

WELCOME TO...

# Wollangarra's Summer Newsletter



Wollangarra, Licola, 3858  
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[www.wollangarra.org](http://www.wollangarra.org)

## The Staff Farewell Issue...

Summer at Wollangarra. The lushness of spring is slowly replaced with the dryness and warmth of summer. Where once you would wake to crisp mornings and dew, we now find the flat balmy and already baking, as the sun rises early over the mountains. The rains come sporadically, until their frequency drops to the point where you say, "Good bye spring, hello summer."

And with the changing of the seasons comes a changing of the guard. As we farewell spring, Wollangarra also farewells its staff. For nearly 12 months now Wollangarra has been in the capable hands and loving care of Clare, Geordie, Jane, Lizzy and Will. As the year draws to a close I can sense a foreboding as the staff realise that their tenure is up. They start saying things like, "This is my last hike to Spion Kopje", and then "This is my last local walk", and then "Oh no, this is my last Stage 1!" until finally, "This is my last day..."

Lately, on their weekends off, they have been taking a few more things with them when they go back to their parents. A little bit of themselves being forcibly removed, al-

though somehow still all of themselves at Wollangarra. Their hearts and minds are there, but you can feel them thinking of the year ahead.

Their farewell letters in here are quite amazing. Each of them has come away from Wollangarra with something numinous, unique and extraordinary.

When I first became interested in coming to Wollangarra, I was told that the staff were very young, the youngest ever, in fact. But this was quickly followed up with how capable and together they were. I was to learn that these observations were very true. And now,

six months on, I can say that they are, indeed, an incredible bunch of people. To work and live in an isolated community for 12 months takes something really special. On top of that put all the additional pressures, including a director change over, and at the end of that everyone still hugs each other and makes cups of tea for one another.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to spend the beginnings of my Wollangarra fairytale with such an inspiring group of people.

On behalf of the Wollangarra community, thankyou.

Ross.



*Jane and Clare enjoying the "new" couch they brought home from the tip.*



## Fruit Bottling!

January 21 and 22.

Be there.

With Fruit.

## Calendar

Here is what is on at Woll:

January 7: New Staff Arrive!

January 16-20: Holiday Stage 1

January 21-22: Fruit Bottling

Feb sometime: School Courses Start

# Goodbye Wollangarra

## The Tireless Worker: Will



Today we dive tackled a sheep, took its fleece off with hand shears and pushed its rectum back inside its anus several times. A typical farm day in the life of a Wollangarra staff member, I guess you could say. This year has been filled with so many of these experiences and stories. Of course, they have often been a little more pleasant than the aforementioned. They have made our year at Wollangarra the most amazing of our lives. This small space cannot adequately express all of these memories that each of us will cherish forever. But sit us down on a sunny verandah with a cup of tea and we will happily ramble on like an old man smoking peppermint tea from a hand carved pipe (well, maybe Lizzy would—I couldn't talk for that long).



*Lizzy will spend 2006 studying Art at RMIT in Melbourne.*

We would remember the burning stumps, the burning munchies, charcoal faces, the late nights, swimming in the river, running out of toilet paper, sheep in the garden, foxes in the chook house, being part of a family, aeroplane rides, magic carpets, Mexican, Big Buck Hunter, Gemma Dawwwg, jumping off the bridge, snakes in drag, grown and hairy men in drag, a crazy inventor, endless complaints, "What time is it?", neverending puns, "How far Will?"—"Longer than a carrot", mandolin man on Skene, and many more.

Our dearest thanks to Wollangarra for all it has shared with us, the mountains for their silent wisdom, the young people for the challenges and laughs, the dedicated supporters for giving more than we could have expected. And last of all, those who we shared the year with—you know who you are.



