Wollangarra
Outdoor Education Centre

Wollangarra's School Programs - Teacher Information 2025

What is Wollangarra?
Wollangarra is where down-to-earth adventure meets practical education for young people. Tucked away in the breath-taking Victorian High Country, Wollangarra offers a hands-on approach to learning about life, leadership, and environmental care. Here, young people find a welcoming community that values hard work, simple living, and connection to the land. Join us for an honest and exciting experience where friendships grow, confidence builds, and the next generation learns to be thoughtful stewards of our environment.

Each week a new group of young people will come across our flying fox and get to experience a way of life that has largely been forgotten. They leave behind their mobile phones, watches and timetables. They bake bread, split wood, tend the veggie garden, collect the eggs and feed the sheep. Young people are given opportunities to make decisions and are encouraged to contribute positively and feel like a valued community member. They hike, camp out, cook over open fires, and partake in discussion about life, the environment and the impacts society has on these things.

Our Ethos
Simple and Purposeful
Wollangarra's programs offer young people a chance to slow down and immerse themselves in activities they can grow from

Connection by Engagement
Meaningful connections are achieved via a shared sense of achievement and purpose

Education by Nature
We let nature do the talking and aim to inspire awe and respect for our natural environment by walking in the amazing country that is Wollangarra's backyard!

Our local mountains

Morning Alarm Clock

Our programs

Stage 1 - Meeting the Mountains

Wollangarra's renowned introductory program, Meeting the Mountains, offers young people from 14 –17 years the chance to discover the joy of hiking in our beautiful mountains. Young people journey in small, well organised and fully supervised hiking groups. With these expeditions Wollangarra hopes to encourage an awareness of our environment.

Stage 2 - Helping the Mountains

Stage Two is a unique opportunity for young people who enjoyed their Wollangarra Stage 1 to come back, get their hands dirty, visit more amazing mountains, and meet lots of other like-minded individuals.

Stage 3 - Adopting the Mountains

Stage Three is a dynamic, strong community of active young people who engage in purposeful, practical conservation and recreation in Victoria's mountains and at home.

Victorian Curriculum Links

Critical and Creative Thinking

Our small, self-sufficient hiking groups provide authentic opportunities for group and individual problem-solving, as well as innovative thinking about managing themselves, working together, navigation, and self-reflection.

Personal and Social Capability-

Our programs encourage skills in communication, collaboration, and resilience, aligning with the curriculum's focus on developing responsible citizens. Throughout the 5 days, the program fosters a sense of empowerment and agency in students as they participate as part of a community.

Sustainability Cross Curriculum Priority

Wollangarra's programs emphasise the relationships between people, environments, and communities. Our programs provide opportunities to discuss global and local environmental issues, encouraging students to consider differing worldviews and future solutions. We further provide experiential learning by 'doing' about sustainable lifestyles, encouraging students to reflect on their values and ethical responsibilities towards the environment

Interested in bringing your school to Wollangarra?

Great news! All school groups participate in our five-day introductory program - Stage 1: Meeting the Mountains. If your students enjoy their Stage 1 program, they can return to Wollangarra independently in their school holidays on our Stage 2 and 3 programs.

Stage 1 Program Objectives:

- To engage students in experiential learning about the interconnectedness of community and the environment
- To develop teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills through a hiking journey.
- To foster an understanding of sustainability and environmental stewardship

Program Overview

- 5-day program - including a 3 day hike
- Capacity for 24 students per program
- **Cost:** we have a tiered program to try and ensure access to Wollangarra for all schools. Please contact us for 2025 prices.

What makes Wollangarra's programs unique?

It can be hard to describe unless you have been to Woll. We are a small organisation. We have been built by and run by our community for 30 years. We do things simply and slowly, in a time when it feels like the world is the opposite. Many Young people continue to return to Woll after their Stage 1 program, and often continue being part of the Wollangarra community for years to come.

A hike group in the high country

Storytelling around the campfire

Program Itinerary
This is a brief overview of what happens on a typical Stage 1 program.

Monday (prepping for the hike)
You'll travel to Wollangarra (either via public transport or private bus). Once you arrive (via the Flying Fox across the Macalister River), we'll show you around the property and then split into small groups to rotate through jobs to prepare for the hike. Jobs include thoroughly packing for the hike, baking bread, cooking hike snacks, preparing dinner, and working in the garden. We will then have dinner together around the fire and talk about the week ahead. That night, teachers will meet with hike leaders to discuss the week ahead and determine the hike groups.

Tuesday (head off hiking)
We'll be up early for breakfast and complete the last bit of packing. We will then split into our hiking groups and head off. Depending on where we are hiking, this may involve walking straight from the Wollangarra property or driving in Wollangarra vehicles higher into the mountains to the beginning of the hike (max 2-hour drive). We will hike as a group to the first campsite, set up camp, cook dinner over the campfire, share stories, and then head off to bed.

Wednesday (hiking)
This is a full day of hiking, hopefully with some good views, a hearty lunch, plenty of snacks, and some good laughs. Once we reach camp, we will follow the same routine as the day before.

