



Killarney Steers in Bullock Paddock

## Director's Update

### Issue 2

The wet season still underway in the North can only be described as memorable, and ongoing! To be unable to commence mustering till mid to late April, or early May is historically unusual. In the Barossa, things are dry - as usual - with hand feeding of stock required now through to the end of August.

We are fortunate to have been delivered an incredibly good wet season for the second year running. Like compound interest, especially on country that has previously been debilitated, the feed response has been amazing. Our ground water aquifer will have been fully replenished, not only the stock but everything in nature flourishes in a year such as this; the explosion of nature and its biodiversity a joy to see.

# MPG Newsletter



Zali's Dam, Birrimba

For those who haven't previously been exposed to the Northern Territory, or indeed outback Australia, you should understand what a privilege it is to be a part of such a season.

It's not just the abundant feed and the fat cattle, bird life and reptiles flourish, along with all of the other wonders of mother nature when incredible seasons occur. When nature does its thing, with species multiplication; the sheer pleasure that is experienced in being a part of the great outdoors during such buoyant conditions.

On the other side of these incredible events, inevitably, are the lesser seasons, and the droughts. That's the simple reality! Take pleasure in the abundance that comes with season 2024.

An important cog in our fire management strategy is to burn mosaic like patterns and fire breaks across the stations, to provide breaks for later in the year when late season bushfires can otherwise be hard to control, and also to spread the grazing pressure of the cattle.

The new growth that comes back from an early burn, providing sweeter nutrition to the stock. We will commence burning as soon as the conditions are suitable.



Wave Hill cattle

# MPG Newsletter



The cattle market shows some positive signs, coming off the back of what I understand to be the biggest fall in the beef market, in dollar terms, ever. The domestic market is showing some positive movement, and while other, global influences might also be positive, the recovery of the beef market is unlikely to be linear, as already seen with the rise and fall of the EYCI since the start of the year. Parts of the country are still dry, importantly 'the big paddock' that is Queensland, is dry in the centre, which will have a big influence on the market recovery.

The agricultural industry has the unfortunate distinction of having the highest rates of workplace injury and death. Not a statistic it is proud of by any measure.

First and foremost MPG is a people business, we value our employees and want to keep you safe.



To those returning, welcome back. I hope you've had a wonderful break over the Christmas period, which now seems a distant memory. For those new to the company; welcome! You have been selected as you have attributes and attitudes that we value; your aptitude for learning, trying new things, never giving up, humility and respect, and capacity for work, amongst other things.

Acknowledging that every individual on our stations is different, we value those differences. The only 'same same' we require is that we all pull together in the same direction.

# MPG Newsletter



## **Callum, PJ and Matt visiting the Gurindji Elders and traditional owners at Kalkarindji in March 2024**

There are many things you will have learned in your induction training which will help keep you safe. But we can't teach everything you need to know because there are too many potential hazards on a station. It's the station culture, that starts with management and filters down that is a significant factor in keeping our people safe.

Apply common sense, when in doubt, 'ask' and look out for your co-workers, they will thank you for it. Productivity and safety go hand in hand, one not at the expense of the other. I'm offering a company branded Yeti 1-gallon water bottle to every employee in MPG at the end of November, if our rate of serious incidents is kept to a minimum.

We have had some unfortunate and unpleasant legal issues arise at Wave Hill in regard to Heritage laws pertaining to the Wave Hill Walk Off site. We don't shy away from the fact that we made some mistakes. We own those mistakes, have apologised to the Gurindji for our actions, and hope to be able to make good, put back everything that was done, or undone. The Gurindji have understandably voiced their disappointment but have shown forgiveness. Their stance on the matter engenders respect and we maintain that the relationships which had started to form between us, have no reason not to continue to flourish.

