Newsletter Summer

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Director's Report

Hello from Katie, Smitho, Frankie, Floyd and Pearl (and Maddog)!

So... our little family has made the big move and travelled all the way across the country to join the extended Woll family for a bit. It's been a long journey and, just like all good journeys, it's also been quite an adventure...

For our little mob the adventure began in Margaret River, Western Australia. After a good few months of pouring over "pros and cons" lists we finally made the leap, packed up home and began a month long road trip from West to East.

Since taking our initial flight over the Wirn wirndook Yeerung (Macalister) River on the well-loved flying fox, our days have been long and full of stuff. Some good stuff, some mind-blowing stuff and some tricky stuff. There's been laughs, tears and all the other stuff in between. There's been lawn mowing, hiking, staff training, swimming, homeschooling, fixing, fishing, and cups of tea. There's been zhuzhing, baking, sheep wrangling, wood carting, painting, music playing, fruit bottling and more cups of tea. The cups of tea are nice because it makes you stop for a minute, but we can tell you we've been pretty bloody busy in between those cups of tea!

It feels like it's been a long haul but we're getting settled in and it's feeling quite lovely. We've had an abundance of people offering support and helping in all sorts of ways. We've seen familiar faces dropping in to lend a hand and plenty of new faces also dropping in to offer their support.

Ourselves and our amazing staff team are all pretty chuffed with what we've achieved since arriving on the flat. The place is looking great, and we've made some pretty amazing friends. We're feeling like we've come a long way but are also excited to think that the adventure is just beginning with plenty more stuff to do and plenty more friends to meet!

We hope you're all doing well and hope to see you soon!

Cheers!

Katie, Smitho, Frankie, Floyd and Pearl.

Welcome 2024 Staff!



Flynn Haubold

If you ask Flynn where he's from, you'll get a long list including (but not limited to) South Korea, King Island and Vietnam... but originally, Flynn's from Wollangarra... the first "Woll baby" to return as a staff member! The shepherd of 2024, Flynn can often be found with 23 sheep in tow. Aside from his sheep, Flynn loves fishing, his car and the sound of two stroke engines (his words, not mine). We love Flynn for his sense of humour, his ability to fix almost any problem, his kindness, his farts (they're real bad), and his charm. Flynn brings loads of Woll experience to the team, having spent many weeks at Woll as a young person and volunteer and is "keen for it all" this year. - Maya



Casper Reed

Casper aka Caz, has been coming to Woll as a YP since 2017. Caz was the first staffy to join the 2024 team! He got first choice of the bedrooms and has gone with the 'powerful women's room'. He loves to run late to morning meetings, recite us Dr. Seuss, ride his bike, cook delicious food and clean the sludge pit. Casper brings a good sense a humour to the team. He's always up for an adventure, a cup of tea or a swim in the Mac. He's most looking forward to hanging out with young people in the high country and four-wheel drive training! - Jayda



Jayda Holman

Jayda Holman is a unique individual. Coming from the beautiful area of Yarra valley and doing schooling in Steiner she as some pretty nifty skills. She has the ability to weave baskets from scratch, some amazing musical talent which echos through the Wollangarra valley (and through the walls as staff try to sleep) and the ability to bring laughter and smiles to everyone. She also makes great nachos as a heads up. Her first time at Wollangarra was as staff and she's done an amazing job so far, we all can't wait to see what this year brings for everyone. - Flynn



The Smith Fam

Welcome to the Smith family!

Following an epic adventure all the way from Margret River, Western Australia, our new directors Smitho and Katie arrived with their Fam-Bam. Piling out of their car with the smell of sea salt and stinky wet suits they have fit in right at home.

Smitho's Wolly life began in 2010 as a staff member, along with his puppy Mad Dog (who's back again this year). He Loves music, gardening, digging holes and hiking.

Katie first arrived at Wollangarra in December with the rest of the family. Her loving nature is a welcome feeling for everyone in the homestead. She loves gardening, the beach, cooking and her kids.

