Wollangarra
Outdoor Education Centre

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Spring/Summer Newsletter

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GUNAIKURNAI COUNTRY

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Katie and Smitho's Farewell

Righteo then…
This is the last newsletter "directors report" from Katie and Smitho. We better make it a good one!
On our last program of 2025 (and our last Wollie program ever ☹), we took our legendary Stage 2 mob up into the mountains and embraced the ultimate Wollie magic. We hiked in classic Wollie dress-ups, we cooked on open fires in classic Wollie pots and we stopped on top of mountains to eat classic Wollie munchies. There was an air of classic Wollie silliness, and it seems right to say that we had the greatest time ever. The mountains knew that this program was a momentous one and so they put on a show for us. The sunsets and sunrises that we witnessed from our mountain top camps were something else. There were times when we laughed together, times when we sat in awe-inspired silence together and there were times that we had deep and meaningful conversations about the future of the planet and what we can all do to make a difference.
The entire week was an adventure to remember, and it was a rippa way to finish!
As we type this (on a lovely, sunny morning with a symphony of birdsong cheering us along!), we're coming to the end of our time at Wollangarra. So, this directors report is a thank you… and a goodbye… and a nod to all of what makes Wollangarra Wollangarra.
To all the young people that have come through Wollangarra over the past couple of years - thank you. You've trusted this place, and us, with an important chapter of your journey. Watching you grow in confidence, resilience, kindness and self-belief has been the greatest privilege of being Directors.
To the staff - past and present. Maya, Flynn, Jayda, Mabel, Cosi, Abbey, Rosie and Rowan, you guys are the magic. You make Wollangarra what it is. You hold space, set tone, tell stories, share, carry heavy loads (literal and otherwise), and show young people what it looks like to be capable, caring humans. We're endlessly grateful for your energy, humour, grit and heart. The friendship that you've held with our 3 kiddos is a gift and we're beyond stoked to be able to call you all our mates.
To the volunteers and Wollangarra Council - thank you for the mountains of work you do behind the scenes. Wollangarra is owned by no one, but held by many, and that only works because of committed, thoughtful people who genuinely care. The support, trust and friendship we've felt has been life-saving, heart-warming and pretty bloody special. We're stoked to be able to call all of you our mates too!
To parents, teachers, donors, Fox Flyers and the wider Wollangarra community - thank you for backing a simple idea: that time in nature, real work, and real community can change young lives. Your support keeps the fires burning, the tents standing, and the doors open.
And to Wollangarra itself - the river, the frost, the heat, the canvas tents, the vegie garden, the chooks, the stars, the stillness, the chaos - thank you for being exactly what you are. Honest. Unflashy. Magestical.
We're leaving feeling proud. Proud of the work done, proud of the people who carry this place forward, and confident that Wollangarra will keep doing what it has always done best - quietly, steadily, purposefully.
So… this sort of isn't really a goodbye. It's a bow of gratitude, a step aside and a big "yewww!" for what's ahead. We know it's going to be great.
We'll forever be Wollies.
With big love and thanks,
Katie and Smitho xoxo