**Callum MacLachlan**

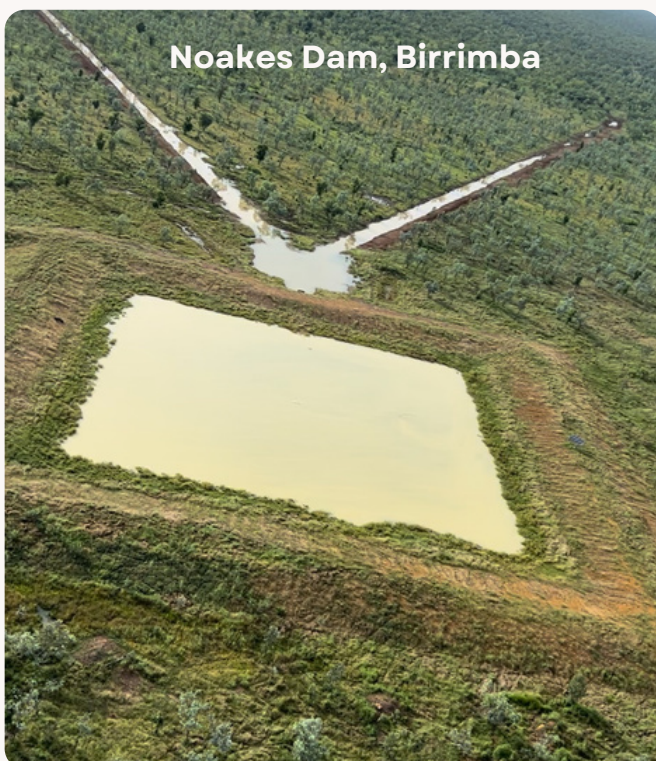
# MPG Newsletter



## Killarney Station

After a huge couple of months fighting fires in late 2023, record breaking rain for Killarney and Birrimba in 2024 was welcomed with open arms. Since November the Killarney homestead has recorded 1326mm of rain. January alone delivering a whopping 870 mm with 295 mm received in just two days! One of our Farmbots at BJ's Bore has hit the 1700mm mark. Also, across Birrimba; 6 Mile recording 1150mm and the new Sink Hole yard on the Eastern Boundary receiving 1609mm.

To put this into perspective our annual average rainfall at the homestead is about 650mm. After many years of disappointing wet seasons, the water table was well and truly hanging out for a wet season of this magnitude. The water seeping out of the ground is such a beautiful sight to see.



Henvil and Chrissy Barroz held the reins over December and January whilst Alex and I were away on annual leave.

A huge thank you to them, having never seen rainfall of that volume received over January, it was a little stressful as the homestead creek rose rapidly gaining on the main homestead. Thankfully, the creek peaked just before the house yard.

The season ahead is looking bright with water worries a little less, with all dams across Birrimba at 110%.

# MPG Newsletter

Killarney crew going for a ride



The focus now on early burning to try and mitigate the huge fire risk we will face come late in the year, as well as provide nice fresh green pick that should carry through late in the year for stock.

First round of mustering just keeps getting delayed with the wet season that just keeps on giving. We are hoping to get under way by mid-April, with a considerable number of calves hitting the ground in late 2023, weaners will be well and truly ready to leave mum. All animals, as you can imagine are looking exceptional and sale cattle are now full steam ahead.

Our two capable headstock women Isla Smith and Kylie Clifford arrived at the beginning of February to get a start on fixing flood fences via helicopter. Seasonal staff for 2024 arrived in March.

We welcome to the team for 2024; Ava Osmotherley, Casper Millbank, Clancy Nott, Hunter Fallins, Jessica Angus, Nadine Heath, Richie Neville-Smith, Martin McMahon and Zoe Ferry.

It is also great to have Alex Gaylard back for her third year stepping up to leading hand and Nancy Strutt, Emma Massey and Sam Hukins all returning for a second year.

Kylie Clifford - weaner camp  
Headstock woman



# MPG Newsletter

## Horse school for the Killarney crew



Stuart Jones our Machinery Operator back for his sixth year with a big year ahead of him. Stuart received a 140H Grader late in 2023 replacing the old 12G. The grader arrived with enough time to get road maintenance done on our Southern Main driveway into Killarney and the Birrimba main Access Road, with forming up and drains. All has held up well over the massive wet season, fantastic work done there.

2023 was Joe MacFarlane's last year flying at Killarney. Joe has been our main helicopter pilot for the past 10 years and played a key role in the mustering of Killarney, his knowledge of Killarney was extremely helpful in our early years.



**Happy Birthday to Jess, Cooper and Isla  
who's birthday's were all in a two day radius!**

Heli muster have now taken over our flying, it has been great having Nic Brisk back at Killarney with a different view - from the air this time, having spent a year in the stock camp back in 2021.

On the domestic front Amy Craig once again running the kitchen, keeping everyone well fed and taking amazing photos in between!

We also welcome Kirsty Putland, Nanny to Cooper and Archie, as well as governess to Cooper in his first year of preschool at Katherine School of the Air.