Frankie, Floyd & Pearl... Here comes trouble! Just kidding, these are some of the most kind and understanding kids around. Growing up loving and exploring the outdoors these kids love playing around the flat. Frankie loves reading, Floyd loves riding Casper's bike & Pearl loves BUGS!!! - Casper



Maya Carlyon

Maya's smile brightens every room and all of our hearts here on the flat. She has spent time as a young person at both Wollangarra and Mittagundi and being an integral part of the Volunteer force in late 2023 she's a wealth of Wollie knowledge. Hailing from an amazing biodynamic farm (and family!) near Flinders, Maya is our resident scientist, specialising in physics and has all the answers for the questions we contemplate about the cosmos over breakfast. Maya is an amazing violinist, baker, knitter, list maker and avid reader and is honestly one of the finest people you could meet. — Katie



Emma Ward

Emma is nothing short of an absolute gem and it's an understatement to say that we are 100% stoked to have her on the Wolly team this year. Emma is our part time team member and our amazing stage 3 coordinator for the year. Based in Melbourne, Emma is juggling a part time job as a speech therapist which is a role she is passionate about. This year Emma is balancing the love for her job and her love for Wollangarra by joining us for our holiday programs and any other time that she can squeeze it in!

Emma is right at home in outdoor adventures and has an impressive list of hikes and adventures under her belt. Emma brings with her an abundance of joyful skills including guitar playing, singing, piano playing, water colour painting and she is an absolute gun at washing dishes (a knight worthy skill to have at Woll!). Emma has ½ a teaspoon of sugar in her tea and to repeat things that are worth repeating, Emma is an absolute gem! - Smitho

Mittagundi Festival

What a weekend! Mitta Fest 2024 was an absolute blast. The annual event held at Mittagundi in January marks the start of the new year for a fresh group of staff and a great goodbye to the staff of 2023. Kicking off with a bush dance held in the Glen Valley Hall on Friday set the mood just right. A turnout of 80+ people all having a great time with a meal and a boogie was heaps of fun. Then to the main event! Mitta Fest, to those who don't know, shares a similar atmosphere to Wollangarra's Open Day. The Weekend was jam packed with activities, demonstrations, amazing food including a Cafe run by our amazing Stage 3's, a fantastic auction of amazing hand made items from across the Mittagundi community, the intense and amazing Olympics, live music (including our own Jayda and Smitho) and so much more. An awesome first adventure for the 2024 staff team!







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Fruit Bottling Weekend

Fruit Bottling 2024 was a success! A huge success! The event was, to our new staff team, slightly daunting... but as always, the Wollangarra community proved that we had nothing to be worried about. With a turnout of around 50 amazing young people, friends, family members, ex-staff, and just general Wolly legends we were able to preserve around 500kg of fruit for future programs! I can't quite express how amazing this was, especially given that we were working under a total fire ban, which makes cooking a bit of a logistical nightmare at Woll.

Not only did we preserve fruit - with everyone keen to pitch in, so many other tasks were accomplished over the weekend including (but certainly not limited to) a huge clean of the Stage 3 building, big garden cleanup missions and fixing a rickshaw. Thank you to everyone who came, keen to lend a hand wherever needed and help us out as we get Woll cleaned up for the year ahead.

Fruit Bottling also highlighted the strength of the beautiful community that exists around Wollangarra. As a staff team, this was our first event, and also Woll's first community event in quite some time - Woll truly thrives when the flat is full of people and it was heartwarming to have everyone here, excited to be back at Woll! The willingness of the Wollangarra community to donate a weekend of their time to help out bottling fruit, and the atmosphere created as young people share Woll with their family for the first time and Woll 'veterans' return yet again reinforces why we do things the way we do, even though they might be a little unconventional sometimes. Not only do these amazing people help Woll out, and get the chance to learn something new or share Woll with someone new... hopefully the work they do inspires a future young person to return to Wollangarra and give back too.













SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR NEXT COMMUNITY EVENT... WOODCHOP!

King's Birthday Long Weekend: June 8th – June 10th

So what have we been up to for the last three months...?

Staff Training

The first couple months at Woll have been filled with training... Hike training (we're now qualified in bushwalking!) as well as some staff hikes to check out beautiful spots in the high country to share with young people. A week of Wilderness First Aid and Mental Health First Aid training, a Bronze Medallion course and heaps more unofficial training - like learning about the environment around Woll, and how to manage fire at Woll. From all of us, we'd like to extend a huge huge thank you to everyone who has shared their knowledge with us over the last few months. And we still have more training to go, with a 4WD course and chainsaw training coming up soon!

We've all learnt so much in such a short time, skills that'll not only help us this year but last well beyond a year at Wollangarra and we're all getting really excited to start running programs and putting all these new qualifications into practice. A lot of our training has been shared with the amazing 2024 Mittagundi staff team too, and it's been lovely to getting to hang out with them and build the connection between these two awesome organisations.







