

A large herd of cattle, mostly white and grey, are wading through a river. Some are standing, while others are partially submerged. The background shows a line of trees under a clear blue sky.

Cattle cooling off at Wave Hill

## Director's Update

### Issue 5

It is a heartbreaking time for pastoralists in south-western Queensland who have experienced record-breaking rainfall. To bring them out of drought in some places, and cause catastrophe in other, an act of mother nature which is neither fair nor welcome, a reminder that mother nature isn't always discerning, and our thoughts are with the communities in that region as they commence the significant recovery and clean-up process.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> was a significant moment in time with the USA Trump regime launching tariffs on all its trading partners, friend and foe alike. With 10% being slapped on Australian meat imports into the USA, only time will tell what impact this will have. My obvious fear is of retaliation by countries across the globe and a full-scale global trade war which probably won't be good for any of us. The world is certainly an interesting and somewhat uncertain place at present, how the next four years unfold with Trump at the helm of the great economy and military might of the USA will be interesting. Buckle in!

# MPG Newsletter



## Killarney cattle in the yards

We are all hoping for an accident and incident free year as we focus on continued improvement on safety at work and on the premise that safety and productivity can go hand in hand.

We are again offering a company branded Yeti 1-gallon water bottle to every MPG employee at the end of November, for stations able to keep the rate of serious incidents to a minimum. So, apply common sense, when in doubt 'ask' and look out for your co-workers; they will thank you for it.

The late wet season rainfall (late March, early April) in the Victoria River District will set us up nicely for the year ahead, extending the growing season, running creeks and filling billabongs at a great time.

Welcome back to all returning staff and a warm welcome to all our new crew. I hope the year ahead is rewarding for us all.



Wave Hill work horses

# MPG Newsletter

At the core of MPG's values is the premise of lifelong learning. In mid-February I was fortunate to attend a week of education in the USA at Harvard Business School. The experience exceeded my expectations for several reasons, one being that I was completely removed from both my intellectual and social comfort zones! While things can be challenging at the time, I think growth happens when we're stretched.

On that vein, I hope the early instruction received around horse safety and low stress stock-handling, first aid courses have been well-received, to be followed up with horse breaking schools between mustering rounds, later in the year. There's no doubt handling cattle, and especially horsemanship, are areas of skill and expertise which take every bit of a lifetime to master. It flows into the adage that we strive to continually improve everything we do.



**Callum (right) at Harvard with old school friend James Neville-Smith**

# MPG Newsletter



**Wave Hill team mustering**



**Wave Hill cattle**

Early March saw a conclusion to the legal matter which has dogged us through 2024 on the back of the mistaken removal of heritage listed fence and windmill at Wave Hill.

We had owned the mistake from the get-go and made all the amends with the Gurindji that we could, bar putting it all back which requires government approval.

Always a glass half full man, it's hard to draw many positives from this long sorry saga. However, one upside is the relationship with the native title holders, the Gurindji people, which has me feeling utmost respect for them, the victim of our error, but who demonstrated values, poise and character throughout.

Despite the legal penalty being a bitter pill to swallow, I remain steadfast that the Gurindji have proven themselves a proper custodian and a respectful partner at Wave Hill, our relationship has been tested in its early days, and they've proved themselves to be worthy of our respect.

**Callum MacLachlan**

# MPG Newsletter



**Number 4 yard - Keeper Heifers**

## Killarney Station

The wet season of 2024/25 has been on average great for grass growth and nutrition. November delivered us 137.4 mm, moving cattle off man-made waters early and eliminating the fire threat, which was a great relief. December delivered 93.2 mm, however with most of this recorded in the top end of the month and with the extreme heat, it wasn't long until we were running bores once again. Finally mid-January delivered a fall of 55mm in just a few hours. For the wet (since November) we have 783mm recorded at the Homestead.