# MPG Newsletter



## Killarney Induction Day

Despite the wet conditions, staff have completed a Low Stress Stock Handling school with Andrew Lewis. The horses have been mustered and staff have been matched up with their horses for first round.

The task of shoeing then began with all staff having a go and managing to get their horses shod, with most shoes staying on.

We have also been chipping away when weather permits at flood fencing repairs.

It is crazy to think we have now seen Killarney through both its driest and wettest periods, I do not think we will ever see another wet season like this in our lifetime.

The wet season of 2023; “the wet that just keeps on giving”, will be one to remember, however we are now ready for the dry to begin, itching to get out mustering once again with a huge mustering program ahead.

**Michael Stanley**

## Hunter working on his shoeing skills





# MPG Newsletter

Wave Hill 2024 Crew



## Wave Hill Station

Welcome to Wave Hill in 2024!

The Wet of all wets has been with us. We have just surpassed 1250mm or 50 inches in the old measure. This is the biggest wet on record since 1975 according to BOM records. 46 of those inches have fallen since January 9th.

A reasonably patchy start during November and December; we were still fighting bushfires on New Years Day. And then it started raining; and just kept going.



Waterways are flowing!

# MPG Newsletter

Lightning fires gave us a fair towelling in December; however with such a good season we have an abundance of fresh feed, so much so that we will be another fire risk in 2024; and will have to be busy with a burnoff in April to give ourselves some protection.

We have experienced some severe flooding, with most water courses breaching their banks and flooding out. Consequently there is plenty of erosion on fencelines and roads that will slow progress for the graders, as we start to get around.

Wild weather did some damage around the homestead with some of the lovely old trees planted in the 70's, being ripped out of the ground roots and all.



**The 'Wet of all wets'  
from the sky**



**Wave Hill Homestead  
from above**

# MPG Newsletter

**Wave Hill homestead grounds**



Big winds and very wet ground combining to create the carnage. Power lines were pulled down, gutters pulled off and a massive tree fell onto the roof of the Managers house causing significant damage. We now await Jim Crothers to come and repair roof and do some modifications that were already in the plans.

A massive amount of work done removing these big old trees, piece by piece by the few staff around in February. With some roof leaks in buildings and not much sunshine for a month, we had mould through most buildings like I have not seen it before. A big thanks to Tess Rixon and Alice Taylor who came back for a fortnight in their holidays to help us tidy up.

**Lace Davies stuck in the mud!**



**Mud making the driving hard going**



# MPG Newsletter

**Weather brewing over the homestead**



As you would expect, stock looking in incredible buckle. Weight gains on dry stock have been fantastic, and there is a lot of big calves and weaners at foot amongst the breeders. The branding cradles will get a good work out in 2024.

With a good season in much of Australia, in particular areas of Queensland and NSW which are home to a large concentration of the national herd, the northern cattle market looks to be strengthening as supply tightens.

Cattle markets across the board look to be slowly recovering from a very sharp and dramatic downturn in 2023. Hopefully this trend will continue. Fortunately with a great season to hand, we can aim to turn off stock when the market is strong.