Frankie's Farewell

Oh no that time has come to say goodbye. I have had such a special time here at Woll. At first I wasn't so sure about leaving all my friends in W.A but I have made so many awesome friends here at that it is going to be so sad to leave them all. I would like to thank all the stage II's for being such welcoming and fun people for me to hang out with over the last 2 years, especially my mopping crew, what fun we had while mopping, singing and gossiping. I don't think much mopping got done or if it did it was way longer than it needed to be but that doesn't matter, I will never forget how much fun I had with it! Thanks to all the volunteers and community for being so lovely and sharing your knowledge; The people at the Stag & Doe cafe, Ralph, Wayne, Kirsty, Bev and Turbo, Kate and Pete, Robin and Pete, Max, Dante, the lovely people at the Licola general store, and many more. Also all the teachers at Heyfield Primary school for being so flexible, kind and welcoming. Plus the teachers that have come up on programs have been super cool! Rosie Maslin, from my very first program here you made it your mission to be my friend, and look at us now we are connected by a chain to the hip. It was so nice to have you come up on programs, events, and to just hang out with me. Emma Ward you are super cool, smart and inspiring.Thank you for laughing, playing Monopoly deal, hanging out with us either on the flat or in the city. Tiare Wilson, where do I begin I have loved every second of my time with you. The baking, the laughs, scroll Saturday and crafternoons. I don't know what I would do without you. I would also like to thank the Thompson family (Joey, Isla, Noah, Emma and Trevor) for being awesome on events and programs and just being good friends. A huge thank you to Ian and Liv for making such a beautiful place that is home to so many people. Every one that has brought any cheese or yummy snacks needs a massive thank you (my favourite food is cheese). That's is not even nearly half the of the people I would like to thank and I probably have forgot someone important, so thank you to the people I am forgetting but need a huge thank you! Wollangarra is such a magical place it has taught me so much. The people have taught me so much. I am so lucky to live in such a beautiful place. It was just the other day that I had one of my favourite magic moments… I was swimming in the beautiful Macalister River watching the sun set over the hills and there was mist on the water. No matter how far into the year you are there is always something exciting or magical going on at Wollangarra. The biggest thank you would have to go to my Woll fam, aka the staff.You guys are super inspiring, cool humans. My years at Woll would not have been the same without you guys. Flynn Haubold, you are the most funniest person ever, but also super caring. Even though your farts are very stinky, my years at Woll would not have been as nice without you!:) Maya Carlyon, I love how you are always up for a adventure and how thoughtful and smart you are. Mabel Kean, an awesome, funny, caring human you are, who has so much knowledge to share, I feel so lucky to have you in my life. Cossete Palmer, a silly cookie you are. I will miss your jokes. I think it is super cool how you can fix nearly anything in a troopie or on a trailer on the side of the road! I really admire you and your skills/talents. Abigail Tucker you are such a funny bunny, damn I am going to miss you doing silly things. Silly things aside, thank you for being so easy to talk to and just being amazing in general, plus caring for us so well. Rosie Ward, you are so nice and are always looking out for us, I've loved hanging out with you so much. Rowan Frankowiak, i love how pumped you are for everything. Also I can not believe how fast you can mow the lawn it is incredible.You are such a funny / cool guy to hang out with. My years at Woll 100% would not have been the same without these awesome people! They have taught me so much and answered so many of my questions. The volunteers and community have also taught me so much. They are all such inspiring and legendary people to hang out with. Last but not least, I would like to thank my amazing Mum and Dad (Katie +Smitho) because without them I would have not been able to meet these cool people or experience this cool place. I am so lucky to have such cool parents like them! This is such a magical place… I am so glad that it exists. Thanks to Remi, Yardie and Maddog for being super cute!!! Oh I almost forgot that I told the staff I would say a thank you about all the cordial they give me 🤣 ha ha.Once again thank you to everyone who has been a part of Woll over my 2 years and just in general.

— Love from Frankie

Floyd's Farewell

Goodbye Wollangarra it has been a great two years. See you later Macalister, it has been nice fishing, catching Trout, Bass, Redfin and Carp. I have had an awesome time swimming in the river.

Goodbye Cosi, thank you for the good chats about fishing and lours it has been rad learning new fishing techniques. Goodbye Abbey, I have had a great times going on walks with you while you taught us how to see things from a bugs view and how to tell if a mushroom is edible. Rosie, thanks for giving us little treats when no one is watching and being so lovely to be around. Rowan, it has been lots of fun going on fishing trips with you. Thank you for being so funny to watch

jumping into the river in winter. Flynn, thanks for teaching me a little bit about building. Maya, thanks for helping us wth making bread. Mabel, thanks for being funny all the time. Max, thanks for teaching me a bit about the forge. Thanks Dante for telling me things about river fishing. T.R.E., thanks for your amazing cakes. And thank you Emma for being so nice to be with and counting worms with me on the crosscut saw. Goodbye Remi and Yardie, it's been fun throwing the stick and Remi for the nice welcome back you give us… you were always waiting at the gate. Yardie, thanks for entertaining us by standing on two legs and running around chasing a stick attached to some rope. Stage II's, it has been nice getting to know you and hanging out. I hope I see you again sometime!

