

Henvil behind the mob at Killarney



Director's Update

Issue 4

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt

MPG Newsletter

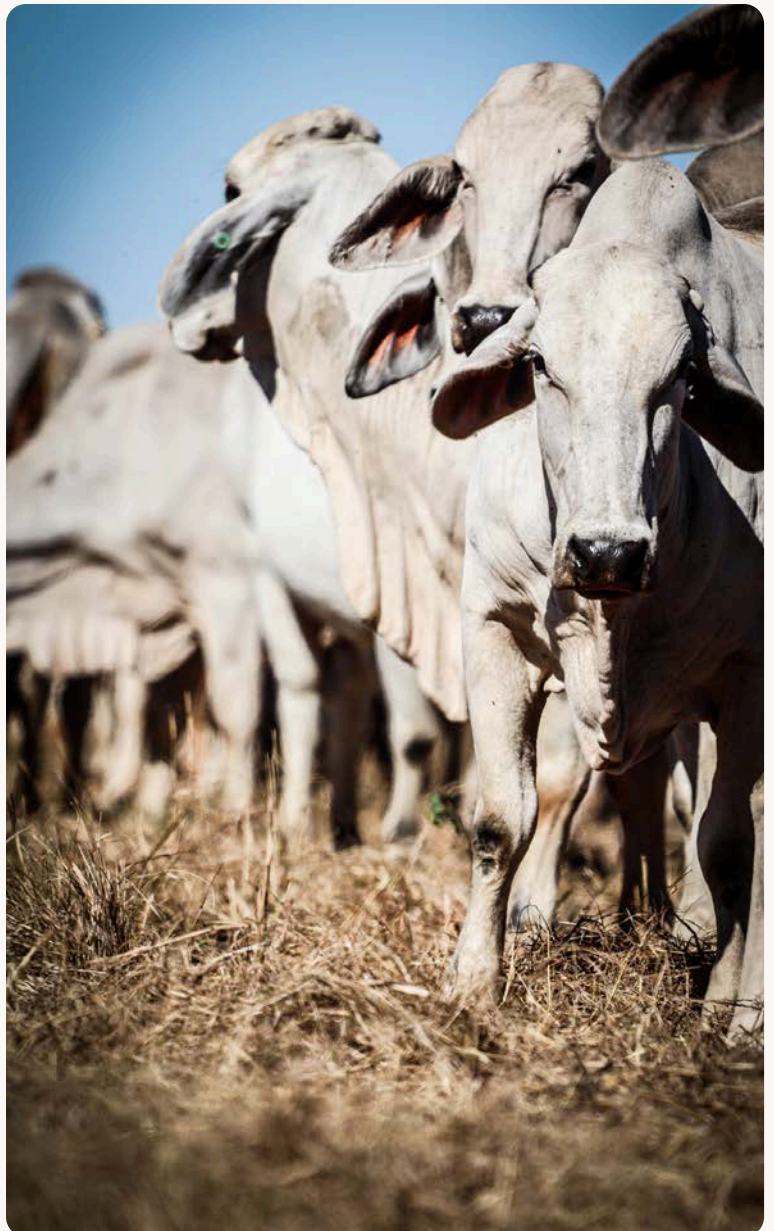
As the year comes to a close, we find ourselves reflecting on the highs and lows of 2024. This quote by Theodore Roosevelt feels 'on point'. It has been a most challenging year: at times it's been borderline overwhelming. Wave Hill has had more than its share of complications and heartbreak especially with the loss of the much-loved Payton Hansen - one of the greatest kids we've had the pleasure of knowing. Our thoughts go out to his family. As most of you know there have also been legal challenges that have compounded the stress levels.

On the other hand, we are enormously grateful for the season thrown our way by mother nature in the Northern Territory. I would like to thank her for that!

I was humbled to see how much we came together as a community and how important it is to support one another in the challenging times. What I've learnt is that there is no benefit in stressing about the things that lie completely outside of one's control. Manage what you can and don't stress over the things you can't.

