

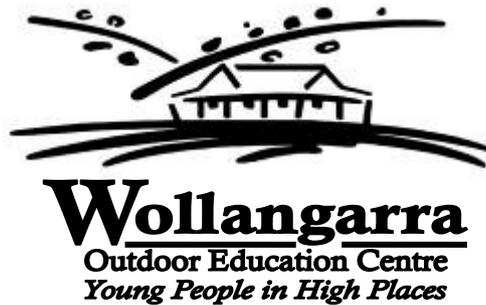
# Stage III

Stage III

Wollangarra

Licola 3858

Ph 5148 0492



Contact Us

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

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Summer 2014 Issue # 96

## December Stage III Induction

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 2013, a mighty fellowship was formed, a troupe of aspiring intrepid explorers, stout of heart, with feline curiosity and an undeniable thirst for broad horizons and mountain tops. Each member of the fellowship formed an integral strut in the metaphysical tipi of induction hike; quirky and irrepressible Dan Brady, easy-going and cheerful Lachie Smith, rambunctious and rampant Meah Nunan, down to earth and out of this world frivolous Claire Woodward, merry and wildly enthusiastic Harry McKenzie-McHarg, excitable and peculiar Caitlyn Kirwan, and as every good fellowship needs a fool, myself, Jho Chibnall, the scintillating ginger. At the helm of our expedition were the seasoned adventurers; jolly and invigorating Annabelle Nunan, ludicrous and spirited Maddie Gort and the noble and indomitable Amy, whom we all followed under the battle name of Mufasa.

Our first task was to issue gear and organise provisions, a mission that involved tackling the kitchen, a labyrinth of milling stage ones. Nevertheless, undaunted we plunged in to secure the precious jam, vital chutney and countless wondrous teabags necessary for a successful hike.

December 16, it was a typical summer day; the earth was holding us in a bubble of enveloping and escalating warmth. We rose, not early, but rise we did, and began the ascent out of Woll, cradled among the surrounding mountains, by canoeing across the Macalister River with the characteristically lively aid of Lucy Kervin-McDermott. Our first lesson in navigation was to take place perched on the slope beside a contour track on a treacherously anty location. We proceeded to scale the ridge, wary of deceptive gullies. What took place next, trudging ponderously up a looming hill, was a battle waged against the opposition of a blistering sun and raging lactic acid. I won't attempt to deny the extreme temptation of self-pity at this crucial juncture, but took heart from the presence of my comrades and persisted

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## January Hike H-ville to Mitta



Glorious sunset at Cope Hut

Photo: Bob Vincent

My week out on hike was amazing, exhilarating and exhausting. At the start of the week at the Woodward's house, I was surprisingly nervous and awkward, as I hadn't been out on hike for over a year. However, of course the beautiful and kind people that I was on hike with immediately made me feel like I was back where I belonged.

Our actual hike started at Ian's house, where we lost track of time talking and ended up beginning late. We hiked all the way up to almost the top of Mt Feathertop, where we met some other campers who's style of hiking was... interesting to say the least. One of them brought out a blow torch to light a fire. Another thought it was funny to pretend to stab a very poisonous and scared snake. But, whatever floats your boat. That night none of us slept very well as there was gale force winds, so our ambitious plans to be on the top of Feathertop for sunrise were foiled. However, we did get to the top later, and the views were spectacular.

Our next path was down Diamantina Spur, which was a bit tough on the knees and on our mental strength to keep going. That seemed to become the theme for me for the rest of the hike, while everyone else seemed to be able to breeze along hiking unperturbed by their sore feet and tired bodies. I had been out of the game for a while.

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Stage III Induction continued...

doggedly. Upon attaining the elevation of the Helipad we were treated to a glorious view and a lesson in taking bearings. After a brief reprieve, we toddled down the side of a ridge for a well-earned lunch before once more shouldering packs and utilising suitable sun protection. An afternoon ensued with abundant sweat, ash and dirt, all very much worth it after reaching a utopian camp and the wildly welcome sight of the gleaming cream pristine sand and the lazily meandering soothing depths of the river. The evening passed in a haze of euphoric swimming, tarp assemblage, fried ricing, the craft of 'induction pendants' fashioned from rounds of beautiful red gum and a happily competitive game of Empires to prepare us for a slumber under open skies and magnificent astronomical features.

Roused unceremoniously by Dan's eerie and uncanny impersonation of Golum, a few of us dared the chilly and bracing waters of the early morning river as a refreshing way to start the next leg of our journey. Pancakes were a welcome indulgence, if a time consuming one. The morning's hike started with a tiring session of bush bashing through hungry and reaching blackberries and thistles, which must have been lonely, as once they hooked you, they were unreasonably reluctant to relinquish their grip on your clothes, skin and hair. The morning proved to be eventful and lively, full of map consultations, exhibitions of strength and flexibility in contortions to pass big logs and low-hanging branches, detours through monstrous thistle plantations and adrenalinisingly precarious rock-hopping obstacle courses. Another swim accompanied with appreciative vigour commenced at Banana Flat and was followed by a supremely satisfying lunch. The afternoon was a chance to demonstrate our independence and as an ebullient company we inductees set off alone (sort of) to negotiate a suspiciously uphill - downhill contour track to our eventual destination of the picturesque Burgoyne's Hut, which emanated a palpable aura of welcoming serenity and a promise of a merry evening. Another session of 'induction pendant' work followed the initial tasks of fetching water and striking tents.