— Love from Floyd

Pearl's Farewell

Hello all you Woll people,
This is my goodbye letter, but first, I would like to say thanks to everyone who came up to Woll and were just nice people to be around, especially Stage II's. I will try and stay in contact with all you guys.
Anyway, back to byes:

- Bye Monday night beans, thankfully
- Bye mountains and hills that are around the Woll flat
- Bye to all the Woll staff (love those guys!)
- Bye to all the stinky teenagers
- Bye to the river
- And I have saved the best for last: Bye Barby Core Wolith (Wolith is a mix between Woll and Smith)

… So bye to all those people and places.
I definitely will be taking a couple more scars, lots of mates, and many more bugs (found dead) to pin and preserve, lots of memories.
Thanks and yeah to everyone, and bye to everyone.
All the best,
Pearl

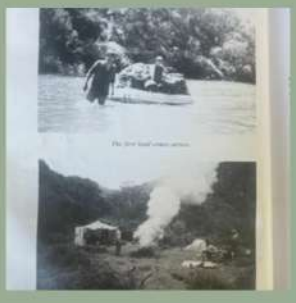
Blogangarra !!

So… it's been a while since we published a blog. Here's one written by the original bloke with a beard (no - not Santa Claus), Ian Stapleton!

It begins like this:

Lying Awake In A Tent: Thoughts From The Early Days Of Wollangarra - By Ian Stapleton

"Smitho has asked me to write a 'Blogg' about the ideas & thoughts I had in my head when we shifted over to The Macalister in the last days of 1988 to start putting Wollangarra together. Quite a big ask, now nearly 40 years later, and I'm pretty sure I covered a fair bit of this stuff in Towards Tomorrow's Mountains. But not all. Anyway, here goes"…



To read the full blog (it's a rippa!), go to https://wollangarra.org/lying-awake-by-ian-stapleton/

Programs, Programs, Programs !!

Heyfield Primary

The local primary school (Heyfield Primary) which Frankie, Floyd and Pearl attended once a week came to visit Woll over a couple of days. These 2 programs (the year 2's and 6's) were just joy filled and jam packed. We first had littlies from Year 2 come out after visiting the Glenmaggie dam wall. It was their first time at Wollangarra. As soon as they entered Wollangarra they emersed themselves in everything. From running the fox and playing watermelon-scrap basketball, to feeding the sheep and damper making. There were a lot of giggles and laughter through the valley. We read the Lorax at the river while we ate our lunch along with the damper we cooked on the fire. By the time we had all settled in they were off again for a sleep over at school.

Just days later we had another group from Heyfield Primary; the year 6's. Us leaders loved meeting Floyd and frank's friends from school (and getting ALL the goss!!). We sunk our teeth into watermelon and played a game of soccer. Having a young energetic energy on the flat was a great break up to having slow sleepy teenagers (jokes!).
— written by Rowan

Foundation House

It was an absolute joy to have the wonderful folk from Foundation House come and spend a week on the flat with us at the beginning of November. The days consisted of cooking delicious food, gardening, bush-walking, swimming and enjoying each other's company whilst sharing culture and stories around the fire. Our team were so appreciative of the new energy brought by such a diverse group of lovely young adults, and I think we learnt and taught equal amounts to each other! Every person in the group, despite it being a very new experience for many, took to the Wolly way with ease, and seemed to deeply appreciate the simple things our program offers: a break from the busy world, a strong sense of community and time spent in the quiet stillness of nature. It was an honour to be a part of facilitating what we hope was a very restorative, connecting, joy-filled experience. The growth witnessed in everybody over the week spoke highly to their incredible resilience and adaptability, which I found so very inspiring and beautiful to see.
Despite our differences, so much common ground was found, and the many places we'd all arrived from only added to the richness of our time together.
Thank you so much Foundation House, for continuing to take a leap of faith and come out to the mountains with us wild Wollys, it is a beautiful relationship we hope continues for a very long time.
— written by Abbey

Programs, Programs, Programs !!

