

# Autumn Stage III

## Stage III

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Stage III on Facebook  
'Mountain Work Parties'

## January Harrierville to Mittagundi Hike

Once again a group of keen Stage IIIs (8 young blokes to be exact) set off to attempt to walk from Harrierville to Mittagundi in time for Mittagundi Pioneer Skills. With Dan Abikhair (ex Wollangarra Staff) and Mezza Shaw (ex Mittagundi Staff) along to offer their support and knowledge of the area the crew were always set to have a wonderful trip.

Unfavourable weather gave the group cause to adjust their plans and spend a little bit more time up on the high plains in the wild weather, making it to Mittagundi several days early. The energy and help which the group offered in preparation for Mittagundi's biggest community event was welcomed by staff and directors alike.



## Trivia Night

The annual Stage III trivia night is approaching!

This is the third year of this event and is a major fundraiser for Stage III so please come along and bring your friends and family for a fun filled night of games, prizes, music, and trivia!

**Date:** Saturday 19th of March.

**Theme:** Thursday Night Dinner Dress Ups

**Location:** TBA but it will be in Melbourne-check the Stage III facebook page 'Stage Three Mountain Work Parties' for more information

**Time:** please arrive at 6:00pm for a 6:30pm start. There will be a prize for the person who brings the most people and for the best dressed. BYO drinks. To book a table and be sure of a seat, please contact Bronwen Behan: [bronwen-behan@live.com](mailto:bronwen-behan@live.com) or 0428427783.



*Stage III is a dynamic and strong community of young people and their supporters, who actively undertake purposeful and practical environmental work in the mountains and at home.*

*Stage III is open to any keen, young person who wants the opportunity to make a real difference.*

# Trip Report

## December hike

### Day 1

'Twas the fortnight before Christmas and the holidays had begun. Stage IIIs were keen to put a roof on the dugout and indulge in an intense hike. On the way we made a basic menu for the week (including a capitalised and underlined reminder to remember the cheese this time), and at Traralgon we were met by Dennis, our first aider and to our surprise our new Stage III facilitator. As we drove to Wollangarra we were awed at the spectacle of the starlit night sky. With the sky dark and the trip tiring our arrival over the fox was quick and we slumped into a deep sleep.

### Day 2

As the rooster sung its morning harmonies we arose to meet others at Wollangarra. We were blessed with the presence of a vibrant and eager group of four from The Crossing Outdoor Education Centre. As a group we prepared for the week ahead; organising group gear, planning our route, baking bread, setting aside some cheese, and making hummus and peanut butter. We removed the mud from the dugout and helped cement the beams holding the roof. After a hard day's work there was nothing better than a premium serving of lasagne. Drunk with happiness the day was gone and the sheets of darkness covered us.

### Day 3

As the sun peered over the mountains and glared on the sparkling McAlister River we ambled to breakfast around the fire and discussed the work that needed to be done. Tin cutting and flattening was performed at the dugout along with the creation of a drain, while others prepared medical forms and first-aid kits. Along with Stage IIs more Stage IIIs came and everyone had a good old chit chat. The morning of the hike a crisp breeze brushed against our faces to start the day as the moist earth was hungry for the sun. From McFarlane's saddle we hiked to Spion Kopje (1615m above sea level) along a track Wollangarra groups have worked on, a jaw dropping experience. We took turns leading the group and navigating, and also wearing the pink tutu. As we headed into campsite a scarlet twilight set the mood for some massage circles and tortillas for dinner, which were tasty despite lacking the cheese we forgot to pack.



### Day 4

As we woke to the warm scent of our porridge ready we ambled out of our tents to stay warm and cosy. With our bellies full and our tents packed up we set out for one of the main attractions of the day: Lake Tarli Karng (the largest alpine lake in Victoria). After our steep descent we arrived at the Lake and it was glorious. Its enormity and that way it shimmered in the light just gave off the purest feeling of serenity. Unfortunately the track to Snowden Falls was underwater so we couldn't visit them, but a dip in the lake was enough to brighten our day. From there we ascended to the 4WD track, singing everything from gospel to Do Re Mi to Shania Twain. Sweating like pigs we sat down for some cordial and lunch. From then we powered on until we met our first of 18 river crossings. Personally I thought it would be revolting and feral yet it was the most comfortable and exciting thing. It surely isn't something that everyone has done and gave me a great sense of achievement.

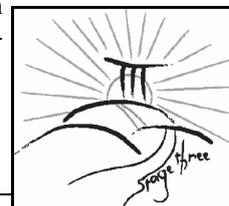
### Day 5

Half asleep we crawled to the fire like zombies to a corpse. Muscles sore and eyes half shut we enjoyed porridge with excessive amounts of chocolate supplied. One by one we dominated the river crossings creating victory songs for each crossing. Powering through the day we monstereed lunch down and trudged on. It was so impressive that no one had slipped after at least 15 river crossings ... until the second last where Lara slipped on entry and was drenched. When we made it to our pick up area we were early and decided to play some memorable games. With our feet drenched back at Wollangarra walking round with sandals was heaven. While most Stage IIIs went on the hike some stayed back and they had been working on the dugout, and was it good or what! For most people this was the last night at Wollangarra and we were tired and emotional. It's not easy to part from this sanctuary we call home.