**Trucks at the ready**



# MPG Newsletter



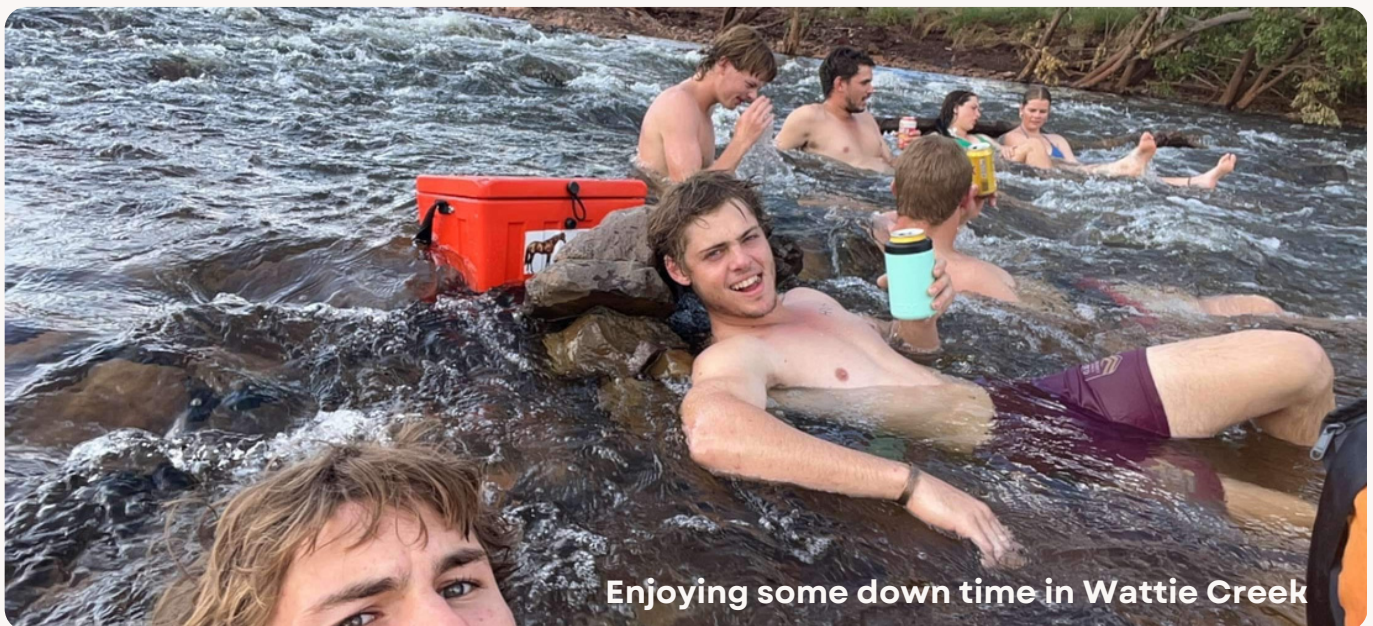
**Britt Clarke, Jessie Chester & Issy Engel with the crew at the Low Stress Stock Handling school**

We welcome back in 2024 Overseer Shay Thackrah, Headstock woman of Breeder Camp Jess Radel who have both now done 5 years for Connie and I at Blina and Wave Hill. Great to have these two reliable senior staff back again.

We welcome back Weaner Camp Headstock man Henry Anderson in his second year.

Payton Hanson has returned as Mechanic and General Allrounder; now a good hand at flood fencing repairs.

We welcome back for their second year at Wave Hill in the stockcamps Jessie Chester, Britt Clarke, Issy Engel, Tess Rixon, Alice Taylor and Taine McConnigle. Darren Wilson, ex-Mulgathing Manager has joined us as operator of the 140H Grader. Darren commented he has seen more rain in a month at Wave Hill than 7 years in the Northwest Pastoral!



**Enjoying some down time in Wattie Creek**

We also welcome 12G Grader operator Isiah Pinheiro. Bernard Dolinski has returned to pilot the station aircraft for us.

In the kitchen in 2024 we have Harrison Sutcliffe rattling the pans, and our stockcamp cook/jillaroo is Lace Davies. Valentina Cavalleri is doing the gardener/domestic role. She hasn't had to worry about the sprinklers much yet!

# MPG Newsletter

And two of the most challenging roles on the station Governess Kate Gover and Nanny Molly Pike have the Wood kids under control; well most of the time.

We welcome new recruits to the Wave Hill Stockcamps; Harry Wright, Paddy Higgins, Caleb Seach, Lachy Newman and Curran O'Donnell. Leonie Heath has moved across to Wave Hill after two solid seasons at Meda.

We have done a big makeover of the extensive Wave Hill gardens to try and make the job of maintaining it far simpler, plenty of fences, garden beds and hedges removed. A few buildings have received some paint as well and much needed repairs and maintenance.



**Jonathan, Imogen and Harrison Wood enjoying their Easter hunt goodies!**



A stack of other jobs we don't normally get time for have been attended to this year. Thus far the Stockcamp have been confined mostly to the homestead area.

Learning a lot about welding, mechanics, digging and fencing, they are going to be learning quite a bit more about fencing in the next few weeks, with such a big wet there is much to repair around the run.

# MPG Newsletter

We have worked last years breakers and handled weanlings and inexperienced riders have been given some instruction; with a Horsemanship school about to take them further down the path. A Low Stress Livestock Handling school has also been completed.

Everyone has a bit of cabin fever and is looking forward to getting amongst it.



**The crew enjoying the views from Mount Possum**

I thank everyone for their patience; it has been a truly phenomenal weather event that we have experienced. It is unusual not to be mustering in the VRD by mid to late March, and it is looking like we won't be attacking our first breeders until early May.

Things will be a lot quieter on the development front around Wave Hill in 2024, with no earthmoving, fencing, tank building, solar installation contractors to keep organised and supplied with gear.