**Friday afternoons - under the tree of knowledge**

# MPG Newsletter

We managed to get out the Killarney driveway - “just” - on our annual leave at the end of January, with Chrissy and Henvil returning after spending a month in the Philippines. We were back on station mid-February along with Isla Smith and Amy Craig. A huge thank you to Henvil and Christine Barroz for once again looking after the place while we were away. Returning to foot long green grass and creeks running is always a welcoming sight. Cattle also benefiting from a long, steady yet consistent wet season, dry cattle steaming ahead and breeders looking exceptional with healthy weaners at foot.

Isla and Melmark spent a week fencing, before the rest of crew arrived at the end of February, ready for orientation day on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March. It was then straight into a two-day horsemanship school with Hamish Lamond, which was once again a success with all staff thoroughly enjoying themselves, while learning valuable horsemanship skills and more experienced staff improving where needed. It was then onto the task of shoeing the working horse plant with all staff successfully shoeing their horses under guidance from experienced crew members.



**Horsemanship School 2025**

# MPG Newsletter



We welcomed Andrew Lewis back again to conduct our annual Low Stress Stock Handling School. This course is invaluable in getting everyone on the same page in handling Brahman cattle the best way possible for the welfare of the animal and safety of the people.

Great to have our core leadership team return in Isla Smith and Kylie Clifford. Isla in her third year running the breeder camp and Kylie in her second year running the weaner camp. Kylie and Isla do a tremendous job with the OH&S side of things.

They were successful in getting everyone through 2024 with no major injuries. Thank you for the effort you both put in.

## LLS Handling School in action

Callum delivering on his word and gifting every staff member at Killarney a branded Yeti water bottle for no serious injuries for the year - thank you.



**Killarney team with Andrew from Low Stress Stock Handling**

# MPG Newsletter



## Induction Day 2025

We also welcome back Nancy Strutt, starting her third year along with Casper Milbank and Clancy Knott returning for a second year.

Ava Osmotherley also returning, making the transition from stock camp to schoolroom, she is doing a fantastic job.

Amy Craig has returned for her ninth year in the kitchen keeping an army of people fed, she also does a power of work behind the scenes.

Stuart Jones back on the grader again with yet another big year ahead of him, further development to come in 2025 on the Eastern side of Birrimba which means Stuart will add another 200km of grading onto his big routine.

Also credit to Melmark, Floreza and Finn Mercado who have now well and truly settled into Killarney, experiencing their first NT wet season.



**Conducting early burns on the ground**

# MPG Newsletter



**L to R: Archie Stanley, Amy Craig, Cooper Stanley & Finn Mercado planting the boys vegetable garden**

Many new faces also this year, welcome to the Killarney team of 2025; Piper Williams, Lucy Simpson, James Pincott, Hugh Wettenhall, Brodie Ramsay, Harry Dawson, Cooper O'Connor, Fallon Hoare and Zac Mitchell.

So far, we have mustered, drafted and weighed 2,486 heifer's ex Laurisson and Comet paddocks with 1,100 cull heifers now spayed and placed into Bennet's paddock ready to be trucked up to Woolner on agistment in a couple of weeks' time.

We managed to get this done just in time with 60mm of rain at the homestead and 100 mm plus over on Birrimba putting a complete halt to our mustering program.

We are currently waiting to see what mother nature will deliver before we plan to recommence mustering, having spent a week training, the crew are fresh and rearing to go. Logistically frustrating, however will not complain about rain.

**Michael Stanley**

## Breeders on Killarney



# MPG Newsletter



**Wave Hill Crew with Andrew from Low Stress Stock Handling**

## Wave Hill Station

The Wet Season at Wave Hill has been somewhat sporadic; however we have now ended up with a pretty fair season. We have had about 70% of our Average at Wave Hill Homestead; but Cattle Creek, Sunshine and Lajamanu have ended up with about 85% of our average. The way the rain has fallen, with frequent dry spells in amongst it has given our feed very high protein levels. This is evident, with cattle as fat, if not fatter than the last two seasons.