*Next year Will is going to study Environmental science at Charles Sturt University in Albury.*



## ... and The Butterfly: Lizzy

## The Viper: Jane

I came over the flying fox at the start of the year to a new home and a new family. There was so much to learn and so much to take in. Just living in a place like Wollangarra is amazing enough, then add going into the mountains with young people every week and you've got an experience never to be forgotten. I never realised how many crazy, funny, emotional and inspiring moments could be fitted into a single year. There are hundreds of things I wish I could share with you, especially about the people I have met and come to know. But because putting these experiences into words would take a lifetime, there is just one memory that I am going to share with you.

It was a hot day and this group of Stage 2s had decided to eat lunch at the top of a long, steep hill. Carrying four day's worth of gear on their backs, as well as tools for working on the walking track, most of the group powered up the hill, knowing that lunch was in sight. But, as always, a few were left to struggle well and truly at the back. What greater encouragement can a small community of young people give than this—they returned from the top of the hill to carry the packs of those that were struggling. They then welcomed them with lunch, laid out and ready to eat, when they finally made it to the top.

So thank you to the young people, the staff, the directors, everything and everyone that has made Wollangarra what it is. The hard work is definitely worth it.



*Jane has secured a job with the DSE and will be going to Canberra initially, working on the rural land stewardship project.*

# r a ' s S t a f f o f 2 0 0 5

## Our 1950s Housewife – Clare



Where else on earth? I'll start with a deep breath. All right! I've resigned myself to the fact that no matter what I write, it will not come close to summing up what this year has meant to me, and where Wollangarra lies in my heart. Anyway, here goes...

Where else do trees and mountains become your surroundings, your neighbours, and hug you from every angle? Where else do young people live, learn, inspire and gnaw you in such close association with nature? Where else can you tell a telemarketer that "sorry, we don't have electricity" when they try to sell you computer upgrades.

Where else do 5 minute jobs take 4 hours, and even then, something's probably wrong? And where else does this not matter?

Wollangarra has been simply awesome. There has been much laughter, tears and self discovery. I have loved the sunshine, the rain, the moon, the stars and the river. The sense of purpose in everyday, of contributing positively to the lives of young people and to the environment, made devoting my energy to Wollangarra such a pleasure. And what I received in return is indescribable.

Thankyou to everyone who has been a part of my journey, I love you all dearly and wish you all the very best. Especially to my crazy Wollangarra family, to the kindred spirits who have been part of my life here. You have been more than I could ever have wished for, and I have learnt so much about the gentle art of friendship.

To Geordie, Jane, Lizzy, Will, Jen, Reiner, Charlotte, Flynn, Ross, Gemma and Billy:

"We all take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere." - Tim McGraw



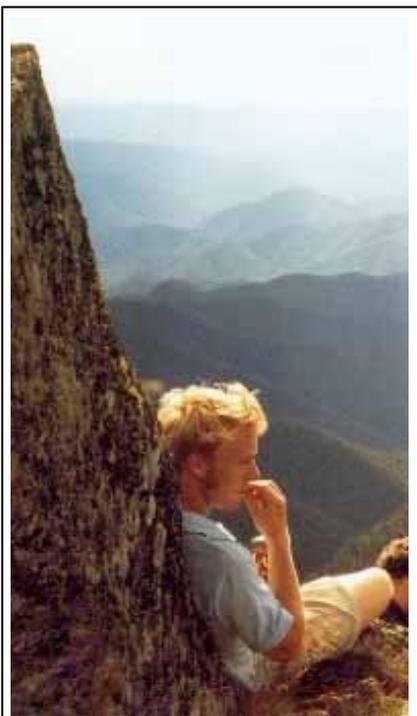
*Clare is changing her course and studying Outdoor Ed at Bendigo.*

## The Mountain Man: Geordie

Although things are relatively green and lush around the Wollangarra flat at the moment, it is definitely summer again. And that means I have lived on this flat for four seasons. That means it is almost time for me to leave this place and move on to another. The prospect of moving on is both saddening and exciting. Leaving Wollangarra, its people, its dogs, will be tough. Yet I'll be leaving with much to look forward to.