Camberwell High

River crossings? Speccy views? Burgoyne's Hut? Camberwell High had it all. We were joined again by our wonderful Mabel Kean who alongside Rosie lead a group from Camberwell along the river through orchid flat and across the river before heading down the track our April Stage II's helped cut, down to deer flat. On that same day the group lead by Abbey and Cosi started off with a bang, speeding up the hill towards Burgoyne's hut before spending a beautiful evening by the fire. One the second day the groups crossed over amid blackberry bushes, wombat holes and wild growing grasses. Cosi and Abbey's group then forded the river carrying their packs one by one before setting up at an awesome 4WD campsite surrounded by red-box covered hills and joyful birdsong. The evening was nothing short of hilarious, and one thing to be noted about this bunch is they managed to find the joy in just about everything. Whether it be tumbling down the hill to Burgoyne's Hut, falling into the river, getting an ant bite, a stray fart during debrief – literally everything. The laughter was infectious and us Wolly's greatly appreciated the burst of joy at this later point in the year. Looking forward to having you all again Camberwell High. We hope this program was the first of many! — written by Cosi

Kew High

Kew high headed up into the Wellington High Plains for the week. A group lead by Rosie, Rowan and River the vollie walked out to Nyimba camp and spent a day walking down to Lake Tali Karng before heading over Spion Kopje in a whiteout on their last day of hike. Meanwhile Mine (Cosi) and Abbey's crew camped at a wolly bush camp where we both received haircuts by medical sheers from one of the young people. The next morning we headed up the sentinels to the most stunning view of the wind painting white swirls on the surface of lake Tali Karng from hundreds of metres above.

On our last day of hike Abbey and my crew walked back across the Wellington High Plains deciding not to do Spion Kopje as we had had epic views the day before.
This week was one for stargazing, with clear sky's and a small moon. Even with the multitudes of satellites we saw travelling across the sky we were still in awe of its beauty. We returned to Woll to the most beautiful dinner cooked by the magical Katie and feasted on Marshmallows brought and shared by one of the young people.
Thank you for your infectious curiosity and humour Kew High. We loved having you!
— written by Cosi

Programs, Programs, Programs !!

Homeschoolers

This program was nothing short of magestical!We had a wonderful bunch of homeschool students from around the country, many of whom knew each other and came together at Woll to catch up in person. We learned heaps of new things from topics about bugs, planes, politics, music and how to build a boat out of rubbish. We also had the pleasure of having Sam from 'Project Interrupt hike with us for the week'. He is a guy who sailed from Tasmania across the Bass strait in a boat he made from waste that was dumped by the salmon farms off the coast. We all had the privilege to listen and discuss with Sam his journey around the campfire. He talked about how he had overcome adversities, what impact waste from fish farms and humans are having on the environment we live in. Starting the program like this was engaging and inspiring which gave all of us a sense of purpose and fearlessness.
Making our way up to Bryce's Gorge we knew we were in for a treat as the wild flowers were cranking out some spectacular colours. The groups split up bush bashing through flowering Hakias, paper daisies and orchids in the warm summer mountain air. The weather changed the next day from a hot sunny day to hail falling sideways from the sky where both groups met up at the top of conglomerate falls. This weather did not damage the moods of these young capable adventures, making the most of the down time sheltering from storm by making hot chocolate, playing the guitar and playing UNO (as well as managing to start the most epic fire in the pouring rain!!). After the storm we departed and continued on our adventures. We camped at Guy's Hut and Red Crossing, and visited Pieman's and Conglomerate waterfalls between the two camps. On the last day we met up at Dimmicks lookout for lunch and ended back at Woll for a well deserved Macalister swim.
All in all, it was an adventure filled with curiosity, compelling conversation, laughter and play! Thanks to Tom and Sam for adding something special to our program. Thanks to all you wonderful homeschoolers you guys Rock!!! - written by Rowan