The other upside of a more mild wet has been significantly less flood fencing (which has been a huge task in the last two years) and significantly less erosion on our roads. We have already fenced up 3/4s of Wave Hill and the graders are making good time around the run, with roads in pretty good nick. The drier than recent Wet Seasons had Kenneth Barroz, Brumby Forrester and myself reasonably busy pumping water and keeping bore runs frequent.



**The newly constructed Wave Hill tennis court**

# MPG Newsletter

Connie, Harrison, Imogen, Jonathan and I enjoyed a few weeks away in the wet and can't wait to rip into the season ahead.

Darren Wilson is back again, operating the 140H Grader for the 2025 season. After some serious maintenance conducted on it over the Wet, Darren is enjoying having the machine back at full capability and also enjoying the lack of road damage. He is making a mile around the Eastern Desert as we speak.

We welcome back to the company some home grown leaders in senior positions.

Rain on the horizon



Ben & Cody - Headstockman on station

Breeder Camp Headstockman Ben Carrick who began at Blina as an 18 year old, doing two seasons there and another at Wave Hill in 2022 before heading off contract mustering and working for other pastoral companies for a few years.

Weaner Camp Headstockman Cody Kitchen likewise started with us at Blina as a 16 year old, did three seasons there and one at Wave Hill in 2022, before heading off and contracting for the last few seasons.

It is great to have these guys return to the fold, after initially training them and seeing them head off to broaden their horizons. They will bring some new skills and perspective learnt away from the company.

# MPG Newsletter



## **Jaye back for her second season**

Our first few weeks have run like clockwork, largely due to having so many old hands back on deck; old hands that are simply great people.

The Barroz Family continue at Wave Hill, with a bit of a holiday over the wet season.

Blanche is keeping us all well fed in the kitchen, which is the cleanest I have seen it in years. Kenneth getting his head around the Bores, operating the loader and a variety of other tasks.

Kent is doing the gardening role part time whilst studying and Chelsea the domestic role part time whilst studying. Great to have them on Wave Hill.

It is great to have Brumby Forrester (third year at Wave and about sixth with the company), Leonie Heath (second year at Wave and fourth with the company) and Tess Rixon and Britt Clarke back for their third year.

Back for their second year is Jaye Radel, Ricky Coates, Caleb Seach, Paddy Higgins and Harry Wright - all returning in 2025.

So helpful for management and everyone else when they are experienced, know the system and the place; and have the attitude and character required.



## **Matt and crew heading out to draft cattle**

# MPG Newsletter



A few new faces at Wave Hill. Bryce Gill has started with us in February as Mechanic/ Boreman and has already made a pretty big impact on the Wave Hill Fleet. Well known to us; having done a few weeks work experience at Blina when he was 16, Bryce did his trade with Cummins and has worked on several stations in the NT; as well as a five year stint with Station Mechanical Services out of Katherine.

It is great to have Bryce around and we look forward to him reducing our motor vehicle maintenance spend and reduce the need for outside mechanical contractors. Bryce's partner Tori will be joining us later on in April and will do some part time work on the station, as well as continuing her role remotely as a Tutor at Katherine School of the Air.



**Cody cooking up lunch**



**Tess & Connie on the kids ponies**

# MPG Newsletter



**Jonathan ready to muster!**

We welcome Ellie Hoch (Jillaroo/ Stockcamp Cook) who has started strongly and enjoying her first camp out at Number 7 Yards as I write this.

Alex Rochfort has also joined us as a stationhand. Selina Tape new to Wave Hill, bringing a few seasons of experience and ably supporting her partner Ben.

Henry Deacon has joined us as Pilot/Stationhand and brings some useful skills and a great attitude to the team.

Erin Dahl and Meg Lenehan have joined us as “The Govies” in 2025. They certainly have a bit on with Harrison Wood (Year 2), Maria Barroz (Year 1), Imogen Wood (Transition) and Jonathan Wood (in Cubs).