Wollangarra Flat Update

Mixed in with training have been many days spent busy on the flat. Flat days can mean absolutely anything... from carting endless piles of op shop donations and other random bits and bobs across the flying fox, to turning the kitchen (and toolshed, and gear store and pretty much every building at Woll) inside out and giving them a much needed clean, to cleaning the vehicles and preparing for programs... just generally "zhuzhing up" Wollangarra! It's been amazing to have the time to get settled in our new home, get on top of jobs and get the flat looking great before we jump into programs for the year. We've been keeping pretty busy, so here's a little update on what's been going on:

- Gear store clean-out and stocktake (including group gear shelf and the loft above the breezeway)
- Stage 3 zhuzh
- Indoor Kitchen and Outdoor Kitchen massive zhuzh!
- Massive coolstore clean (including the loft!)
- Toolshed clean-out and zhuzh!
- Shower building repairs and tidy up
- Toilets are in the process of being "zhuzhed"
- Swimming hole has been zhuzhed
- Troopie car wash day!! (many hours spent at the Heyfield car wash)
- Generally sorting out all the random piles of STUFF that Woll tends to accumulate
- 50+ sleeping bags washed!
- Acquiring some chickens for Woll!
- Losing the sheep... the sheep returning... the sheep finding a new hole in the fence... and repeat

Wollangarra Summer "Best, Worst & Funniest"

It'd be pretty boring for you to read about (and me to write about) the ins and outs of every single week of training, and the weeks of flat work we've done, so instead here's a debrief (and a fair few photos) loved by the 2024 staff team - a "Best, Worst & Funniest" of the last few months at Wollangarra!

Best!

- Clean toolshed! Casper
- I dunno, it's all good... well, most of it. The best bit is getting to be here and live at Woll in this gorgeous valley. Flynn
- Watching Woll get transformed. Maya (and everyone really)
- Wombats wiggly bums Katie
- Settling in to the 2024 staff crew, and making Woll our home. Jayda
- Hiking to Conglomerate Falls with my friends and fam on a weekend off. Casper
- Mittagundi bush dance Jayda
- Learning how to airdrop Smitho
- Casper fainting in WFA training Smitho
- Catching a fish Floyd
- Watching the first aid scenarios Floyd
- Watching staff training (and finding bugs!) Pearl
- Watching the place get tidied up Pearl
- Dancing on the table with Rosie at Mittagundi Frankie
- Flynn's flock of sheep Katie
- The Rooster! Katie (and everyone actually)
- That time that Katie made as a really un-Woll dinner Maya
- Staff training hikes (our job is hiking!) Maya
- Learning amazing tech skills from the staff crew. I had no idea that an I phone could do such nifty things. - Smitho

Not so best...

- Cleaning said Toolshed Casper
- Stepping on a snake Jayda
- Non stop rain Floyd
- The smell of Casper's sludge pit (especially when it's being cleaned) Flynn
- Hauling some really heavy rubbish across the fox from Tussocky, and then across the main fox. Casper
- So. Much. Cleaning. Maya
- Hauling massive fruit bottling food orders across the fox way too late in the evening. Maya
- Learning that the staff crew had not heard of NOFX or a whole bunch of other outstanding music from my youth. Smitho

Funniest ©

- Flynn's Flock (aka the sheep running down hills, chasing people when they want food, escaping and returning multiple times, always ending up in the wrong paddock). Flynn (and Katie, and everyone)
- Finding all the missing photo albums in the roof!? collective laughs
- The Rooster! again, quality amusement for all
- Katie's answer to "not so best" was no comment. Smitho
- Sister things when Tali visited. Jayda
- Stage Three Hike laughs. Casper
- Flynn's farts and the aftermath (climbing out the kitchen window). Pearl
- Rosie's legendary acting in our Triage first aid scenario. Maya
- The Not Square square. all, whether that be laughing or shaking heads
- Funniest: That time that guy did that funny thing and we all laughed. What a classic!



















Around the Wollangarra Flat

As part of home schooling, the Smith crew have been writing newsletter articles about things they are interested in around the Wollangarra flat \odot .

Australian Bass - by Floyd Smith

Bass are a great sport fish, and are amazing for eating. They come out at sunrise and sunset. They like eating crickets, snakes, lizards and flying insects. Bass like hiding near fallen trees. Bass are not meant to be in the Macalister river. They were introduced as fingerlings by the fisheries department. They usually breed in salty water.

Brad Pryce Award



A few weeks ago, I had the incredible opportunity to join the 2024 Wollie Family on a journey to Mittagundi for my Wilderness First Aid Qualifications. Thanks to Conrad's support and sponsorship, I was able to have an unforgettable experience at Mittagundi. Staying with the Mittagundi Staff was a delight and our teacher, Dave, was truly exceptional. The week was filled with learning, laughter, and great company. I now feel more confident and prepared to embark on what I hope to be many more adventures, knowing now that I have the skills and knowledge to help and support others. Going into the

training I was a little bit nervous, as I didn't know what to expect, but it exceeded all my expectations and I had an absolute blast!