I pass on that reflection, not because I'm one to offer words of wisdom, but just to say that's how I've dealt with it. And when you boil it all down and things are getting tough, focus on the super important things, especially family.

There isn't a person that I know within our organisation or outside, that life in some way, shape or form isn't throwing significant challenges. We all have our trials.



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There are many people I'd like to thank for their service this past year. My wife Skye puts up with a lot, she offers great counsel and for that I am grateful. But I say thank you to all employees, contractors, pilots, suppliers, agents, truckies, buyers, feedlot friends in Indonesia; you all make the wheels turn and make this, in my opinion, the greatest job in the most rewarding industry. I thank you all and remain truly appreciative.

Special mention must be made to head stockman Jess Radel and overseer Shay Thakrah who are leaving our employ. Both have been pivotal to us finding our feet in the early days at Wave Hill from the improvement in the herd to the quality of the water infrastructure. Their hard work, attention to detail, knowledge, people skills and sense of humour will be sorely missed. Thank you.

Christmas is upon us now to spend time with family and friends. It doesn't get any better. Go well, see you in the new year, here's hoping mother nature can back it up.

Callum MacLachlan

Merry Christmas from the MacLachlan family



MPG Newsletter



Killarney crew of 2024

Killarney Station

What a year it has been at Killarney. With 1st round complete and sale cattle trucked (for now) it was time to get a start on between round jobs. With a late start to mustering, we only had a two-week window. In this time crew handled 7 weaner foals and completed a breaking-in school lead by Gus Rose. Everyone had a go at handling and riding a young horse, another skill learnt.



Weaner foal crop of 2024 patiently waiting to be branded



Watering the horses after a long day

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Above: Clancy giving his horse a drink

Below: Ritchie, Isla & Casper enroute to Birrimba yards

Numerous improvements were completed including a new tank at BJ's yards, two new troughs built at Coolibah bore, and several new solar enclosures constructed - all work done by the stock camp.

We also had Tiger on Kelly Daley's dozer opening some more country out the back of Birrimba preparing for new bores and fence lines in 2025-26. He also put a new line through Comet paddock, credit to Tiger he has done a great job.

Josh Gilbert and crew put in 16km of fence line through some hard going country with plenty of rocks, to split Comet paddock with the new Laurisson paddock erect, a great addition increasing our efficiency when turning off sale heifers.



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Isla & Lexie arriving at Comet waterhole with weaner heifers

In September we welcomed Melmark, Floreza and Finn Mercado to Killarney, all the way from the Philippines. They have settled in well with Melmark in training with Henvil and Floreza learning to cook with Amy. It's safe to say they are both in great hands to excel. Finn also joining Cooper in the school room.

In October, the second round of mustering was in full swing. With everyone now knowing the ropes it was rewarding watching the crew go.

How much they had learnt and absorbed. All now competent in getting around a mob of cattle on horseback, on a bike and in the yards on foot, also now very efficient in branding and tallying.



Welcome to the Mercado family

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Casper & Pandora working the tail of the mob



Once second round was complete in early November, horses were bushed and our end of year party in Darwin was had, everyone arriving home in one piece. It was then time to farewell our seasonal crew. The young green crew that drove through the Killarney gates in February leaving as highly skilled, capable respectful young adults, all valued members of our team.

Head Stockwomen Kylie & Isla



To the stock camp of 2024; Isla Smith and Kylie Clifford our head stockwomen leading from the front, the hard work and dedication you both show in your work and keeping your crews productive and safe is an absolute credit, while always managing to have a laugh and some fun.

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Lexie giving cattle a spell to water at the billabong before yarding up

To our leading hands Alex Gaylard and Nancy Strutt, both of you have stepped up in your third and second years. Lexie our tally extraordinaire, calf, weaner branding machine, passionate and always paying attention to detail and Nancy, your work ethic and ability to take on any job no matter how challenging.