Four kids, all in different classes in the school room and keeping them out of harms way outside of school. They have started strongly and their energetic and enthusiastic approaches to life and education are hugely appreciated. Arguably the toughest job on Wave Hill, they are making a real show of it. We welcome the new recruits into the Wave Hill team.



**Jonathan joining mum & dad on the muster**



**Imogen & Jonathan documenting the days work**

# MPG Newsletter

We had a Horsemanship Clinic with Hamish Lamond in March, which was well received. Second time around for many; a whole new level was reached. With 15 horses broken in last year, and another 14 to break this year the Wave Hill horse plant is on track to be an absolute ripper.

Likewise a Low Stress Stock Handling clinic was conducted on Wave Hill by Andrew Lewis. Again, experienced and returning staff gain so much more out of these schools. We are having a First Aid course in April as well.



# MPG Newsletter



**L to R: Matt with Ag Dept workers; Jaydn & Caz, Connie, Cody & Ben doing a plant ID day**

We have delivered 30 decks of sale cattle already this year, taking advantage of some opportunities. The market has been slowly strengthening since late 2023; and things are looking positive.

We have our Floodplain Steers drafted out and protocolled ready to send up to agistment country on Woolner as soon as it dries out enough up there. And we begun first round of the Breeders yesterday. So it's action stations at Wave Hill for the next couple of months.

We have a few capital improvements lined up for 2025. These include the installation of a truck weighbridge at Wave Hill homestead, which will allow us to cut down on some shrinkage that we endure with a 7 to 8 hour truck ride for sale cattle to weighbridge in Katherine.

This should be a great thing for Wave Hill. Kurt Heath will be installing this project and we look forward to Kurts arrival, having done a lot of work together over the years at Blina Station.



**The team at their Low Stress Stock Handling school**

# MPG Newsletter

Josh and Dylan Gilbert will be back at Wave in late April to do a further 50 km of fencing. The race is now on to have lines that were cleared in 2023 reopened and graded up for them to make a start.

This fencing out in the Heifer area of Wave Hill will greatly improve our operational efficiency.



**Ready, set, muster!**

Likewise we have a few bores earmarked to convert from Mono's to Solar in 2025.

A new hoist has been erected in the workshop and a slab laid. Great to have this done.



## **Matt & Harrison Wood with Brumby pulling a bore**

We are looking forward to attending a few Campdrafts and Rodeos this year, with plenty already in the calendar. Further to that we set up a tennis court over the wet, with our local tennis pro Paddy Higgins taking charge of fixtures. Stay tuned for updates around the Wave Hill Open.....

We hope everyone at MacPG has a great start to the season.

**Matt Wood**

# MPG Newsletter



Sunrise in a very bare Big Paddock

## Springfield Station

The phrase "it's dry" is frequently being used in conversations in South Australia currently and is the main topic of discussion. This unprecedented dry is unusual for the Mt Lofty Ranges and the mid north, especially during Spring. Typically, the average annual rainfall would be close to 700mm; however, last year it was significantly lower, measuring less than 450mm.

Consequently, the crops did not undergo customary regrowth that usually sustains the weaners until the end of January. As 2024 concluded, a decision was made to sell the calves early due to concerns about a market downturn in the new year and to conserve as much feed as possible. All calves were evaluated and divided into two sale lots for the final Auctions Plus sale of the year in the week before Christmas.



First calves

# MPG Newsletter



Skye and Henry helped to draft and weigh calves multiple times before the weaners were sold successfully.

123 steers with an average weight of 295kg were purchased by Struan Research Centre at Naracoorte in the Southeast for a second year.

94 heifers headed to the Paraweenah Highlands in NSW for breeding, weighing an average of 270kg. The remaining 26 'lighter' calves were sold at the Strathalbyn store market early in the new year.