Looking back on my year here, I am very glad I deferred my final year of uni. Being here has given me the opportunity to live at a sensible pace, which has allowed me to do the... well, dreaming, I needed. I won't go into detail, but the right kind of dreaming is very important for our souls.

As well as dreaming, I managed to learn many practical things related to Outdoor Education, relationships, fencing, nature, young people, toilets... the list goes on in such a completely disorderly fashion. And I am most grateful for sharing this place with the special people I did—Jen, Reiner, Charlotte, Flynn, Clare, Will, Jane, Lizzy and Ross. You are an amazing bunch of people, all influencing me in different ways. Thankyou to those people above, thankyou to the wider community—your input makes Woll what it is. And thankyou to Wollangarra—the place and the experience.



*Geordie will be returning to Bendigo Outdoor Ed to finish his studies.*



## What's New At Woll

### The New Fox

It was a big weekend in December when all and sundry descended upon the Wollangarra Flat like a group of Stage 2ers to a pile of shovels. And they all came out to help put in the supporting structure for the new flying fox. Now, don't get us wrong, it's not as though we didn't like the old one. Far from it—we are ever so thankful for the years of service and trusty mileage of our dear friend. However, there comes a time when we need to retire our beloved colleagues, and that time has come.

First, we had to dig the hole wider, because the railway tracks were half a metre too wide. Then came getting the two sections of frame across the river—John Colpo drove his ute halfway across the river, where Will and Clare connected a cable which was attached, via a pulley connected to a willow stump, to Wozza, the tractor. Ross then dragged the frame, after it was washed downstream somewhat, across to the other side.

Positioning them was fun, but there was just enough labour to lift them and then get them level. Getting them aligned was tough, but we finally managed it.

Next was getting the railway tracks into the hole—not easy when space is confined and you have a flimsy bit of plastic in the bottom of the hole. Then the rod was connected and aligned with the frame and the RSJ on the other side of the river.

Enough for a weekend? No way! Next came the concrete, but after one mix, one of the belts decided to go belly up. And that was it. To the river we went.

As it turns out, it was a blessing in disguise. We resumed work a few days later and it was a full day's work of mixing, carting wheelbarrows, pouring, carting screenings across the fox and throwing rocks in the holes.

So now we wait for the concrete to dry, and hopefully get this current lot of Stage 2ers in there to fill it in. The cable will be connected early in the new year.



*Anti clockwise from top: Doug on the back of John's ute toppling the frame into the Macalister; Ross transporting the frame to the fox site; the work party putting the two pieces together; the dwindled crew with the first and only pour of the day—note Jane and Nick holding the broken belt; the gang laying the railway track; Sarah and the formwork of the rod.*

## Say Hi to “Ken”, the New Boiler

Alex has served us well, but he has been retired. Enter “Ken the Monster”. Alex was the boiler at the outdoor kitchen which was already about 80 years old when Wollangarra took possession of it. So, it was no surprise that it was time for Alex to move to greener pastures. I mean, sure, it’s kind of cute to have this equipment that is held together with wire and rivals the great Pyramids for their age, but you get pretty sick of walking out of the kitchen and seeing flames leaping into the sky because the entire flue has decided to take a holiday.

*note: Ken Medew (pictured, the one that is not Lizzy) called it the Monster because of its size. However, we have also decided to call the boiler Ken after all the amazing work Ken has done. So please don’t get confused: Ken Medew is not a Monster, and Ken the Monster is not a plumber.*

So, where did Ken the Monster come from? Where do you find gear like this? Where else but the only other place that has no electricity and likes everything *hard*—Mittagundi. On our last trip there to help with their skiing course, we asked after a boiler, and *voile*: there was Ken the Monster. So, after getting the White Rocket bogged trying to load it, it headed for Wollangarra. From there, we took it to Ken Medew’s where he pressure tested it and worked his magic. This included totally rebuilding many components and fabricating many parts from scratch. Several back problems later, we managed to get it to the outdoor kitchen. And as you can imagine nothing went that smoothly for its installation, but Ken was able to get it working in one day. Another amazing feat for Ken Medew. And thanks to June, Ken’s wife, for letting him come out.



