



Winter 2018

Wirraway News

Those who trust in the LORD will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. **Isaiah 40:31**



Glenn & Teresea

INFLUENCE

The team here at Wirraway is extremely conscious that while we all share a faith in who Jesus is, it is not something we can demand of others, nor is it an avenue for judgement, negativity or criticism of any kind.

In themselves, these things have been dividers of communities and, in my opinion, the catalyst for people in Australia and around the world to not desire anything to do with God, Jesus – or any form of religion. In Corinthians Paul states that if there is no love, then words and actions from people are just like a clanging gong – let’s face it, who wants to listen to a clanging gong? It’s annoying, loud, intrusive and pretty much useless (unless of course it’s a gong telling us that food is ready!) The last thing we want to hear is a clanging gong telling us the exact opposite of what God actually thinks of us and how much He loves us. The last thing we want at Wirraway is to be some kind of clanging gong!

This isn’t just a Wirraway thing though, this is life! We have all grown up with clanging gongs going on in our ears at times, negative voices, judgement, nasty words and un-called-for criticism. Unfortunately it sometimes can be all too familiar whether from inside our own mind or from someone else. Unfortunately also, the young people we encounter through Wirraway have these clanging gongs going off in their mind daily, sometimes hourly. It is a voice that tells them they are no good, insecure, not accepted and can’t belong and it drives them to find these things somewhere ... elsewhere, anywhere.

Recently, a school attended Wirraway for a camp, amongst the school were some parents that wanted to support their children in coming to camp but more than that, they were there to support the teachers and were an extremely positive voice in many circumstances – not just at camp but in school life in general.

What I noticed was that these parents were extremely respected and revered. This respect wasn’t achieved by saying great and mighty and wise things, it was achieved through love, care,

acceptance and a listening heart. More of these parents are required, more of these people are required, more of this influence is required. Why? This was a school I had spoken to a year or so beforehand, the teachers and school were under pressure to not bring their students to Wirraway anymore because we were deemed to be a campsite that was ‘too religious’ for some of the parents liking, even though the parents hadn’t actually spoken to us or tried to find out what it meant that our staff all had a faith in Jesus and how that played out. In my understanding, the parents with a positive voice had something to say and encouraged the school and teachers to persevere in attending the camp here.

How sad it would have been if the children at the school missed out on something so good and positive in their lives in not being able to come to Wirraway because of some negative opinion or misunderstanding. So they came, the students had a ball, they overcame big challenges they thought were unreachable, they experienced love and care, they experienced staff that were interested in them, they heard from staff who had overcome challenges in their own lives and who encouraged the students in their own journeys, and of course, adored the horses.

If it weren’t for the influence of positive voices, those children would’ve missed out. What a great learning example this is for us, and my question for all of us then, in all situations is; “How are we sometimes like a ‘clanging gong’?” The next question is, “How can we be love, light, acceptance, a positive voice and an influence that brings hope?” In answering these questions it just might change yours and someone else’s life for the better.

Thanks for reading,
Glenn.

**THERE'S A BIG EVENT
COMING THIS OCTOBER –
READ ON FOR MORE...**

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SCHOOLS WITH DAN Program Manager



It's not long until Wirraway takes its mid-year break. The weather has been getting colder and wetter but I am happy to report that nothing has stopped our happy campers from having a full Wirraway experience.

25 school groups have come through our gates so far this year and it's been great catching up with returning teachers. Being part of Wirraway for 5 years now, I appreciate the teachers who've been returning to Wirraway for many years (some first came before I was even born). They are always keen to find out what the staff have been up to and to see what has changed around the camp.

Students are pretty much guaranteed to have a good time with all the great activities, but we like to ensure the teachers have a good time too. So, a new coffee machine and microwave in the teachers' lounge are a couple of new items we've added to assure a comfortable stay.

There have been some schools that are new to Wirraway, and more to come later in the year. It is always great to have a fresh opinion of the camp and feedback from teachers and students has been great so far in 2018. Some of the most positive feedback we receive is for our staff who run activities. When asked what they consider the most valuable aspect of the camp, one teacher answered, "The staff! The way they interact with students through a range of engaging activities is fantastic! Students have the chance to feel respected and therefore enjoy their time away."

Occasionally we also receive letters from the campers that attend school camps. "Overall it was a great camp and, by the way, your homestead is my favourite camp because of YOU! Yes, you! All the staff at Wirraway Homestead are super friendly and helpful! Thank you so much for making my three days an unforgettable experience!"