### Day 6

To finish off the week we took the long trip back to our homes. Some call it 'civilisation' but in my view the city is barbaric and Wollangarra in fact is civilised as it's the loving and caring environment we all desire.

-Al Katrivessis



# Committee News

## Committee Update

### Thankyou and goodbye

Stage III would like to say a 'bigger than huge' thank you to the phenomenal contribution to the building of the Stage III committee and community to *Alex Pontonio, Hamish Macrae and Clare Hazelwood*. The work and enthusiasm that you have shown and shared with so many others has been essential to the size and vibe of the current Stage III community and we cannot thank you enough.



And though we say goodbye to you from the Committee for now, we wish the best of luck for those of you who are travelling and hope that you don't stay away from Woll for too long, because over the years you have shown what an invaluable part of Stage III you are.

## Committee training weekend

Two years ago the Stage III Committee undertook a series of training days with long time members of the Wollangarra/Mittagundi community Suz Christeson and Kate Gilson. This training provided the Committee with the skills to effectively govern the Stage III programs over the last few years. Due to its obvious success and the number of new members joining the committee it was decided at our last meeting that it is time to invite Suz and Kate back and skill up once more. This training will be a great experience and a must for committee members as it will help us in effectively guiding the Stage III community.

**Date:** Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March-Sunday 27<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 5pm Friday - Sunday afternoon

**Location:** TBC, hopefully a beach house somewhere!

**Themes to be covered:** The role of the Stage III committee, the roles of committee members, meeting procedure, where is stage III now, where does it need to go, leading group discussions and engaging the wider Stage III community.

## Fruit Bottling

Fruit bottling was an massive coming together of over 120 people this year with over 40 young people in attendance. A massive thanks must go to everyone for all their help, with over 500 bottles bottled! There was also lots of work done on the dugout, garden and around the flat.

Stage III took the opportunity to meet and plan out a few activities for the year: hikes, trivia nights and Clean up Australia Days!

Thanks must be given to all those Stage IIIs who brought up stuff, helped out or even helped run the weekend (see 'Chief Chopper An-nabell' above).

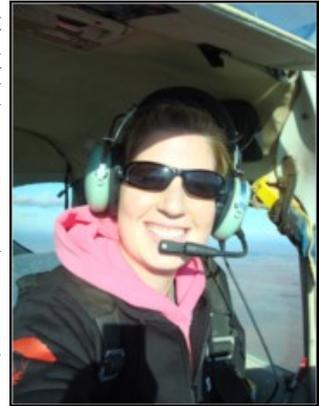


# Stage III Follow Spot

Nobody is safe in this section of the newsletter...any Stage III-er, past or present can be put in the spotlight and required to answer a series of questions about how they're going and what they're up to in their fascinating and eventful life! This edition, we see Jenna Davies in the spotlight. This is what she had to say.

*Question 1: What is your involvement with Stage III?*

Unfortunately I don't really participate actively with Stage III anymore. I was a Stage II-er for a number of years and then joined Stage III but it became hard to stay involved with uni and work commitments. I think the last time I visited Woll was 2009, for a Stage III reunion, at least I think it was 2009?!



*Question 2: When was the last Stage III event you attended?*

The last event I attended was a fundraiser trivia night last year which was lots of fun!!

*Question 3: What have you been doing with your life over the past couple of years?*

After school, I went to Swinburne University to study Aviation and got my commercial pilot's license, and got to fly around Australia to build up hours/experience which was a lot of fun. Get out and see Australia, its got so much to offer! Since then I've worked for a few skydiving companies flying their jump planes, and taught people how to fly in a Boeing Simulator for a few years. I traveled around South-East Asia for a month with a few others, and spent half of last year living in Cairns, on a working-holiday, which was also great, and I am now back in Melbourne, working for QBE in their Aviation department.

*Question 4: What are your plans for the next couple of years?*

Wherever the wind takes me really.... So long as I am still able to fly, work with some great people, I'll be happy! Although I think I should aim to a bit healthier this year....maybe go on a health kick!!

*Question 5: What is your best memory from your time with Stage III?*

I have so many great memories of Woll, it's hard to choose! I always loved a good conundrum to get me thinking and silly group photos at the end of a Stage. But probably the best memories are of me just arriving at Woll....I always love the walk in, followed by flying across the fox with a big grin on my face, smelling the sweet air and being warmly welcomed by everyone....knowing that I will have a brilliant week, whatever we get up to. No matter who you are, or what your background etc, Wollangarra and its staff have created a really great environment for young people to go to get away from their everyday life and just BE in nature's wonder....and I will always be grateful for the great times I had. So thanks!