*Ken and Lizzy installing the eponymous “Ken the Monster”. “It was hard work”, said Lizzy. “I was boiling after lifting it, but I found installing it a great way to let of steam. I like to work under pressure.” Ken said Lizzy took to the task like a duck to water.*

## Some New Chooks and Lambs

Jake the Rooster has been at it again—siring two chicks. Welcome to Wollangarra “Cisco” and “Ludicrous”. We look forward to many years of delicious eggs from our new family members.

And Roger the Ram has also been caught in the spirit of doing what animals do, and given us “Jim” and “Hendrix”. Shona the Sheep, the proud mother, seemed very happy. She ate some grass. In fact, there have been a few other lambs since, but no-one has named them yet. We look forward to, well, eating all of you. Yum!

*STOP PRESS: A fox ate Jake, most of the chooks and Cisco and Ludicrous. However, there are three new chicks that survived. If anyone wants to give us some chooks, that would be great.*

### Ode to the Staff

<i>It’s Saturday morning</i>	<i>Has she been in the</i>	<i>Geordie stumbles in</i>
<i>Our only day rest</i>	<i>river?</i>	<i>Feeling mossy</i>
<i>Is that Will I can hear</i>	<i>It’s the middle of winter</i>	<i>He’s not awake</i>
<i>Stirring out of bed?</i>	<i>But you won’t see her</i>	<i>Till he’s had his coffee</i>
<i>The Sun’s barely risen</i>	<i>shiver</i>	<i>And there’s our butterfly</i>
<i>It must be early</i>	<i>And someone drinking</i>	<i>fly</i>
<i>If it were any other man</i>	<i>tea</i>	<i>Arty and busy</i>
<i>He’d surely be surly</i>	<i>Smiling too</i>	<i>Pierced and tattooed</i>
<i>And what’s that I hear?</i>	<i>Its Jane, and its early</i>	<i>That’s our Lizzy</i>
<i>Someone baking?</i>	<i>With a hug for you</i>	
<i>My goodness, it’s Clare</i>	<i>Does she ever not smile</i>	<i>You are all loved</i>
<i>Another cake she’s making</i>	<i>Oh, how she’s brave</i>	<i>For who you are</i>
	<i>We all love Jane</i>	<i>Wollangarra is the sky</i>
<i>She’s dripping wet</i>	<i>She’s our fave</i>	<i>And each of you a star</i>



*The Cycling For Sustainability crew rode into Wollangarra during November. This is a group that are riding from Brisbane in order to raise awareness of living sustainably, including using bicycles more as transport. Notable mentions include Dan and Freya, some of the staff of 2004.*

## The FRL Experience...

The Folk Rhythm and Life festival was another bottler—what a wonderful festival! So much music and such a great vibe. And a great way for people to catch up with one another, particularly for us isolated folk. The music was almost as refreshing as the river, and the people as pleasant as the weather.

A huge thank you to all the supporters and friends that helped out at the burger tent. My question to you is this—can Larissa Robbins be stopped? She is a burger behemoth, an egg frying freak, a veritable sausage sizzling leviathan, a juggernaut of the barbecue superhighway. When Riss takes to the road, you'd better hop out of the way. Riss has organised and run the stall (which brings in some nice moula for Woll) for many years, and seems to barely venture from it during the weekend. She had some helpers this year, namely Fi Stewart and Helen Collins, but there were so many others involved—we love you all!



*No-one is spared when it comes to attracting recruits for the Wollangarra burger tent. Not even past directors can escape.*

## Jen & Reiner & Co...

As we enjoy the heat of a summer Christmas in Australia, Jen, Reiner, Charlotte and Flynn are braving the subzero temperatures of Colorado. This is Reiner's homeland, where his family still reside. After our fond farewell to this wonderful family who gave their heart and soul to Wollangarra as directors, kindred spirits and friends, Jen gained a position of Director of Outdoors at Howqua, the year 9 campus of Lauriston Girls College, near Mansfield.