To the rest of the crew you should be very proud of what you have achieved this year; Ava Osmotherley, seeing your confidence grow and how far you have come this year is a true credit. Jessica Angus arrived an equestrian horsewoman and has left a cow chasing cowgirl. Zoe Ferry with that beautiful infectious smile always keen to lend a hand. Nadine Heath your calm nature an asset when working cattle. Casper Millbank, “the Zimbabwean cowboy” you have become a valuable member of our team.

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Killarney cricket team at the annual Wave Hill cricket day 2024

Clancy Nott you have become an accomplished horseman and allrounder. Richie, your energy and athleticism in the yards and determination to nail horse riding. Sam handy on the spanners and all those nitty gritty shed jobs. Hunter Fallins arrived surfer/cowboy and left cowboy/surfer. Also, a big thanks to Nic Brisk our helicopter pilot, a passionate cattleman always giving guidance when needed to those on the ground when mustering.

To those working behind the scenes at the homestead and around the run; Henvil Barroz, keeping bores running and getting the wet season lick out efficiently just in time!



Kirsty, Archie, Cooper and Finn

Henvil has also once again played a major role in turning off sale animals. Keeping cattle up to the weigh bridge on his handy steed.

Stu Jones our grader driver, had a big task ahead of him this year with floods causing some damage to roads but has managed to keep ahead of the stock camp.

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Wayne Stanley, aka the tree of knowledge, always giving guidance where needed, particularly all things bores and horses. Christine keeping the homestead area in check and always been such a friendly face. Amy Craig once again keeping everyone fuelled, keeping food up to a crew of predominantly 18-year-olds no easy feat. Amy also captures some awesome photos (as seen in this newsletter) and won the Nutrien photo competition this year, her photo featuring on the front cover of their 2025 calendar.

Kirsty Putland our amazing governess/nanny, thank you for keeping the kids in check and happy. Also, welcoming Finn into the school room so warmly, it has been challenging at times especially with English a second language to Finn and on occasion a 2-year-old ring in. You have handled it all so well and the kids absolutely adore you!



What a success 2024 has been, with over 15,000 head trucked out the Killarney gates, 14,000 weaners educated and processed, and 23,000 breeders put through the yards twice. The Killarney team of 2024 have been outstanding, and we thank you all for your efforts, it has been a huge year in all areas, and you have all played a part in its success.

As I write, rain falls on the roof and the creek runs once again. Absolute music to the ears! With 138 mm already fallen for November, the wet is off to a great start. We still have 4,000 head of feeder steer and heifers on agistment at the Woolner flood plains to turn off and then the cattle work for 2024 is finally complete. Wishing all our staff and connections a safe holiday season, see you all in 2025.

Michael Stanley & Alex Laurisson

MPG Newsletter



Wave Hill crew 2024

Wave Hill Station

The year 2024 has been a rollercoaster for all at Wave Hill Station and certainly one we won't forget for a long time. The greatest wet season on record with over 1200mm falling at Wave Hill Homestead. This meant that our crews had cabin fever; stuck around the homestead doing maintenance jobs for longer than expected. As soon as we could start to move about, the massive amount of flood fencing repairs and road repairs began.

We didn't start processing breeders until May 7th and didn't finish our first round until August 7th. Despite this and countless hold ups out of our control, we managed to complete a busy sale program and complete a full second round before the crew knocked off in mid-November. A credit to everyone at Wave Hill for keeping their eye on the prize and being understanding of our priorities. Thank you.



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A fantastic season at Wave Hill on the back of a good season in 2023 has seen us wean 76%.

A whole range of things have culminated in our production getting to the level we expect of a place like Wave Hill.

It is very heartening to see hard work by many people, good management practices and targeted inputs all coming to fruition in increased production.



This year after our cattle on agistment at the Woolner Floodplain are turned off, Wave Hill will have sold in the vicinity of 12,300 head. This is up 30% on our 2022 turnoff.