We await Peter Cause to return to finish off building Cullacabardee Yard in the Eastern Desert. Everyone is excited about seeing the new design in action, and a heap less portable panels to set up in 2024.

In the meantime, we enjoy seeing Wave Hill at its finest.

**Matt Wood**



**Kelly Creek**

# MPG Newsletter



## Springfield Station

The beginning of 2024 started better than expected with much needed rainfall continuing through January. Although there are plenty of unwanted summer weeds starting to appear across the property, our renovated pastures with annual Ryegrass just kept giving.

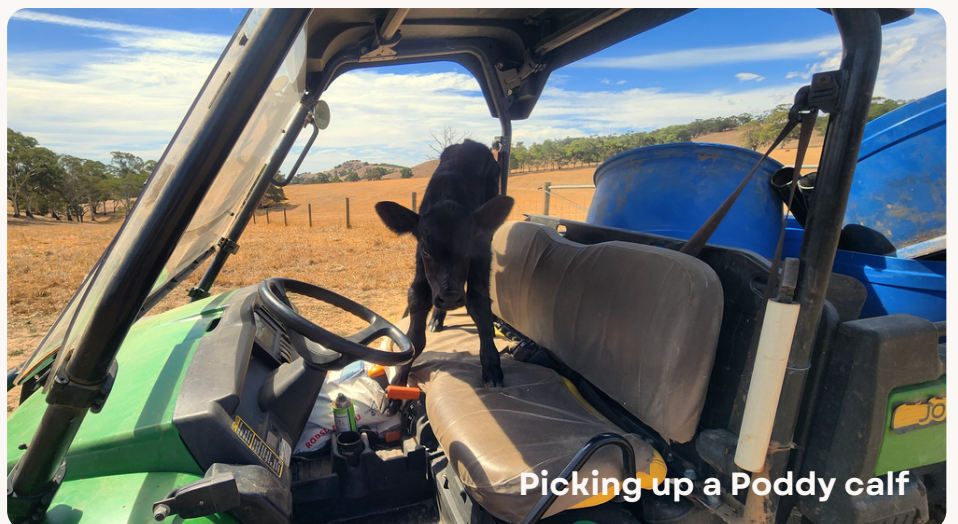
We were able to finish off all weaners on premium pasture and grazed multiple times. The first assessment for Auctions Plus was in the first couple of days in the new year when Bruce from Elders came to draft calves into 4-5 different weight categories.

Suzanna Koch was a tremendous help in the yards and moving weaners to get the job done. Until this stage all calves have been running together in the same mob since weaning. It was time to split steers and heifers into separate mobs and put them back on to pasture.

After the second assessment, calves were offered to be sold on Auctions Plus on the 2nd of February. For the first time, all calves sold within South Australia.

39 Heifers travelled to the edge of the Flinders Ranges and 72 females went to Hindmarsh Valley.

Sixteen of the tail of mixed calves were sold at the Strathalbyn store sale.





# MPG Newsletter



**Suzanna moving calves for assessment**

The rain shut off again in February with nothing recorded for the month. It didn't take long for paddocks to dry out and feed to become scarce quickly. Supplement feeding of silage commenced a couple of weeks earlier and the heifers were brought in to start calving on the first of March.



**Feeding silage with the cart**

After a bit of a shaky start with a few mothering issues, they have settled in well with most of the mob calving within the month. All other females were yarded for their pre-calving vaccination, ready to start calving mid to late March. A big thank you to Skye for always being there to help when needed.

# MPG Newsletter

## Shannon inside an amazing old Redgum at Springfield



In between yard work and feeding, there have been plenty of opportunities to catch up on spot spraying Blackberry, fence repairs and improving gateways and moving rock to fill erosion issues. Suzanna was a great help to get as much done as possible before she finished at Springfield just before Easter. It's certainly been nice to have a second pair of hands to make some jobs easier, so she will be missed.

With typical Autumn weather upon us, the nights have cooled quite considerably with foggy mornings and beautiful sunny days. We are heavily into calving currently, with over 100 calves already on the ground, but the focus now is to start getting paddocks prepared for sowing new pasture when the season breaks.

We have had next to no rain in the last 2 and a half months, so anything would be welcoming at this stage just to settle the dust. Whilst multiple rain systems are happening in the North, we might have to wait a little longer.

**Shannon Kunst**

## Glowing Heifers in the morning sun