The industrious activity gradually wound down and peace settled over the land, the darkness sifting down like falling feathers over the rolling hills. A full moon greeted we weary nomads, and overlooked a predictably unpredictable round of Mafia with the addition of campfire chocolate cake. Perhaps the most notable event of the late evening was Meah and Claire celebrating the pinnacle of the lunar cycle by mooning the moon. Once again laid out like content caterpillars, we drifted off to sleep under the comforting iridescence of the moon and stars.

The next morning was spent in a frenzy of decorating the hut and fire pit (most of which went understandably unnoticed) for the arrival of the twenty day 'Tale of Two Tables' hikers as Burgoyne's was to be their last camp of their monumental expedition. After setting out once more and waddling up another hill we caught sight, from our lofty vantage, of the twenty day hikers. Feeling rejuvenated, we once more hit the track, after an experimentally catastrophic and unintentionally violent game of 'packs-on twister.' The afternoon whiled away with happy toil, after some grinding uphill and gruelling downhill under an unapologetically radiant sun.

We left Woll as a crew of excited and fresh individuals, we returned back to Woll as a united fellowship, forged through shared sweating, panting, stories and laughter under the magnanimous guidance of Mufasa. We all dived into the events of the next day, gliding seamlessly into the Stage III flat week crew.

Our experience was much more than a walk in the mountains, we came out as individuals with a clear sense of purpose, unity, inspiration after an invigorating and cleansing trial that was every bit and induction into the mentality and drive of Stage III.

Sincerely, with the occasional exaggeration, Jho Chibnall

## *Upcoming Hike / Work Party*

Feeling inspired after reading about the adventures had on hike? You too can have your very own adventure on the Stage III hike / work party coming up in the April school holidays (13 - 18th April). Please send your forms ASAP to confirm that you are coming and if you have any questions give Woll a buzz on (03) 5148 0492. Further details to come closer to the date.

January Hike continued...



Maddie, Mae and Ellie T at Federation Hut Photo: Xavier Johnson

The hike along the high planes was flat and easy, and gave me plenty of time to imagine that I was in Lord of the Rings with the fellowship. This is probably always my favourite part of hiking. Our lunches were long because of our inability to stop talking about all sorts of interesting things. We always seemed to be getting to our campsites late, but at the same time it didn't matter because we were all happy and laughing and talking.

The last night on hike we had a debrief and it got a bit deep, and we learnt a lot about Aboriginal culture and the culture surrounding fires. I think what I said and what was said by other people that night is what will help get me through year 12 this year.

Our hike finished up at the Mittagundi festival, and even though we were exhausted and our feet were blistered and bruised, there was no way we were going to turn down an excuse to party hard. Ain't nobody gonna stop our train. We not only danced vigorously that night but also the night after when there was an open mic at Mitta. The next day on the way home I felt sore, tired, but also I finally had a sense of fulfilment that I had been looking for over a year. This hike reminded me why I need the outdoors and that no matter how stressful the last year of high school becomes, I can think back to what's really important to me, the connection I have with the mountains.

Mae Godfrey

## *Stage III Trivia Night - 10 May*

The Time has come again, as the Stage III Trivia night approaches, attendees refresh their memories with general knowledge, watch re-runs of Spicks and Specks, and prepare themselves for the ultimate battle to raise funds for Stage III. Bring your friend, your aunt, your fish, all are welcome. **We are accepting donations for the auction and prizes now!** More details to come, watch this space!

## *Upcoming Events*

Anzac Day Weekend Work Party: 24 - 27 April

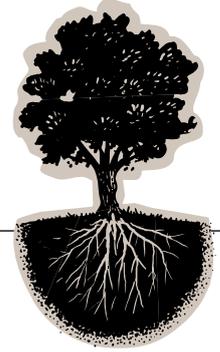
Stage III Hike/Work Party: 13 - 18 April

Stage III Trivia Night: 10 May

Woodchop Weekend: 6 - 8 June

## Nicola's Fun Fact

If you take a small section from a branch (about the size of your thumb), peel off the bark and attach a tube to one end and seal it off, the pores used to transport sap through wood can be used to filter 99% of e.coli (bacteria that gives you food poisoning) out of water at a rate of several litres a day!



## Stage III Committee 2014

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 awesome group.

Maeve Nunan  
Dylan Burns  
Oliver Wright  
Chris Bates:  
Anthony Gowans  
Oliver Smith  
Claire Woodward  
Annabelle Nunan  
Ellie Ware  
Meredith Johnson  
Nicola Woodward  
Harriet Negus  
Sarah Anne Mair  
Isaac Kervin-McDermott  
Jack Garton  
Georgia Booth  
Jackson Greatz



## 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.

### Contact Us

**Amy Naivasha - Stage III Facilitator**

**Phone:** 5148 0492

**Email:** [stage3@wollangarra.org](mailto:stage3@wollangarra.org)

**Address:** Wollangarra, Licola VIC 3858