We look forward to the rest of the year's camps and can't wait to meet more great people.



Please follow our Facebook and Instagram accounts for future details and tickets.



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STAFF NEWS



Matt Shilling has moved on from Wirraway and has taken a position as Chief of Staff with Steve Murray MP. Matt has been a wonderful staff member with us and has diligently worked hard in our office and horse area. Matt will be very missed at Wirraway but we know he is passionate about his current vocation and we are very pleased for him and look forward to seeing what's next for Matt.



Shannon Munyard has also made the decision to further her studies in counselling and will be reducing her hours at Wirraway. Shannon has been an amazing contributor particularly our horse care and her leadership in this area will be dearly missed. We are thankful that she hasn't completely left us but her time away from Wirraway does mean that we will be on the hunt for one of our staff to step up into the horse area coordinator role.



Leah Ashman started with Wirraway at the beginning of the year in a specific role in our EAL program. Leah has an amazing ability to connect well with the community and the influence she has had on assisting our program to gain traction and enlarge has been significant. We look forward to what is in store for Leah at Wirraway and the EAL program.

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STUDENTS

This year we have 3 students working hard at their Cert III in Outdoor Recreation, **Hannah Francis, Ben Wicks** and **Aisha Graetz**. They are going very well in their studies and considering the steep learning curves of Wirraway life and what is involved with studying outdoor recreation, they are coping well and have contributed well to the team.

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INAUGURAL BUSHDANCE FUNDRAISING EVENT AT WIRRAWAY

What: Bushdance Band and huge Bushdance floor, Support artists, The Inaugural Wirraway Round bale roll, Pony Rides, Food, Fun, and Family Friendly!

When: Saturday the 20th of October, 6pm till late...



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2018 STAFF

Back, left to right: Dan (Program Manager), Stuart (Maintenance), Abi (Horse area), Hamish (Activities Staff), Bec (Activities Staff), Rhett (Activities Staff), Tim (Activities Staff), Ben (Student), Matt (no longer at Wirraway, but all-round great guy).

Front, left to right: Gemma (Horse Area Staff), Kirrily (Kitchen Staff), Jewels (Finance Officer), Shannon (Horse Area Coordinator), Leah (EAL Staff), Teresea (Horse Area Manager, Office Manager, Finance Manager), Phil (Kitchen Manager and qualified staff in all areas), Hannah (Student), Susie (Horse Area Staff), and Glenn (CEO). Absent: Aisha Graetz (Student).

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OUTBACK CAMPING and FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITY

Exciting news! We have just received planning approval from the council for the building of some infrastructure in our outback camping zone.

The buildings (still waiting for council building approval) consist of a central large shelter, an amenities building and some teacher's 'eco tent structures'.

Our plan is to start bookings now for camps beginning in April 2019 and we are extremely excited and looking forward to making the most of our beautiful surroundings and sharing this environment and the Wirraway culture to a larger capacity of campers.

Our first stage of building will be for the teacher's structures. We are extremely blessed to have received a grant from the Commonwealth Bank that will go towards one of these structures. However, we are still approx. \$3000 short of the mark for our first eco tent.

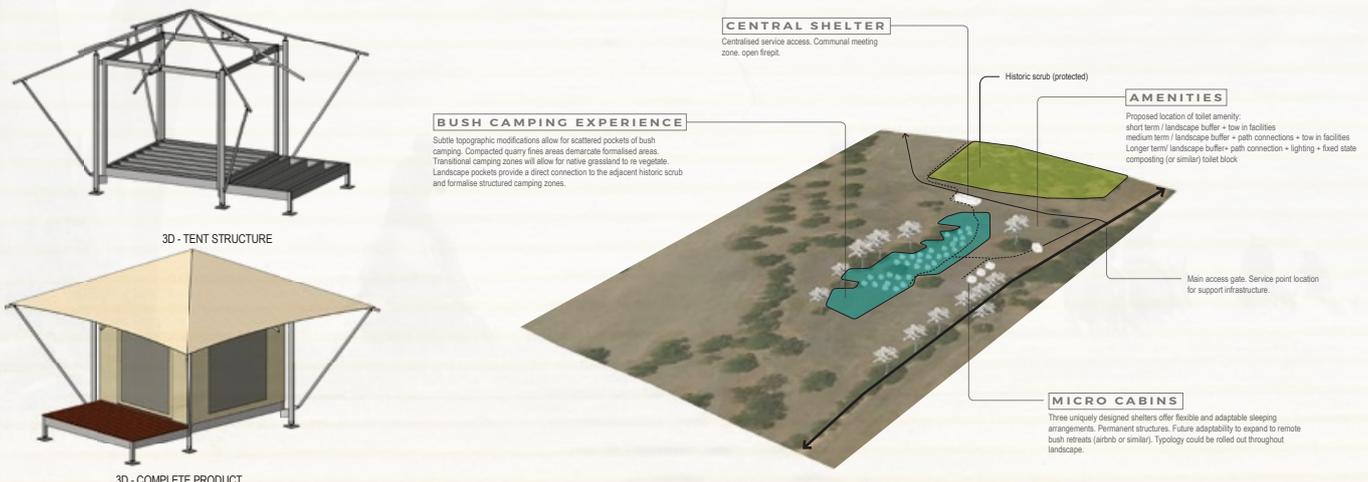
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Can you help?