## Upcoming Events

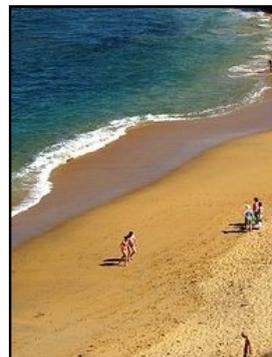
- 6th March: Clean Up Australia Day
- 19th March: Trivia Night
- 26th-27th March: Committee training
- 9th-16th April: Miller's Hut project (School holidays)
- 24th—30th April: Miller's Hut Project (University holidays)

# Stage III

## Clean up Australia day

Stage III is going to the people! On the 6<sup>th</sup> of March in conjunction with a 'Clean Up Australia Day' team, Stage III is going down to Rosebud beach to help clean up our beautiful country.

This initiative is about including the sometimes forgotten but much loved 'Island and Peninsula crew', while also getting us entrenched Melbournians out of the city for a day at the beach. The idea is for Stage III to continue to impact the environment outside of Woll while getting together to have some fun! Check out the 'Stage III Work Parties' Facebook page for all the details and to ask for lifts. Don't forget to bring the permission form (available online), some friends, beach togs and (hopefully there will be a need to bring) sunscreen! *Nicola*



## From the Facilitator

Stage III has kicked off 2011 with an absolute flurry of activity and it feels great to be a part of it all as the Stage III facilitator this year. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Dennis (Deno) Bainger, and I've been hanging around Woll for a few years now after having studied Outdoor Education in Bendigo with Lucy Vardy and Sonja Patterson (Woll Staff 2008).

Why did I apply for the Stage III Position? Where else do you find a self motivated, positive crew of young people who give up their time to do service projects in the mountains and cities? The Victorian High country has for a long time had a special place in my heart and it's wonderful to be a part of a community which actually cares for it. What do I see my job entailing this year? Basically, doing what I can to help the Stage III

community go about its work in the mountains and in our cities as independently as it possibly can. Working with the Stage III committee makes up a major portion of my role but also training and supporting the wider stage III community as people take on responsibility of new projects, events and activities. I'm currently working a .75 load and living most of the time at Wollangarra. In the other one week a month I'm doing a little freelance work out of Melbourne. So, hopefully I get the chance to catch up with many of the Stage III communities in Melbourne, the Island, the Peninsula and other parts of Victoria.



## Thank-you...

- Dan Abikhair: First Aid and OE support of the January Harrierville hike.
- Nathan Burmeister: The fantastic performance at Fruit-bottling.
- Mezza Shaw: First Aid and OE support of the January Harrierville hike.
- Suz Christenston and Kate Gilson: Ongoing support of Stage III.
- Ian Arbuckle: Evacuation support.
- The Stage III Committee: Continued dedication to Stage III and Wollangarra.
- The Mittagundi Mechanic: For... Mechanics
- To the Wollangarra Council and Wollangarra Directors: Their continued support of Stage III.
- Annabelle Nunnan: 'Chief choppering'.

# Stage III

## April Stage III

Stage III is off to the Wellington High Plains. Miller's Hut is in much need of new upright posts and Stage III seems to be just the mob to do it!

2011 has created a few difficulties regarding dates as University and School holidays do not match up. Hence, for the April Stage III we will be having two programs. One during the school holidays and one during the university holidays. Check out our facebook site for more details or give Deno a call at Wollangarra.



### APRIL STAGE III

#### School Holidays:

Dates: 19th –16th April

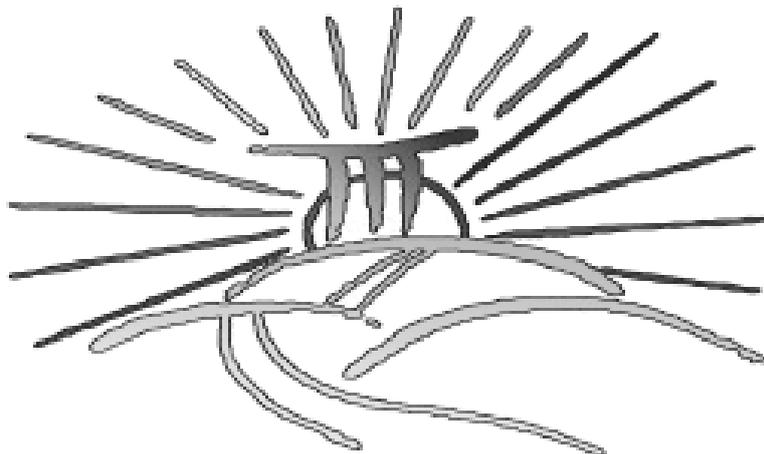
#### University Holidays

Dates: 24th—30th April.

## First Aid Training

In early January two brave Stage IIIs, Louise King and Lucy Kervin-McDermott joined with the Wollangarra and Mittagundi staff to participate in Wilderness First Aid Training.

This is hopefully the first of many opportunities for members of Stage III to undertake such training and become a valuable part of the first aid support on Stage III trips. It's exciting to think that these opportunities can exist for Stage IIIs. As Stage IIIs get trained in this way, we will become more self sufficient on our trips out bush.



Stage III at Wollangarra  
*Adopting the Mountains*

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