

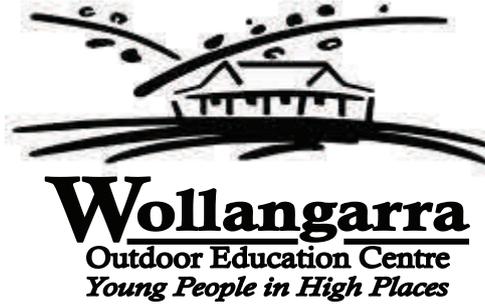
# Stage III

Stage III

Wollangarra

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Contact Us

[www.wollangarra.org.au](http://www.wollangarra.org.au)

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## December Stage III

Long, long, ago back in the final days of the Mayan calendar a group of young stage threes took to the mountains to live out their final days. These hikers were adventurous and spirited. This crew contained the very best in the business when it came to hiking. Think the A-team or Avengers of the hiking world. It consisted of the top notch Mr "Pauly P.dids" Paul, the organizing and mafia extraordinaire, Ms Nicola Woodward, the fantastic and flamboyant singers Ms Ellie Ware and Ms Karlee Hayes, the mysterious and dashing character Mr Six, the luscious Lydia Sims, the dreaded and daring Jacob O'Donohue, the Ostentatious Austin Hawkin, the lovely lovable Maddie Gort, the marvellous Maeve and not to mention classic Wollangarra characters such as Sarah and her boy toy Foss. Now with introductions aside we can get set into the tale.

On Friday the crew came down from the big smoke Via V-line and the hire bus for the week. They met up with simple-country boy Six, bought some supplies and headed to Wollangarra. The responsible stage threes enjoyed their BBQ dinner and laughed politely at Nicola's terrible puns while the Wollangarra staff went and partied it up at ranger Wayne's house. With an early start and a late departure on Saturday morning we made our way into the mountains entertaining ourselves with singing and playing games such as "hide the peg". When the team arrived at Moroka Gorge car park, we then encountered our first tragedy; we had left the bread for lunch back at Wollangarra. But Ellie, Sarah and Foss were the heroes of that hour, rising to the occasion by donating rice crackers and wraps. With our packs on we walked the rigorous one-kilometre to our campsite. We quickly



Boardwalk fixed!

set up our tarps where Paul displayed his tarp and knot expertise. We then ate Nicola's delectable animal shaped pasta which vegetarians Jacob and Paul found very confronting. After tea



Lilo-ing at Moroka Gorge

we demonstrated how a real democracy should work when we all agreed that we should do a bush kris kringle (a lot like normal kris kringle but in the bush), we received our names out of Paul's hat and secretly started planning our presents. The next day we rose early to attack the Sunday's puzzle; the lost mismatched boardwalks. As you are all probably well aware, every year at Moroka Gorge Wollangarra redo the boardwalks that have been washed away in the previous winter's floods only to get washed away again in the next year's floods! When we arrived at the site every one put on their gumboots and aqua socks and got stuck into it, we all worked great as a team and got those lost board walks back to where they belonged after a long day of squelching around in the mud. The next day we spilt into groups to divide and conquer the gorge. One group made steps and trimmed the savage beast that the bushes over the path had become. Meanwhile the other group tied down our beloved boardwalks with metal stakes in a vain attempt to stop them floating away in future floods. After those jobs were done we soon realized how little there was to do so after all our hard work we enjoyed a little nap after lunch. It was possibly the greatest thing I've ever experienced on hike.

That evening Lydia suggested that we do a night time wilderness first aid exercise to be lead by Paul which is essentially a big game of hide and seek. Maeve volunteered to be our missing hiker and disappeared into the bush. We searched for her for 2 and half hours with no success. It seemed like all hope was lost but then we hit the Nunan jackpot. We found her laying in a bed of grass, full of hopelessness and self pity. What happened next I can only describe as a crazy hurricane of screaming and emotion. Everyone screamed their hearts out as we tried to bring Maeve back to life. Turns out she was just cold, did not need water nor did she have a spinal injury. Once we were all safe back at camp we had some hot cocoa to soothe our spirits. (Acting was

December Stage III continued...

a key part of this exercise)

The next day we slept in after our stressful night of search and rescue. We rose up to a fun day of step making, pruning, napping and swimming in the beautiful Moroka Gorge. We enjoyed a lovely lunch of cheese, cold tinned spaghetti, Saladas and tuna. That night we experienced a bone chilling game of mafia where our true selves were revealed.