The swims I had during that week were amazing, as well as some late night chats and dancing with the Kids. Over the course of the week it was wonderful to see how quickly we all learned to work together and apply our new skills in a simulated emergency situation, some of the survival techniques we learned were truly impressive as well. The mass(ish) scenario where everyone took turns to assess patients one by one was definitely one of my favourites: the acting skills of everyone involved were top-notch, not to mention extremely hilarious. Overall, the experience at Mittagundi was truly wonderful and I am so grateful for the opportunity to have been part of it. It was a week filled with growth, fun, and unforgettable memories.

Stage III Update

Thanks again to the Woll and Mitta Staff Teams, Dave our Teacher, Conrad for the incredible opportunity, and Emma Ward for driving me back home afterwards Xx

So what is Stage III?

Stage 3 is an opportunity for Wollangarra young people to continue to be involved in the Woll community beyond Stage 2 programs. Stage 3's are encouraged to get out into the mountains on their own and explore beyond the high country they've seen with Woll. It's an opportunity for young people to become a little more independent, whilst still having the home base of Wollangarra. Stage 3 also takes part in organising fundraising efforts for Woll, and themselves, in aiming towards some self sufficiency in the adventures they go on as well as remaining pivotal parts of the Wollangarra community.

January Stage III Hike!

In January we hiked from lan's house in Harrietville to Mittagundi for Mitta Fest! In the past, Stage Three has hiked to the festival to help out and volunteer, and we were keen to start that up again, do the hike and volunteer at Mitta Fest. This hike involved a lot of planning - a special thanks to Ivy Anderson, Rosie Maslin, Alkira Aares, our hike leaders Casper Reed and Georgia Mitchell, and the wider Woll community for helping this hike happen.

We eagerly started our adventure at lan's staying there the first night filled with good chats and stories. Ian reckoned our hike sushi plans were a bit much, but we assured him our bellies were in for a treat! First stop was Federation Hut and then a race up to the summit of Mt Feathertop for sunset – the kind you only get atop an Alpine Mountain, surrounded by burnt orange sky. Our journey continued to Weston's Hut and Cope Hut then Wild Horse Creek and finally arriving at Mitta. Things I remember... filling our hats with cool clear spring water and it dripping over our heads, singing songs walking into Wild Horse Creek, reciting the Grinch together, Casper waking us each morning with a song or story, swimming at Blairs Hut, and cooling our sore hot feet after going down Diamantina in the cold cold creek... ahhhh!

Thanks for an amazing hike together, Stage Threes - Alkira Aares, Eloise Bisley, Ivy Anderson, Phoenix Lachal, Rosie Maslin, Tom McLachlan, and Ursula Stephens.

Jasper Hall







Thank You

A little update...

The Stage Three crew is working hard at Wollangara and in the city to make things happen. Over fruit bottling weekend the Stage Three building got a much needed zhuzh. Who knew we had so much stuff! It's definitely been a while since the building has looked this good, everything was taken out and given a thorough clean and cull, before being returned to its place in a far more organised way. That's not all we've been up to though, closer to Melbourne we've been hard at work making merchandise for Off The Grid Living Festival, which is very soon. We have had the lovely Emma join us as a stage three coordinator, who has been amazing already, hosting a screen printing day last Sunday. We are screen printing shirts, bags, tea towels, and everything in between to sell at the festival to raise money for Stage Three and Wollangarra. Keep an eye out on the socials for information about upcoming events, such as Trivia night, and for more frequent updates chuck the stage three instagram account a follow.

- Ivy Anderson

Dan O'Brien + Wil Ald: For helping the Smith Fam move in across the fox!

Jett Pearson: For sharpening all of our knives, building a new hotplate for ODK fire place and general legendness.

Dave Cadogen + Willie + Jett: for helping move solar systems over to tussocky

Dave: (again) for a huge tip run including a piano

Xanthe + Sarah: for dropping by for an evening and delivering us some amazing delicious berries and ice cream

Ross Richards: for his amazing job at slashing some paddocks for the Wollie crew

Oscar + Ted: for cement, bringing a mower home and cooking up an amazing feast

Ralph: For his primo weather knowledge, amazing plums apples and a handful of peaches

Francis: For bottling some of our own delicious plums, and all her help with fruit bottling

Sally Freeman-Smith: For delivering us some fresh hiking boots and being some amazing help on Jan Stage 1

Kelly Reed: For sourcing the hiking boots

One Planet: For supporting Woll with the hiking boots and sleeping bags

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Dan O'Brien and Bushy Dan: For being some amazing legends on Jan Stage 1

Vern Graham Mitre 10 Staff: For always being happy to help the crew!