Again, on the back of two good seasons sale weights of all stock were nothing short of exceptional. It is amazing to see the kgs that Wave Hill is capable of producing.



Curran leading cattle in for a drink

We have also drafted off a line of 4,300 heifers to join to a bull in January 2025; increasing our total females to 23,000 which is also up on our 2022 numbers by about 14%.

Also notable is the huge improvement in the quality of the Wave Hill herd. A lot of pregnancy testing to address fertility, spaying to remove aged and out of type cows, and the introduction of 600 quality bulls in 3 years all coming together to see our line improve out of sight.

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Wave Hill crew at Possum



Some key improvements in 2024 are the Cullacabardee yard, with Peter Cause and crew finishing off what they started in 2023. A fantastic improvement, we put stock through this yard so easily and efficiently. Mono Bores at Number 3, Wykes, Number 25, Parkers and Nutwood have now been changed over to Solar installations courtesy of Shay Thackrah. Great to have a few more knocked over. New troughs at Willicks, Number 17, Kelmans - a great addition.



Matt & kids checking the water tanks

Connie and I would like to thank our 2024 crew returning next year.

Leonie Heath who added great skills and humour, stepped up and supervised at times and did a good job with her young horses.

Patrick Higgins who started about as green as you can get, but through hard work and a positive attitude became very competent across the board and a valued member of the team.

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Tess Rixon has put in another great season at Wave Hill; and has done a great job with some of her young horses.

Jessie Chester another key cog of the Wave Hill team with a great attitude and work ethic second to none.

Caleb Seach had just started to hit his straps before a motorbike accident put him in a moon boot for the rest of the season.

Harry Wright has become our main motorbike man, gotten the hang of riding horses and become a good hand in the yard.

Jaye Radel, who started mid-year, slotted straight in to the stockcamp.



Cody & Donkey ready to ride!



Wave Hill team at the Ringers Rugby competition in Katherine

Ricki Coates, who started with a few weeks of work experience and then never left, we are excited to welcome you back as an actual employee for 2025. Thanks for your great work ethic and attitude Ricki.

Brumby Forrester developing a wide range of skills and providing plenty of laughs as well.

Darren Wilson did a formidable job in the grader in 2024, clocking up some 11,000km, probably about 85% of which was with the blade down. That is a lot of grading.

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Enjoying the Wave Hill cricket day

To those staff moving on, we wish them all the best on their next adventures and are glad to have had them here at Wave Hill. Lachlan Newman, who grew into the role as the year progressed and proved handy around the workshop and on a machine as well. Curran O'Donnell, likewise demonstrated that attitude and work ethic are everything and became a valued member of the team. Alice Taylor has put in two great seasons at Wave Hill, and has developed into a handy ringer.

Henry Anderson has done a good job of running the Weaner Camp, with well educated and well branded weaners that are a credit to him.

Maddi Muirhead added plenty of value and lots of laughs to the station.

Bernard Dolinski, thank you for the hours you have put in steering the Cessna 182 and keeping us abreast of waters at Wave Hill.

Kyle McGuinness our ever resourceful mechanic and Vicky Crimmins will be sorely missed.

Izzy Engel has done two seasons at Wave Hill, always kind, thoughtful and doing the best job she knows how, thanks.



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Tess leading the way



We also welcome the Barroz family from the Philippines. Kenneth is the younger brother of Henvil at Killarney and has joined us as a Borerunner/Lick Truck Driver. Blanche has settled into the kitchen keeping us all well fed and looked after.

Chelsea (19) is doing the Gardener/Domestic role and Kent (18) has joined the Stockcamp. Maria (6) has joined the chaos of the school room with the Wood kids.

We are thankful to have a family of good hearted, hard working people join us at Wave Hill.

We thank Governess Kate Woodward and Nanny Lucy Cummins for keeping the Wood kids alive, looked after, educated and out of trouble; well most of the time anyway.