Newhaven College

This long-awaited Newhaven bunch did not disappoint! After hearing about the awesome kids that have come to Woll over the many years the 2025 team was not surprised to be met by a group of fun, vibrant, curious individuals. Without fail we were made to laugh around the fire nightly. We took this crew on a local walk. The first group headed by Abbey, Rosie and Tom the vollie spent a magical first night at Burgoyne's hut, followed by a night at Hickey's Creek before climbing to McMillans lookout the following Day. The group Headed by Cosi who was joined by the fabulous vollies Amelia and Lauren climbed McMillans on the first day before making camp right at its base. After camping at Burgoyne's hut the second night it was a race against the heat to get back to Woll and jump in the swimming hole.
Every step of hike was accompanied by the noise of giggles, puns, and jokes. Thursday night dinner was, again, delicious (Thanks Katie!). All in all it was a fabulous last school program! - written by Abbey

Stage II (the final program!!)

Well, that's a wrap folks. Our last program as a staff team! And what a way to end things. A 'magdala'-ificent hike with the stage twos, 'speccy' views, and a big hill or two that 'buggered' us (get the puns?)...

This was an adventure packed program. As one whole group we spent the first day of hike walking to Mac Springs. The following morning one group headed by Smitho, Abbey and next years director Gillian walked off over the crosscut and Mt Buggery to spend the night over the far side of Mt. Spec. Smitho and a few young people went on an epic water mish returning to take their dinner back up Mt Spec and watch the sunset and clouds wash through the valley beside them. Meanwhile the other group headed by myself (cosi), Rosie, Rowan and vollie Tom climbed Mt. Howitt, and continued following the Alpine trail to Big Hill, Hellfire creek, past Hells Window and up Mt. Magdala. We were incredibly lucky to have very low winds forecasted for that night as it meant we could pitch all three tarps right on the peak of Mt. Magdala and watch the sunset while listening to a story of "Oh The Places You'll Go", wake up and watch it rise again. Up on Mt Magdala there was a failed water mission, resulting in the whole group watching the sunrise, packing up and walking back down to hellfire creek for breakfast, which proved to be quite magical.

Both groups spent their third night back at Mac Springs, where Smitho told a scary story and we were serenaded by many talented guitarists.

On our final day we all reached the troopies and decided to head down to the Thomastown swimming hole for lunch. In all our fancy dress ups we swum together, ate lunch and listened to Smitho read us the Lorax. We finished up with deep chats about the Once-ler, the Lorax, and "someone like you" — written by Cosi

A Year With The Mountains

A Year With The Mountains

A Year On The Flat

A Year On The Flat

Staff Farewell's

Rowan Frankowiak

Farewell Wollangarra and hello new beginnings. My first experiences at Wollangarra was meeting Dave and Bruce at the front gate. I said to them
"I want to find a place to work at where I can be a part of a community. One which fills me with a sense of purpose, belonging and where I can build strong relationships"
Bruce's eyes lit up and he responded with a smile
"the place you are looking for is just around the corner waiting for you".
This gave me goose bumps knowing that I have found a new home.

Moving through this year at Woll has been simultaneously the most rewarding, isolating and impactful year for me. Woll has given me and young people unforgettable memories, from camping on top of a mountain in a dress to full on porridge fight chaos during open day and many more unforgettable experiences that have been burnt into my memories.

I have learnt very valuable life lessons working at Woll like taking the time to slow down to appreciate the small things that are always happening around us, to watch the flowers bloom on fruit trees, the bees pollinate them and the fruit to grow. Something so simple but can change the way you look and relate with the environment around you. Or Just taking a step back to listen to the hum of stories being shared, jokes being cracked and new stronger relationships being formed by young people. It's incredible what a simple fire circle, a guitar and a strong sense of community can create. It's MAGIC.

Thanks Smith family for making this year at Woll rush by so fast, from bug hunting, unbearable tickle fights, catching monster fish and ridiculous dad jokes. Also to Rosie, Cosi, Abbey and Mabel for the memory's we have made together. I know that the future will hold many more with you.

Finishing the last week here I am reflecting on the hard, meaningful work us staff team has done this year and the things we've put into this place; a new garden, new greywater system, etc. I feel a sense of pride being able to pass the baton over to the next staff team with a running start. I feel proud in knowing that my contribution to Wolllangarra this year will last indefinitely.