They seemed to have settled in well, enjoying some of the luxuries that life after Woll brings. But they dearly miss Gemma Dog, and the rest of their beloved Wollangarra family. It cannot be put into words how much Wollangarra gained from them, and we wish them all the very best for their new adventure. If you want to contact them, their address is Locked Bag 3, Mansfield, 3722

## Mittagundi Pioneer Skills

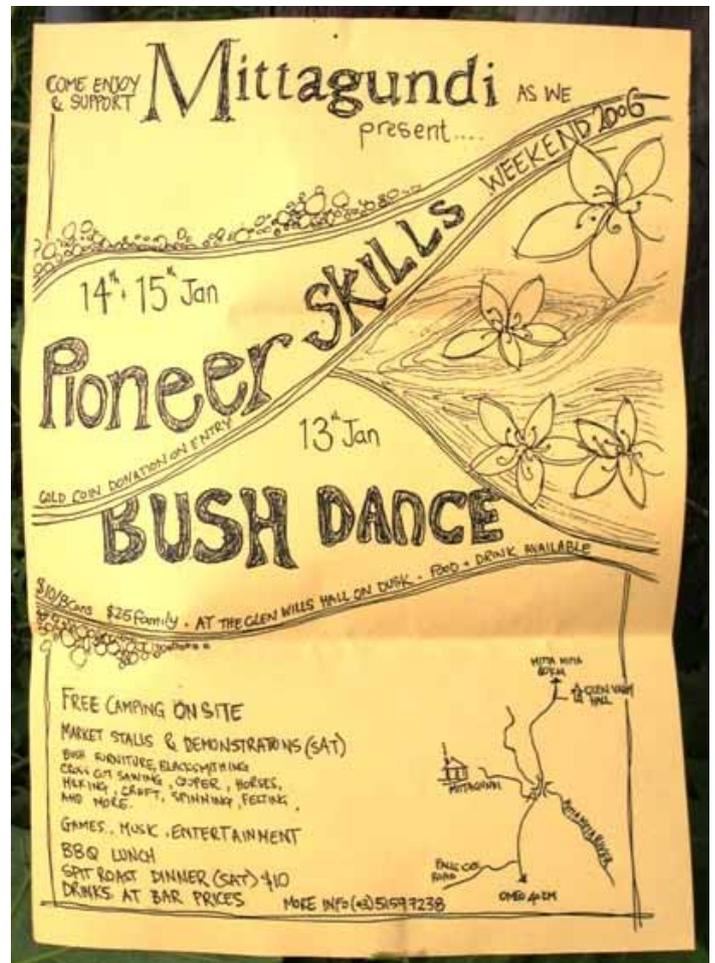
Our brothers and sisters of Mittagundi are having their annual Pioneer Skills weekend on the 14th and 15th January, 2006. This is also the staff handover weekend, so a good chance to see old and new staff as they all begin their new lives together.

Things are a bit different up there, though, so don't be too alarmed if you see cars driving around.

## MISSING



*Have you seen these children? They were last seen being dragged across the flying fox at Wollangarra in early July, 2005. Those responsible may be dangerous—proceed with caution. Note: baby may still be armed with plastic plate.*



## Stage 1 Courses

The schools kept coming in the latter part of the year, and it was a pleasure to have had the company of:

- Plenty Valley
- Westbourne 1 & 2
- Camberwell 2 & 3
- Matthew Flinders

It was great to return to Bryces Gorge after the road was opened after winter. The waterfalls were absolutely pumping, with both Piemans and Conglomerate Falls showing the force of Mother Nature. And the crazy young people that braved the icy waters—we think you are all nuts. And the young folk also were able to get things done around the flat, such as straightening gate posts, digging out the fox hole and working on the new toilet.

Also a big thankyou to the teachers who com out and give up their time. Without you, the young people wouldn't be there, either.