We would like to Farewell a few staff from Wave Hill who have been a huge part of our lives for many years.

Jess Radel did two years at Blina Station for us, as a leading hand and then came back to take on the Wave Hill Breeder camp. She has done an outstanding job with the cattle, the horse plant and the people.

Amazing things have been achieved, with some serious numbers of cattle put through in a timely fashion but never at the expense of working them properly.

Her ability to put big numbers through, yet ensure that they were handled with the utmost care, is a real testament to Jess.



Maddi and Alice fighting fires

MPG Newsletter

Jess walked mobs of maiden heifers out to the Eastern Desert to stock it for the first time; the opening of another chapter in Wave Hill's history.

The horse plant at Wave Hill is now one of the best in the NT, and Jess is largely responsible for that. Jess has been an incredible role model and mentor to many of the young people during our time here and we will miss her incredibly, not only as a first class head stockwoman, but as a valued friend and adopted family member.



Jess moving the mob

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Wave Hill team at the annual Wave Hill cricket day



Shay started as an Allrounder Stationhand at Blina in 2020; and showed an interest in bores, plumbing and associate infrastructure; as well as mechanics. And so began a long process of learning, sometimes being shown, other times having to figure it out.

Shay then came across to Wave Hill as Boreman in 2022 and was promoted to Overseer in 2023. Wave Hill was a place where watering infrastructure was sorely in need of attention and those skills he had learnt at Blina became so important. In three years Shay has achieved a hell of a lot, with more than 60 new troughs installed and plumbed, 12 tanks plumbed, 14 turkey nests replumbed, concrete trough aprons poured etc. and countless other big plumbing projects...

Bore work never ends...



Jonathon overseeing the fires



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Shay was the key player in Wave Hill's massive upgrade to solar pumping systems.

In 2022 and 2023 he was responsible for pulling 30 mono bores, then using the test pump to accurately measure each hole's capacity to produce water and how the water table drew down under pumping. From that information we were able to size our solar systems accordingly.

Patrick Annersley from Thinkwater Broome showed Shay how to set up these Lorenz systems, and Shay has now installed over 15 himself.

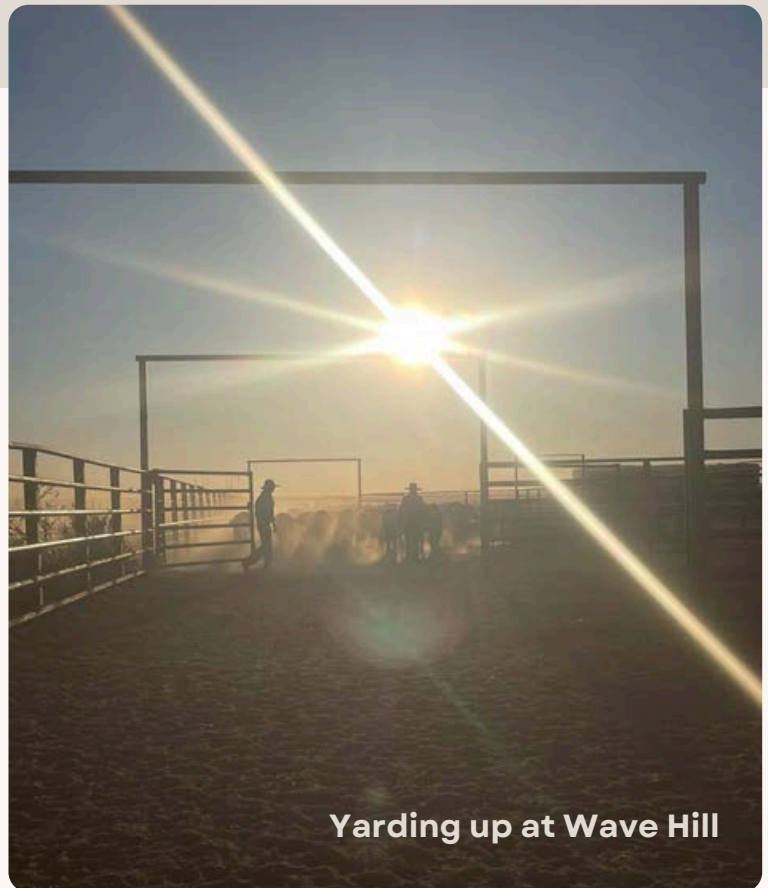
All of this was achieved on top of his day job of keeping up the water to the Wave Hill herd, and he has spent more than his fair share of time under a vehicle or truck with a spanner in hand to keep the Wave Hill fleet rolling.