Thursday (hiking back to Woll)
This is the last day of hiking. We will cook breakfast over the fire, pack up, and head off. Along the way, we will complete the "Letters to Self" activity, where students will spend time alone writing a reflective letter to themself that we will post to them in three months' time. We hike back to Woll or use the vehicles and return to the property via the Flying Fox. Back at the flat, we will unpack from the hike, have a hot shower, put on the Wollangarra dress-ups, and enjoy a celebratory dinner and dessert around the homestead dining table. The two groups will debrief together around the fire about their hike experience.

A classic Woll style hike lunch

Friday (pack up and travel home)
After breakfast, we will spend the morning doing some jobs, packing up, and then begin the walk out. To leave Wollangarra, young people walk the Telephone Track to Cheyne's Bridge (around 2 km). Along the walk, you will get a few good glimpses of the Wollangarra homestead and the local mountains. From Cheyne's Bridge, you can either meet your bus or we can transport you to Heyfield to catch public transport back home.

Frequently Asked Questions from Interested Schools

What program do schools do?
We run Stage 1 Meeting the Mountains programs for school groups. Young people who wish to return in their school holidays for a Stage 2 program undertake this independently.

Do you arrange transportation to and from Wollangarra?
No, that is for the school to organise. We can pick you up and drop you off in Heyfield if you choose to take public transport, which is usually a less costly and environmentally friendly option. However, you are also welcome to organise a coach or minibus to our front gate.

What equipment do students need to provide?
Not much. We have a gear shed full of all the things you will need to go hiking - including tents, sleeping bags, sleeping mats, thermals, hats, rainwear, gaiters, hiking boots, woolen jumpers, and more. Students are welcome to bring their own gear if they have it. However, if it is not fit-for-purpose we may ask them to use ours anyway. Mostly students need to bring clothes to hike in and we can supply the rest.

Where do we go hiking?
We have a few different hikes in the local mountains that we use on Stage 1 programs. Where we go will depend on a few factors such as the time of year and weather. When the conditions are right, we love to take young people up into the high country to places such as Bryce's Gorge and Wellington Highplains. There are also great local hikes along the Macalister River and the Channels.

About to head across the River on the Flying Fox

How difficult is the hike?
These hikes are intended to be an introductory hike.
No previous experience hiking is needed. When you arrive, we will give you tips on effectively packing your hiking packs, adjusting them so that they fit well, as well as setting up tents etc. The hike is also intended to have a few achievable challenges, such as hiking to a summit, which often come with great views, opportunities to support each other and a feeling of achievement.

Are you an accredited outdoor education provider?

Yes. Wollangarra is accredited with the Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC). This is the main governing tourism body in Victoria. They use the Quality Tourism Framework to accredit organisations and ensure that stringent safety measures are put in place and audit camps on a regular basis. We also are members of the Australian Camps Association and Outdoors Victoria to ensure that we are getting the most up-to-date outdoor education industry information and standards - including Australian Adventure Activity Standards.

How many teachers need to accompany a group?
This depends on your school's policies. Our programs can run without any teachers at all, as we supply our own qualified staff. However, most schools prefer to send one teacher as a school representative. Up to two teachers may accompany the group at no additional cost. Every teacher after that is charged the standard student price.

Time in Lieu?
If time in lieu is a barrier to your school considering a program at Woll, let us know. We have a few suggestions on how we can help you to reduce the total accrued hours on your end.

Is the teacher required to participate?
Absolutely. We explain to the young people at the beginning of the week that we are all a community, which means each of us needs to do our part to make the community work effectively. This includes teachers. We ask that they participate in the hike and all other group activities, especially as it is a unique opportunity to get to know their students outside of the classroom environment.

Are the Wollangarra staff sufficiently trained and experienced?

A hike group at the summit

Yes they are! We have a mixture of trained outdoor professionals and staff with experience in a variety of different areas. When out hiking, each group is accompanied by a Wollangarra staff member, and they each have their Wilderness First Aid, Bronze Medallion, Bushwalking and 4WD qualifications, and they are also trained in behavior management, mental health, and group dynamics. They operate under strict protocols for wilderness areas set up by Wollangarra.

How do I explain the camp to the students?
Wollangarra staff are always happy to give a school talk to attending young people (and their families, if so desired). We can make sure they are prepared with the right gear, answer any questions and make sure they are clear about what to expect for their week with us.

What about program changes? How about a longer program?
We are happy to chat to you about what program you are hoping for. There are a few things that can change, including longer programs. And there are a few things that can't, that make our program unique and have been working really well for 30 years. Give us a call.

Still not really sure what Wollangarra is about?
That's fair. It is a hard place to understand without having been there. There are a few blog posts on our website that try to convey the 'essence' of Woll. And some great videos on our social media. You are also welcome to give us a call.

How do I book in my school?
Please give us a call or email if you are interested in discussing dates and we can answer any other questions you may have.

Just a reminder though, as there is no electricity (and then also no internet) on the Woll flat we are sometimes a little slower to respond to emails. If you want to speak with us quickly, a call on the landline is the quickest way to speak with us

The high country

Chats around the campfire

Contact us:

Phone: (03) 5148 0492
Email: directors@wollangarra.org.au

Website: https://wollangarra.org/
Instagram: @wollangarra
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