Wednesday was our day off, it was the day that we conquered the gorge once and for all, today was the day that we rafted down. So the very excited crew pumped up our lilos, inflated our inflatable toy animals, grabbed our swimming noodles and headed straight to the gorge to face the mighty river. We sailed down the gorge, soaring down the rapids on our inflatable toys while staring death straight in the face. But it wasn't all honour and glory. Two hours into our journey we had made a total distance of just 900 metres into our 3000-metre journey, when we suffered a casualty with Ellie's inflatable crocodile popping. We were cold and hungry and Jacob and Six were on the verge of a tantrum. Despite this, spirits were high, and they rose even higher when we decided to turn around. Ending our rafting adventure on a high note, we got back to the waterfall and had "lunch". Due to a misunderstanding this "lunch" consisted of 3 oranges, one can of baked beans, 2 brownies, 4 wraps and one container of Nutella amongst 11 people and one very hungry Foss. That night we all got into festive cheer giving out our Kris Kringle presents that we had been working on all week, it was amazing to see the effort people had put in for each other. Then we enjoyed a fantastic night of fun experiences such as Foss's rendition of sexual healing, Jacob's legendary chick-pea wraps and many menacing mafia games worthy of an NCIS episode.

On Thursday, the 20th, "the last day of the world eve" we packed up, enjoyed a lunch at Thomastown then returned to the gastro infested Wollangarra flat. We showered, brushed our hair and put on our remaining clean clothes. The Flat Week Stage 3's and the Moroka Gorge Stage 3's put aside our differences and constructed a song to send the amazing leaders off with a rockin' way to end their year with us.

It was a truly tremendous way to end, what I can only describe as one of my top Wollangarra hikes. The leaders said their goodbyes when they dropped us off at Cheyne's bridge, where we caught a bus back to reality. It turns out the Mayans were wrong, and the world never ended. It was kinda awkward.

- Michael 'Six' Caffery

## January Stage III

This January, there were two groups who participated in the annual Harrierville to Mittagundi hike, the Feathers and the Bogongs. Both were named according to which route they were going to hike, however due to extreme weather conditions of 40 degrees, the hikes were changed into some different series of events. Read below to see what each group got up to.

The Feathers:

There's nothing better than starting off New Year in the mountains. On the morning of the 6th of January we were at Harriet's home ready to get on the road by 7 AM on our way to Harrierville. Troopie was full with the Feathers group, later named Oestrogen group, as that was what it naturally was apart from Dan, there were Tish, Harriet, Miranda, Nicola, Lou, Maeve, Ellie and myself. Excitement within the vehicle was intense although much to our disappointment our hike was changed due to the hot weather. Our climb to Feathertop was now a night spent in Harrierville at a fellow stage II Georgie's home. The swims we had! (Special thanks to Georgie and her family for having us!)



Miranda & Nicola checking out Fitzgerald's Hut

The next day was also another cruisie day and we stopped by Ian Stapelton's home for four hours having a chat with tea and bikkies, funny stories were shared. The next two days were spent at Mittagundi, at 'Ian's Hut' with the other Wollie/Mitta group. The greetings we had with them were confusing as they told us false names and pretended to have stomach cramps. However fun times commenced with lots of work completed to help get ready for Pioneers skills weekend. The weather was warm which meant swims, and more swims. On Wednesday we headed out for a two day local hike as the weather was cooler. We stayed overnight at Wild Horse Creek with roasted marshmallows and interpretive dancing. To get back was a 25 km hike down to Mitta, with an achievement of 3 km before lunch. The group stayed strong although many felt weak and the map of Victoria was discussed. Back at Mittagundi a fun weekend was awaiting with extra Wollies coming up to join in the bush dance on Friday night. The Mittagundi bush dance was one not to be missed with many bodies on the dance floor 'till morning. Pioneer skills was full of events, Stage III's pitched in to help make 146 family sized pizzas and chunks of wood were endlessly chopped. However strength and talent was very strong with records in crosscut saw and tractor pulling and beautiful singing in the evening. Although it wasn't as we planned, we all enjoyed our Mittagundi experience linking the Wollangarra and Mittagundi families together!

- Maddie Gort

## The Bogongs:

During the hot January of this year, myself and a few others who were either Mittagundi or Wollangarra young people, made our way to Bright to start our six day hike from Mt Bogong into Mittagundi. Because of the stinking hot weather, however, we didn't get to hike along the planned route. Instead, we took the Wollangarra troopies up to Mittagundi with the Wollangarra stage III crew. After a couple of days of farm work our group decided that, over two nights, we would hike up and down Mt Wills, past the Big River Saddle and along the river and back into Mittagundi.