In addition to this, at such a young age, being left in charge to keep things ticking whilst management are away on leave.

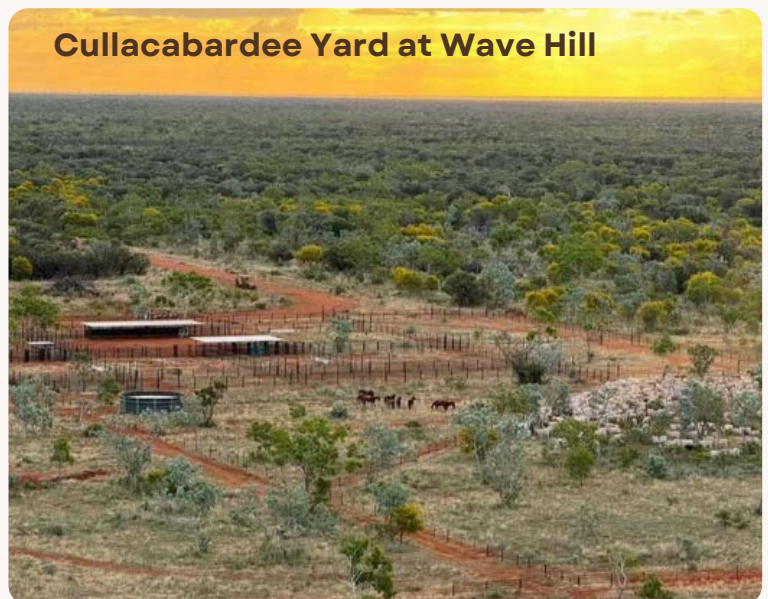
Connie and I will certainly miss Shay's loyalty, reliability, hard work and positive attitude along with an unflappable and humorous nature that knows no end. Shay and Jess met at Wave Hill, and their relationship has bloomed from there. They are heading back to Jess's family place in Central Queensland and on with the next chapter of their lives. We wish them all the best and look forward to what the future holds for these two.

We wish everyone at MacLachlan Pastoral a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Matt & Connie Wood



Yarding up at Wave Hill



Cullacabardee Yard at Wave Hill

MPG Newsletter



Hay paddock at Springfield

Springfield Station

After grazing the crops, feeding out some of our last hay stocks, taking the bulls out from all mobs and spreading urea, I took a couple of weeks' leave to head to the Birdsville Races and across the Simpson Desert.

Early September marks the beginning of the growing season when pastures are at their peak quality, making it the best time for me to take a break. This year's rainfall through winter looked more promising than 2023 with an extra couple of inches recorded. However, it tapered off again in September when it was most needed and by late September, the ground was certainly getting dry.

The dry season brought lice problems earlier than usual, so upon my return, we immediately began back lining all stock with fly and lice treatment. Additionally, there was plenty of growth on variegated and scotch thistle that required significant attention.



Some terrific Clover this year

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This little guy watching Henry and Shannon repair a fence

By mid-October, we were still struggling with insufficient rainfall to sustain the crops, and most of the cereals were going to head. With little to no rain expected in the coming weeks, we began cutting all the crops consisting of over 50ha.