If you support the vision of Wirraway Homestead and would like to help in enlarging our capacity of influence, we would greatly appreciate donations to reach the \$3000 shortfall for our first eco tent.

A donation form is attached with this newsletter and all donations over \$2.00 are fully tax deductible.

We look forward to seeing some progress and sharing more about our Outback Camping with you in our next newsletter!



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EAL (Equine Assisted Learning)

A HORSESOME NEW PROGRAM @ WIRRAWAY

If you were at school and you said your teacher had four legs, I am sure some disciplinary action would be taken! But here at Wirraway, the teachers actually do have four legs, a mane and tail.

Horses used in therapy, experiential learning and activity based sessions, are becoming more popular around the world. Studies show that the use of horses is highly effective as they promote greater positive progress for young people in this alternative setting.

Wirraway has ventured out into this exciting territory, launching the Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) program early last year. In these sessions with a trained EAL facilitator and a horse, the young person engages in activities such as caring for horses (e.g. grooming and feeding) or theme-directed activities (e.g. leading a horse through an obstacle course). Young people between the ages of 10 and 18 can take part in this program. A number of the young people who attend have anxiety, depression, schooling disengagement, social difficulties, disabilities,

family issues, or substance misuse. The first year of the program showed such outstanding results, we are expanding the program this year to allow more young people the opportunity to experience the benefits of the Equine Assisted Learning program.

As an example last year an EAL participant, by learning to read the horse's body language, grew in their ability to read peer body language and experienced a significant improvement in their social engagement at school. Her parents commented, "Since attending EAL lessons at Wirraway, family, friends, teachers and ourselves have noticed a great difference in her confidence level, socialising, attentiveness and ability in managing her anxiety." EAL provides opportunities for young people to learn new ways of approaching situations, that then can be applied to relevant areas of their life.

Our EAL staff are amazed to see the results that come from these sessions as the participants grow and challenge themselves. We call ourselves facilitators though, as we recognise that the main contributors to this growth is the presence of the horse and the natural way that young people interact with them.

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HORSING AROUND

2018 kick-started an exciting new season for the horse area team at Wirraway.

In December, four of our staff members, (Leah, Bec, Hamish & Rhett) decided they'd like to be involved in the Horse Area, to one day become Instructors. This began a 6-month-long training process for them to then attend a Horse Safety Australia Clinic on the long weekend of June. It is exciting times for the four of them, and we hope for a positive outcome and more learning in the months to come!



2018 has also brought forth new horses to our site. Leroy, a 3 year old palomino pony. Rosie, a very gentle bay welsh x . Promise [pictured here] an 11 year old miniature being used solely for our EAL program. And two bay Standardbreds, Wolfgang & Spike. Wolfgang reaching to 17hh,

which makes him our tallest horse on site! We plan for all of these horses to be worked into our program over time.

Hope, our sweet horse that we adopted from the RSPCA early 2017, has begun being trained in the riding lessons. She has been an extremely easy horse to train and is going well being ridden by our instructors. However because of her lack of nourishment in the past, her muscles become very sore and 'knot' after being ridden. We are working with her to build up her body to be able to take weight without being in pain. It has been a great opportunity for our staff & students to see her progress and to work with her!

It has been an exciting year for us, with lots of busy exciting things happening behind the scenes but also continuing to keep our schools program advancing and producing a fun and safe experience with horses.

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Stay In Touch...

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