It was a great feeling being with a small group of only 12. We were able to organise our own track for the hike, our leaders, Paul and Danni, gave us most of the responsibility for planning our trek. After two nights of sleeping under the stars on top of Mt Wills and then on the banks of Big River, we made our way back along track 107 into Mittagundi where had a great chat with Ian Stapleton about everything from Shakespeare to his well-known chicken story. We set up camp once again and prepared for the annual Pioneer Skills festival. The week was full of sneezing, inspirational chats, and swimming, lots of swimming. Everyone who was there really enjoyed themselves which just made the experience even more memorable and fantastic.

- Harry McKenzie-McHarg



Nicola and Tish representing Stage III in the crosscut saw competition at the Mittagundi Pioneer Skills Weekend.

## January Stage III Induction

After many fantastic stage II courses and helping around Woll, myself and seven other stage II's where invited to be inducted into the infamous stage III. We were taught the tricks of the trade including organizing the trip. The course was led by the lovely Stage III's Karlee Hayes and John Collopy but it couldn't be done without Paul the Stage III Facilitator helping every step of the way too.

Going up for the local hike to Burgoyne's hut and around the local tracks we learnt about leadership, the land, safety and independence. The highlight of the trip was crossing the river back into the homestead after the three day hike realizing that now we were now Stage III's and our Wollangarra experience had reached a new level. Unfortunately on the Thursday we had to be safely evacuated due to the fires as precaution but that didn't sour our spirits, overall was a fantastic week!

- Jackson Groatz

## Nicola's Fun Fact

**Scientists have discovered that dolphins have individual names!** They have noticed that each dolphin will use a specific whistle when referring to themselves, and another member of the pod will use this unique whistle to call or speak to that individual.—Nicola Woodward is moving to Adelaide this year to study vet science



## December Flat Week

'Twas the month before Christmas, when all through the flat  
 Not a creature was stirring, not even a rat;  
 The packs were hung by the ODK with care,  
 In hopes that Paul Nichol soon would be there;  
 The staff were nestled all sick in their beds,  
 While visions of storms raged in their heads;  
 And Oli in his 'kerchief, and I in my cap,  
 Had just settled down for a long gangster rap,  
 When out on the flat there arose such a splatter,  
 I sprang from the Homestead to see what was the matter.  
 Away to the office I flew like a flash,  
 Tore open the gastrolite and held up the sash-et.  
 The dried vomit on the breast of the new-fallen ill  
 Gave the lustre of health to all those who were chill,  
 When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
 But Dan Abikhair, and many a volunteer'



Snow-sealing those boots!

Every year a large bustling crew head down to the flat in December to participate in a Stage Three flat week. This year was no exception. A bustling crew of stage threes came down to help out and do some big jobs around the flat. Ran by the infamous Dan Abikhair things were sure to get serious, but we were ready to get down and do some hard work. This year we had an amazing crew of stage threes such as Oli 'OJ' Smith, Anthony 'Gowie' Gowans, Alistair 'Souvlaki' Katrivesses, Bonnie 'Momma Bon' Mcwilliam, Anna-belle 'Rangabelle' Noonan, Olly 'Raider' Wright, Cassie 'Insert nickname' Burton, Scott 'NO SCOTT' Dingey, Chris 'Hawk' Bates, Cass Martin, Harriet 'Haz' Negus and Jack Garton (I bet I forgot someone).

As we all arrived on the flat we were hit with a scene reminiscing of Dawn of the Dead. Ignoring this imminent zombie apocalypse we set to work writing up a list of jobs to be done for the week. Each day consisted of over 20+ jobs and the Stage Three crew were not afraid of the workload ahead. Luckily we received staff parental reinforcements and were able to push out from the quarantine zones to complete jobs such as painting the shower block roofs, fixing locks on doors, giving the vegie garden lots of love and other small but crucial jobs around the homestead.

We also had Cowarr Primary School come along for a day visit. They enjoyed fun activities such as tours on the flat, lunch in the sun and sheep. Many of the primary school students had never visited Wollangarra and were fascinated by our way of life. Overall the visit was a great experience and the students really enjoyed their time at Woll. On a positive note we acquired one free lunch box and lunch included! It was delicious and wholesome but the bread was rather dry so I'd give it a 6 out of 10. Luckily Hawk, Haz and I were able to return the lunch box (Minus the lunch) back to Cowarr Primary School.