*The girls from Star of the Sea, ready for anything Wollangarra can throw at them, in their action suits.*

## Sheep get their Come Uppance

Well, it all started a few days before Open Day. The sheep get shorn, you see, to do that, we drive them in from Rob's 80 acres. Well, we left a few because they had small lambs. But they needed to be shorn and the lambs marked. By the time we got there, the lambs weren't that small, and of course they were boys. Oh well, not for much longer.



*Left: Ross shearing one of the sheep that was left behind. There is a reason why they don't use hand shears any more. Right: Will and Tim with the lambs, thinking of places they'd rather be...*

### Wish List...

- Lawn Mowers (x 2)
- Chooks
- Fencing materials, especially stat pickets
- 1 litre Nalgene Bottles
- SnoSeal for boots
- New pillows
- House for demolishing
- Sunflower seeds for planting
- House paint
- Paint brushes of all kinds
- Hatchet for kindling
- Holiday stage 1s
- People for fruit bottling (not bottling people, but fruit)

## The 2006 Alpine Walk

The Alpine Walk is a fund raiser whereby young people hike from Wollangarra to Mittagundi. Young people are chosen from Wollangarra, Mittagundi and Typo Station. The money is put towards sponsoring young people to attend the programs of the three centres. In 2006, the confirmed young people from Wollangarra are Kasey Anable, Hamish MacRae, Ally Styger, Eric Woodward and one more mystery person. The staff representative from this end will be Jane LLOYD (by the way, that is the historically correct use of capitalisation of Jane's name).

So, give up your hard earned dough and support these young people. Write a cheque with a note saying who you are sponsoring and for how much. Send this to us and we'll take care of the rest.

## The Staff of 2006...

Let's not draw too much attention away from our beloved 2005 staff, but just for your information, the staff of 2006 are: Loz Scanlon, Freya Thomas, Tim Macauley, Nick Procter and Steph Barclay. There will be more about these characters in the next newsletter, but for now, some things on which to ruminate: is "Loz" her real name? Is Freya from some exotic Scandinavian country, and if so, what is she doing here? Tim seems innocent enough, but is there a dark side? As for Nick, well, not too much known. Is he hiding something? Is he going to use Wollangarra as some kind of hide-out, or training camp? And Steph Barclay—need I say more? Maybe she holds the answers to the unsolved Wollangarra murders.

# Woll Merch

What	How Much	How Many
Wollangarra Red Wine, from Rutherglen	\$15 each, or \$165 dozen	
T-Shirts, mens and womens, XS to XXL (sizes run small), in brown, aquamarine, navy with emerald, khaki with raspberry	\$25 each	
Secondhand and Solid—the book of how Wollangarra was built.	\$15 per book	
Jim and Molly—2 Very Special Australians	\$8 per book	
Cards—Wollangarra Icons.	\$2 each or set of 8 for \$12	
Stickers	\$2 each	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Total (including donation for postage) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheque payable to Wollangarra Inc.

## Thankyou To...

- Our babysitters: Wheels, Alex, Tammy and Yvonne
- Ken Medew (see this issue)
- Our fox helpers: Loz, Tim, Jodie, Doug, John Colpo, Nick, Yvonne and Gemma
- Rob Gilder for the railway track and delivery
- Heyfield Bakery for the bread for the sheep
- Des Coleman for the use of the trailer
- Jen and Reiner for the donations for the gear store
- Andrew Fullagar for the batteries and Sudoku books
- The FRL helpers (see this issue)
- Julian for the forthcoming fox axle
- David McPhee for the lemons for the fox workers
- WBM Engineering for the fox and advice at odd times on weekends
- Our course helpers: Jodie and Will Morris
- Stuart Brooks for the maps
- The Amazing McCallums—with hearts bigger than Phar Lap
- The Aerial motors crew—Dave, Jacki, Kauf and Craig.
- All our Stage 1 participants
- The Stage 2 young people that at the time of writing are on their way from the train to Wollangarra



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Wollangarra

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