To say "Farewell" to Woll isn't truthfully what I am doing here. Because Wollangarra for me and for many others alike, will linger on branded onto our hearts forever, we never truly leave it behind.

Thanks again to the community that has accepted me with open arms and to the people who have supported me to be my best. Thanks

Staff Farewell's

Rosie Ward

If you were to ask me at the beginning of the year how I ended up at this little woodfired place down south, only accessible via a flying fox over the river, I would've told you it had something to do with my Instagram algorithm. 12 months later, it's safe to say that something more cosmic than that lead me down here. Cheesy, I know. Hiking up into the mountains each week, guiding young, curious, brilliant minds, does something special to your sense of purpose and place in this natural world. Maintaining a home collectively built by thousands of comers and goers and getting to add your own shine to it does the same.

But on top of all that, it's the people who are the real bloody treat. I've learned so much about what it *really* means to live in a way that is connected ecologically, while also not taking yourself or life too seriously. The gratitude I have for the team of people I have worked and lived alongside this year is unfathomable. They are people I plan to hold dear for life.

And to all the young people I have had the pleasure of getting to know (including Frankie, Floyd and Pearl), I think you have taught me more about the world this year than I have you, and I'm not surprised in the slightest. It brings me so much warmth just knowing you are sharing your kindness and compassion wherever you go, spreading love for our natural places, the people around you, and the simple things in life. Thank you to everyone who has played a role in Woll this year, big or small. You made a difference.

Most importantly, thank you to the mountains for the long views and steady grounds; for holding so much life in one place - whether we notice it or not - always moving, growing, carrying. You make things feel simpler. You teach me to breathe deeper and stand taller. Much love.

Staff Farewell's

Abbey Tucker

I've just walked back up to the homestead after having a dip at the swimming hole; the sun is warm on my skin… I'm unsure how I'll go adjusting to a life without the beautiful Macalister right at my doorstep. That has been one of my greatest joys this year, and strongest supports; the deep relationship I've had the privilege of forming with this beautiful land. And I think it's an important place to begin my farewells - because without the nurture and holding of this Gunaikurnai Country, extending right up into the deep mountains, it is unlikely that Wollangarra would have quite the same profound impact, and magic that it has carried for the last 36 years. The way a quiet morning cuppa overlooking endless cloud at the peak of mount Spec. gets you thinking about life is unmatched, and the delirious fireside conversations one has mid-program, doing late night out in the bush, connects you to your crew like nothing else.

After the enormity of my Woll year, I, like every other ex-staffy I have spoken to, am at a loss for words, to articulate quite how incredible my time here has been. So much happens, in every second of every day, with little time and space to really digest all the beautiful moments.

Anyways, I think I'll just say this.

Smitho, Katie, my admiration and gratitude is endless. Thank you for bringing me on board, sharing your beautiful family with all of us and trusting our team to keep Woll magical and our mountains wild. It has been an honour and the things I've learnt from you will ripple through my life for a very long time. I'm so excited for this friendship to continue unfolding over the years.

Floyd, Frankie and Pearl, how do I even put into words how special you all are to me? It's tricky, but I hope you know. All three of you have shown us staffys such unwavering love all year long. Your random cuddles, giggle-filled sleepovers and morning cups of tea have been one of the most beautiful parts of the year, and it's been my absolute joy to get to know you all and watch you grow. I hope to do that for many many more years to come.

Rosie, Cosi, Mabel and Rowan, I don't think anybody in the world knows me as well as the four of you, and I can't think of a better group of mates to experience the absolute roller coaster that is a Woll year alongside. Thank you for holding me through all the hard moments, celebrating my wins, sharing your stories and depths with me and honestly making this one of the best years of my life. I hope you'll stick around forever, my love for you all is huge.

Thank you to every single young person I've had the joy of working with. You all have changed me for the better and my faith in humanity has genuinely been restored after witnessing your joy and goodness. Stay rad.

And finally, thank you to the entire Wollangarra community, for caring enough about the future of our young people and planet to keep, in the words of one legend guy, 'working towards tomorrow's mountains'.