Things were looking promising with word of more reinforcements (Scott and a few others) coming soon, but alas one member of the team fell ill to the deadly zombie virus more commonly known as Gastro. As more and more of my comrades' fell in battle I knew it was time for some heavy artillery and use of germ warfare. We now had a new priority. To ensure that all traces of the dreaded virus had been eradicated. Two days of industrial rubber gloves, vinegar, Aquim and a revamp of a popular Christmas song now named 'The twelve days of Gastro' we were all ready to be called veterans in germ warfare.

As silently as they had left, both hike groups suddenly returned weary, smelly but most of all happy. While the week did not go the plan due to the outbreak everyone on the flat week team showed great resilience in the face of a dreaded zompocolypse and in the end everyone lived to see another day.

A huge thankyou to Dan for his hard work this weekend as well as the huge amount of helpers that came along to fight alongside us, without you we surely would have been overrun by hordes of undead.

Hopefully next year we will see the velocapture.

Olly Wright – Stage Three Fundraising and Holy Paladin

## *Upcoming Events*

Fruit Bottling: 1-3 March

Yackandandah Folk Festival: 22-24 March

Stage III Trivia Night: 11 May

Woodchop Weekend: 8-10 June

## *Stage III committee*

If you haven't heard who our committee members are this year, here they are:

**Al Katrivessis:** Treasurer

**Maeve Nunan:** Secretary

**Dylan Burns:** Events

**Oli Smith:** Events

**Lachlan Rigg:** Fundraising

**Olly Wright:** Fundraising

**Chris Bates:** Saving Suburbia

**Anthony Gowie Gowans:** Saving Suburbia

**Karlee Hayes:** Young Person Liason

**Annabelle Nunan:** Young person Liason

**Ellie Ware:** Newsletter

**Meredith Johnson:** General Member

**Jack Garton:** General Member

**Nicola Woodward:** General Member

**Bonnie McWilliam:** General Member

**Harriet Negus:** General Member

**Tish Gort:** General Member

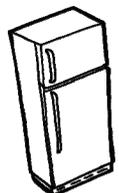
If you are interested in becoming part of the stage three committee, general members are always warmly welcomed. Just let us know and we would love you to be a part of this amazing group.

## **Stage III Wish List**

- Dead dog bags for pack liners
- Sleeping bag compression bags
- Dry bags
- Ground sheets
- Lining boards

## **Fundraising Goal**

Stage III's goal is to raise **\$2500** for a replacement fridge for Wollangarra. We'd love for you to donate one or more items for the Stage III Trivia Night auction and prizes.



## Stage III

*A dynamic, strong community of active young people for purposeful, practical conservation in Victoria's mountains and at home*

The Stage III program is open to anyone who wants to be involved in helping and hiking in Victoria's mountains. There are no prerequisites. Everyone is welcome to join one of our trips to enjoy and give back to the high country, learn new skills and meet like minded people.

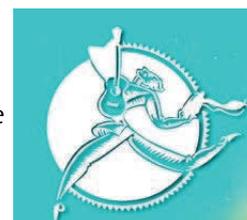
## Stage III Calendar 2013

MONTH	DATE(S)	EVENT
March	22 - 24	Yackandandah Folk Festival and BBQ Fundraiser
April	1 - 4	Stage III Conservation Project
May	3 - 5	Stage III Bush Skills Workshop Chestnut
May	11	Stage III Trivia Night
June	8 - 10	Woodchop
June/July	30 - 5	Stage III Flat Week
July	8 - 12	Stage III Induction
August	17 - 18	Stage III reconnaissance / Organising for September trip
September	22 - 28	Stage III Trip
October	2 - 4	Stage III Open Day Preparation
October	5 - 6	Open Day
October	26 - 27	Stage III reconnaissance / Organising for December trip
November	9 - 10	Stage III Work Party
December	15 - 20	Stage III Mountains Work Party
December	15 - 20	Stage III Flat Week

## Yackandandah Folk Festival - 22nd—24th March

*This year Stage III will fundraise at YFF* with a barbeque running on the weekend. Come and join the crew, enjoy some live music and the company of the Stage III community. Stage III will put \$50 toward your ticket so if you could manage a couple of shifts behind the grill during the festival, it will be a great weekend with lots to see. Hope you can make it! There is a **\$500** instant win prize for the best busker! And a spot on stage in next years festival.

For more info about the festival visit <http://folkfestival.yackandandah.com> OR call Woll on 5148 0492



## Trivia Night - 11th May

*The time has come again*, as the Stage III Trivia Night approaches, attendees refresh their memories with general knowledge, music knowledge and other topics for the ultimate battle to raise funds for Stage III. All are welcome to enjoy the trivia night surrounded by fun, Wollangarra folk. **Accepting donations for prizes and auction now!** More details coming soon. Watch this space!

### Contact Us

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