The Plantation paddock was the first to bale and after a long day's work, we managed to bale and wrap the Plantation just before receiving an unpredicted 25mm of rain that night.

The conditions were far from ideal, especially with more rain suddenly on the horizon. We had to bring in extra equipment to aid with drying, and everything needed to be teddered before raking and baling. Everyone worked tirelessly around the clock to complete the job before the next rain front arrived. We managed to finish just as the showers began, and another 24mm of rain fell that night. The wet conditions definitely made the entire exercise much more challenging, but we certainly didn't complain about receiving the rain.



Shannon Anne

Deni looking over The Glen from the Plantation silage

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This year, we scheduled the cows for pregnancy testing with Dr. Chelsea Fowler, who is currently based in Heywood, Victoria.

Chelsea graduated from The University of Adelaide over a decade ago and primarily focuses on production animals.

Over two days, we ran the cows through the yards for ultrasound scans and also assessed them for any issues that could affect production.



Chelsea showing Olive & friends how to read an ultrasound

Given the tough conditions leading up to mating and the high feed demands on the heavier cows, I expected the results to be less successful than in previous years. Overall, we pregnancy tested 310 cows, with 87% confirmed in calf. In most other years, we would have over 94%.



Always plenty of fencing to do!

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At the end of October, we bid farewell to Glenn and Gaynor Fuller, who have been an integral part of Springfield for over 15 years. They are finally retiring up at the river and hopefully getting some well-earned rest. They will certainly be missed by everyone, especially me. I wish them both all the best.

In November, Skye, Henry, and I registered for a two-day Low Stress Stock Handling course with Nic Kentish in the Clare Valley. It was great to have a refresher and find ways to improve efficiency in the yards and moving stock. Weaning commenced immediately after the course, providing a good opportunity to put what we had learned into practice. All 270 calves were weaned into a paddock with some hay for the first week before being moved to pasture regrowth. To help reduce the incidence of pinkeye caused by the stress of weaning, all cows and calves received another back line treatment for flies.

Due to the reduced feed availability caused by the lack of spring rain, we have decided to sell the calves on the Friday before Christmas instead of at the end of January. Assessments with Bruce from Elders will be conducted in the upcoming week. Additionally, a B-double truckload of sale cows was sent to Greenham's in Tongala, Victoria, last week. Our aim is to conserve as much feed as possible, in preparation for the calving season and selling the calves before 2025 whilst the prices remain stable.

I would like to extend my best wishes for a joyful and safe Christmas and New Year to all members of MacLachlan Pastoral Group.

Shannon Kunst



Henry mustering on Tuna

MPG Newsletter



MPG STAFF PROFILE

MEET PAUL-JOHN (PJ) MUDIE

MPG'S ACCOUNTANT

(and unofficial IT Guru...)

Office Closure

MPG WILL BE CLOSED
FROM 5PM FRIDAY
DECEMBER 20,
RE-OPENING ON
MONDAY JANUARY 6.

Have a safe &
Merry Christmas!

Q & A WITH PJ...

WHEN DID YOU COMMENCE WITH MPG?

Having moved from a Chartered Accounting firm I started under Jumbuck's umbrella in 2012 and migrated across to MPG in 2023.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST SATISFYING PART OF YOUR ROLE?

Being involved in the creation of MPG was a great experience. Starting from a clean slate was satisfying, the business is on a strong trajectory and it's still evolving.

WHAT MAKES YOUR WORK CHALLENGING?

Each day is different. Whilst many tasks repeat there's also a host of new things to constantly tackle.

I LOVE...

Microsoft Excel and my wife, not necessarily in that order.

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

I'd take my dog, coffee machine and some country music. I'm questioning my inclusion of country music though, I don't like it but maybe I'll come around if I listen to it enough on station?

WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?

I like metalwork (see his talents in the above photo - sculptures made by PJ!), cooking and restoring things. Things that don't have debits and credits!