See you all around the traps, it's been magic. Love Smitho's favourite, Abbey

Staff Farewell's

Cosi Palmer

I'm currently sat on the couch, looking out at the walnut tree, that has enthusiastically been reminding me all year to BEWARE! Of nut allergies. I've been tasked with writing my farewell to Wollangarra, and honestly, I'm stumped (Hence I'm writing about a walnut tree).

The mid 30's heat of my first day at Woll, could be said to be the coolest part of my welcome to this beautiful place. First I met Smitho Floyd and Frankie at the front gate, bouncing their way towards me in the Hilux, Smitho gave me a big old hug and the kids said a shy hello, I felt the shyness creeping up inside me, it would soon me squashed. My most vivid memory from that day was of walking up from the fox, the glimpse of the red roofs, the railway sleeper walls of the homestead, and the sunlight chasing me down through the acacias. In that moment the seed of excitement bubbling inside me burst and became the beginning of what has become an immense love for this place.

I came to Woll longing for a modicum of purpose and hope. I have found such in bucketfuls. I have also found the most passionate of communities, from the staff team, to the vollies, to all those who visit us for events and at random points throughout the year to cook for us and bring us cheese, tea and chocolate. In my staff team I have found my closest of friends, people who took me in and loved me wholeheartedly. In the young people we've traversed the mountains with this year I found endless laughter, deep curiosity within them, and then within myself, (they might disagree, but I believe they also taught me how to be hip and cool). I have fallen in love with the land and feel a deep respect for the connection the Gurnaikurnai people have to it. I feel an immense sorrow within me at leaving the side of the Macalister River and saying goodbye to the mountains that have held me this year.

I cannot simply say goodbye, without saying thank you. Thank you to Katie and Smitho, for taking me and my chaotic dog on board. For creating an environment where I've been able to give so many new things a go, thanks for letting me loose on the property to tinker with things and repair lots of the little things that break all the time. Those moments have been some of my favourites. Thankyou also for being people I will continually reach out to for advice and a well-made cuppa tea. Thank you for your children, those three have changed my life. Frankie thank you for your kind heart, all the cups of tea you've made me post hike and in bed on days off. Thank you for your recipes, pancakes, kombucha and beautiful magical curls. Pearl, thank you for your questions, curiosity, and heart for what is both fair and just in the world. Floydothank you for your endless chats about tackle and fish, for everything you've taught me about observing the land around us. I will miss you immensely.

I would be amiss if I did not include the following sentences which Smitho in all his wisdom gave me when I said I did not know what to write for this farewell:

Hanging out with Smitho was the best year of my life. that guy is amazing, his beard is majestical and I'm in awe of his presence I will miss him dearly, what a legendary guy. My life is enriched from being near him for the last 12 months. Wollangarra will be shitter without him. My other friends were good too, but I will miss Smitho the most. Goodbye my lovers goodbye my friends. P.S. Ben lee rules.

Thank You's

Ross - for the seed donation
Lachie - for cooking the Fox Flyers feast
Kirsty - for organising car things
Sijuan - for the donation of lots of handy things
Althea - for the CDs!
Joan - for the wool jumpers from Twice Blessed
One Planet - for the gaiter donation
Trudy - for the rain gear donation
OEG - for the rain gear donation
Lauren - for volunteering on Newhaven program
Tom - for volunteering on program Newhaven and Stage II
Amelia - for volunteering on Newhaven and Stage II
Dante - for cooking us dinner

The staff team of 2025 would also love to give another big thank you to the continued support of locals like Kate and Pete, Robin and Pete, Wayne, Bev and Kirsty, Paul and Chrip, Stag&Doe, Ralph, and many others in the Gippsland community who continue to support the purpose in which Woll was built for; fostering a love for the mountains.

And thank you to these mountains for being the giver of life, and the source of all our adventure and curiosity. Thank you to the Gunaikurnai people who have cared for these mountains for so long, and to anyone and everyone who has shared stories and love of them.

Thank you also to the Wollangarra council, who put in tireless effort in the background and make it work.

Last but not least, thank you and good luck to Gillian, Trixie and the 2026 staff team! Woll is in good hands!

