand to supply fresh drinking water to the main kitchen (\$6K)

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.

If you're interested, check out the website (<https://wollangarra.org/fox-flyers>) for more information, or give us a call. We're tackling some big projects this year, and any and all support makes a real difference in keeping the momentum going.

Thank You

Loz, Fede, Jahla, Roly & Flow for comms training, help with the shower, amazing gardening & just fun times

Maeve being an amazingly helpful volunteer, and just fun to have visit

Zoe for volunteering before our first program, and helping screen print for Off Grid Festival

Rosie volunteering on the April Stage I

Robin for being super helpful

Essie, Tex, Charlotte & Liz for volunteering on the April Stage II

Simo & Josie the chooks! Also, woodchop prep, shower building help, and good chats

Margaret for crafty donations, and endless Woll support

Tegan & Michael for tea towels (and a lovely letter)

Ralph all the things... fixing tents, fixing the fridges (more than once), bringing us fruit, supplying U bolts to fix trailers etc.

Wayne, Bev & Kirsty for helping us with our sheep, and for a lovely dinner and constant kindness

Vern Graham all the help

Heyfield Post Office for the newspaper

Heyfield Community Resource Centre all the help

Brian Beasley for a lovely letter

Andy (ACE training) for a super fun 4WD and chainsaw training

Sam & Alex for volunteering on the May Open Stage I

Woody amazing wool socks

Renata for the haircuts

Dante for bring heaps of treats, and taking Floyd fishing

The Brady Family for unwavering support and help, especially over the woodchop weekend

Freya for hot water bottles, and bringing us dinner and treats

Indi & Hamish for a delicious burger dinner

Max all the help with woodchop, coming back to volunteer and cooking us dinner

John & Hazel Brady for help with the shower, and being a kitchen whizz

Jett for volunteering the week before woodchop, and help over woodchop

Ivy for volunteering the week before woodchop, and again in July, and all her help over the woodchop weekend. And bringing snacks!

Dan Brown for the kitchen extravaganza over woodchop

Virgil & Julie for help with the shower and woodchop supervising

Brooke for sheep geniusness

Ross for help with PVCC and burning stumps

Cass for the amazingly delicious brownies

Dane (Glenfalloch) letting us chop wood in your paddock

Al & Lucy Sleeping bags, fire barrel and the amazing pruning

Everyone who came to woodchop for chopping wood, bringing delicious cakes, helping in the kitchen, and everything else!

Reiner for help in the lead up to, and over the weekend of, woodchop

Meg, Jenna & Ness for volunteering on the PVCC program

Matty Hannon for allowing us to screen 'The Road to Patagonia

Macpac for some sweet new thermals

Woll council for your unwavering support and kindness

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