Kathy from the Heyfield Library: For being a legend

Freya: For an amazing wealth of knowledge on the environment around Woll and sharing it with the staff

OETI Crew: For helping the staff team get bush walk qualified

Jay Riley + Ross Richards: For helping with a huge tidy up and testing the sprinkler systems.

Council Shout Out: Getting on board with 2024 crew to help woll to run amazingly great

Emma Ward: For being a legend from helping with screen printing and stage 3 shenanigans

Tali: for amazing help and hard work at Fruit Bottling

Raff + Eliza: For amazing blackberry jam and some incredibly delicious spaghetti

Paul Wiley: For fixing one of our rickshaws, rooster help and fixing some sprinklers

Jade Bishop: For helping with our wild beagle and a donation of dog food

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Peter Abikair: For a place to crash when needed

Bushy Dan: For an excellent Staff reccy hike

Mitta Crew, Survive First aid (DJ Dave) and Pharus wellbeing (Chopper, Daniel): For an amazing Week of wilderness First Aid, Mental Health First Aid and some shenanigans

Chrissy (Nanny Noo Noo): For being an amazing help for the time she was here

Dulux: For making an incredible paint donation

Rosie Maslin: For being an amazing Stage 3 and being Rosie in general including bringing an Op Shop to our very own flat

Margaret Beckett: For making some new munchie bags and some pillow cases

Simo + Finn: For helping install the solar panels

The Neaves Family: For hosting an amazing dinner and a tour of their dairy

O'shea Family: for digging a cable trench

Brady Family + Luka: For some amazing legendness, picking up our NSM order, Hazel for doing a sourdough lesson and John For his incredible hard work over the whole fruit bottling weekend

The range of people who donated: Boxes of fruit, food items and items off of the Wishlist

Stella (Freya's little child): for some amazing cute words and moments

Robin (Maya's mum): For her amazing her help and friendliness over the weekend

Ivy Anderson and everyone who helped in the kitchen

Ellie Ware: For donating some seedlings

What's happening next for Wollangarra



Probably as you're reading this newsletter we are running our first program of the year! It'll be amazing to have young people back at Woll, and up exploring the stunning high country that we are so lucky to be able to call home for the year.



2024 Program Dates!

April Holiday Stage 2: Monday April 8 - Friday April 12... FULLY BOOKED, but there's a waitlist!

July Holiday Stage 1: July 1 - July 5 July Holiday Stage 2: July 8 - July 12

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

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.

Resources we need (aka the Wollie Wishlist): 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 questions about anything you think we might be able to use (03 5148 0492). Also, this wish list is on the website https://wollangarra.org/wishlist and being updated often!

- Hills hoist clothesline!
- 4 x steel 44 gallon drums (we need watertight ones with lids - we're replacing the homestead fire drums)
- a lawn mower! (there's a LOT of lawn to mow here, and we've currently only got one push mower. We're looking for a good quality push mover, ideally a commercial one with a larger cutting diameter... a ride on wouldn't be scoffed at either!)
- tea towels (always and forever... if anyone knows where they all disappear too, give us a call haha)

- AA and AAA batteries
- queen sized mattress (we're chasing one in good condition - it's needed for one of our staff bedrooms)
- fencing wire (one roll of half decent stuff will do the job)
- standard wheelie bins
- stainless steel clothes pegs
- 2 x dutch ovens
- 2 x head torches (hopefully some solid ones with rechargeable batteries)
- 2 x watering cans
- heavy duty dry bags

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

Wollangarra has just launched a fundraising campaign. We are all in "go" mode, and have been making some solid progress on some well needed infrastructure and grounds management of the property. We're really proud of what we've achieved in a pretty small amount of time and we want to keep this momentum going! Our calendar is packed with events and holiday programs etc. and the place is buzzing with good vibes ©. We are in a position in which we can really keep this momentum happening – we just need some extra funds!

The generosity and support we've received so far has been amazing, from the smallest of contributions to the bigger ones, everything makes a difference, and we'd like to extend a huge, huge thank you to our amazing community.

If you'd like to help us keep moving in the right direction by sharing the link to our fundraiser: https://www.mycause.com.au/page/331904/keep-wollangarra-secondhand-and-solid.



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.