## **Limo - Springfield's oldest pony**

With the calves being sold, January provided an opportunity to address essential fencing repairs and perform general maintenance tasks that are often overlooked during busier periods. Several Red Gums have been shedding branches as a result of drought-related stress, and unfortunately, some of these branches have fallen onto fences.

The last remaining sheep were mustered from the Victoria Creek paddock with some help from Rose, to be later shorn by John Teusner and sold at the Dublin Market.



## **Cows heading to the dam amongst the dust**

# MPG Newsletter

In early February, Henry returned to the yards to help draft cows into 4 mobs in preparation for calving late March. They were also weighed and given a pre-calving 7-in-1 vaccine.

Additionally, my young pup Deni was also showing some promising skills and courage moving cows to the yards. Feeding of silage twice a week has also commenced early with most paddocks now been grazed reasonably hard.



**Deni cooling off**

In mid-February, a few days were spent inspecting bulls at Beef Week in the Southeast. However, the majority of bulls available were heavier than desired. Three heifer bulls were purchased from a stud north of Kapunda. The bulls from Maryvale Angus Stud are well-suited to our terrain, coming from a similar type of country and are expected to be ideal for the young heifers. The stud is only an hour from Springfield, so it was convenient to pick them up with our own truck. This year, more focus has been placed on hoof health for both bulls and cows. All stock now receives a dry lick with zinc and biotin to promote harder hooves, preparing them for the wetter months ahead.



**Deni moving pregnant cows**

# MPG Newsletter



## One of the springs on station that has started running

By March, most dams are at their lowest levels, but with both the bore and main dam filling the header tank, water quality remains good. Unlike many neighboring properties that have run out of water, our supply is steady. The dry season has prevented summer weeds, and even the Blackberries look like they have been sprayed and are dying. Unfortunately, some trees, including a few Red Gums, will not survive and some of the Oaks are really struggling. This year has also brought plenty of close encounters with snakes. I have seen or nearly stepped on 10 snakes in 8 weeks!!



## A healthy Eastern Brown snake & plenty of Black Cockatoos around the station

As the seasons change, many calves have already been born. The first and second calvers finished within four weeks with few issues, and older cows are progressing well.

We will increase feeding from twice to three times a week and store some superior quality wheaten hay from Manoora before it gets wet. Currently, we still have some warm weather to enjoy.



## Deep cracks appearing in fertile soil

**Shannon Kunst**

# MPG Newsletter



## MPG STAFF PROFILE

### MEET NATALIE EFTHIMIADIS

**MPG'S ADMIN &  
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

(and everything inbetween ... )

## Q & A WITH NAT...

### **WHEN DID YOU COMMENCE WITH MPG?**

I came on board when Callum & Skye started MPG in September 2023... I didn't have a background in Agriculture, so I've learnt a lot.

### **WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SATISFYING PART OF YOUR ROLE?**

I love putting together the newsletter. Reading about what goes on around the stations and the challenges they face. And seeing all the great photos from around the stations (especially Shannon & Amy's photos!)

### **WHAT MAKES YOUR WORK CHALLENGING?**

Getting everyone what they need, when they need it (it's usually all at the same time too!).

### **I LOVE...**

Good food (food I didn't cook is best!), sharing a wine with family & friends and spending time on the River Murray. All the good SA things in life!

### **IF YOU WERE STRANDED ON A CATTLE STATION OVER THE WET SEASON, WHAT 3 THINGS WOULD YOU BRING?**

Assuming the pantry is fully stocked (including coffee & tim tams!)... my Spotify subscription, a jigsaw puzzle and my walking shoes - to get outside and enjoy not being in the city.

### **WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?**

I love to travel (photo above from Coffin Bay in SA). My husband and I are looking forward to getting over to Greece this year.

## Safety Incentive



**Don't make a Yeti mistake**

Think safe. Yeti's are on offer for crews that work the season without serious incident.