What's on for 2026 ??

Save these tentative dates…

Fruit Bottling - March 7-9th
Wood Chop Work Party - June 6-8th
Open Day - October 10-11th

Stage I - April 6-10th
June 29th-July 3rd
September 28th-October 2nd
December 7-11th

Stage II - April 13-18th
July 5-10th
October 4-9th
December 14-19th

Stage I+II 10-Day Extravaganza - August 31st-September 9th

Homeschool Program - June 1st-5th
November 23rd-27th

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

At Wollangarra we aim to reuse, repurpose and rehome things as much as we can. Essentially we try to reduce our "consumerism" as an organisation and we believe there is a real educational value in doing things this way. When there is "stuff" that we need, we call on our community/supporters for donations before looking to buy things new (if possible!). Our wish-list is an up-to-date list of things we need.

- If you have something on the wish-list that you'd like to donate, please let us know!
- If you're coming along to one of our community events, please check the wish-list for things and, again, let us know what you're able to bring.
- We aim to keep the wish-list up to date as possible so if you see something on the list - we more than likely need it!

Please call if you have questions about anything you think we might be able to use (03 5148 0492).

Wollangarra Wishlist:

- Wide Brim Hats
- Hike Shorts / Pants - In all Sizes
- Long Sleeve Cotton Hike Shirts - Button up business / work shirts are ideal
- Stainless Steel Hike Bowls x 25 - Some of our old bashed up Wollie bowls have reached the end of their life
- Medium Sized Hike Packs 70L capacity – top loading these too!
- Small Hike Packs - For our littlest Wollies to go on adventures with.
- Hiking Boots - We are after smaller ones; Sizes 4 – 9
- Sleeping Mats - Not foamies – Thermorest's and the like, for school teachers on hike.
- Bunting - Any Crafty folk keen to make some bunting for our Open Day Celebrations?
- 20 x Munchie Bags - Draw string material bags
- 2 x French Press - Large enough capacity to fuel a few Wollies on a cold morning
- 2 x AeroPress - Ours have seen better days
- Commercial Can Opener - One for the Indoor Kitchen
- 30 x AA and AAA Batteries - We go through so many of these! If anyone has some decent re-chargeable ones these would be ideal
- Fencing Wire - Just one roll of half decent stuff will do the job. Or longer lengths of whatever you've got!
- 2 x Dutch Ovens - For slow cooked stews etc.
- 6 x Decent Headtorches - Hopefully Petzl or Black Diamond ones with rechargeable batteries
- 10 x Tea infusers- The one cup, ball style ones!
- 6 x Stainless Steel Stock Pots - Minimum 8 litres

This wish list is on the website https://wollangarra.org/donations/ and being updated often!

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

Become a Fox Flyer!

The Fox Flyers are a community of supporters who are able to make the financial commitment of donating $50 a month.
The Fox Flyers are connected to Wollangarra in a range of ways, but all believe in the unique, simple place that it is, and the opportunities and experiences it offers both young people and its far-reaching community.

The 'Fox Flyers' giving initiative helps support Wollangarra to keep doing what it does best – getting young people into the mountains.
Through outdoor education, we provide a small step to a healthier environment, stronger communities, and happier young people. Our programs help young people form deep connections with the natural world, and facilitate them engaging with environmental challenges in a practical and motivating way.
As a Fox Flyer, your donation will go towards supporting general operations, building upgrades and maintenance, and sponsored student places on programs.
Wollangarra is a registered charity and deductible gift recipient. Donations can be issued with a receipt for tax purposes.
The Fox Flyers are a community of Wollangarra supporters who are pledging to donate $50 a month. As a Fox Flyer, you will receive several updates throughout the year to see where your money's going, and we an annual dinner under the stars at Wollangarra each year. Our 2024 Fox Flyer dinner was a very special occasion!
The Fox Flyers are more than just donors; they're a passionate community united by their belief in the transformative experiences Wollangarra offers young people.
We are immensely grateful in advance for your participation.

Check out our website for information on becoming a 'Fox Flyer' !!
https://wollangarra.org/donations/