

# MITTAGUNDI

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

### AUTUMN 2023



## CONTENTS

Directors Report.....	
Introducing New 2023 Staff.....	
Programs.....	
Program #500, A Mittagundi Milestone.....	
Program #1, Mittagundi in the Beginning .....	
Alpine Walk 2023 .....	
On the Farm.....	
Working Bees.....	
Creative Reflection by Liam	
Council Chair Report.....	
Thank You Jakob.....	
Thankyous.....	
Resources we need.....	
How to get involved.....	

## DIRECTORS REPORT

Autumn has been and gone and we're certainly heading into winter now. Many of you who know Mittagundi will know or will have heard all about winter here. Our 2023 team is slowly getting to know how real the stories about winter are. It's getting colder by the day, and we had our first snowfall at Mittagundi during the winter working bee. It wasn't enough to settle and create a base on the ground, but it was certainly falling as if it would. We've had frozen pipes, frozen water bottles in the dining room, -5-degree mornings at breakfast and our team lives in lots and lots of layers.

Speaking of snow, we had some along the hike between Kelly Hut and Hollands Knob on our last 10-day program before winter. The young people were ecstatic and couldn't be restrained from having snowball fights. We decided not to camp at the Octopus tree on the last night due to the weather forecasted to arrive, instead we went to Ropers Hut for our final night. Over the next few days, a lot of snow fell, and a deep base was present around Trapyard Gap and McNamaras Hut. This brought a lot of joy to the team, and a temporary shut of the Falls Creek gate while we were stocking the hut for winter with the cross-country skis in the Troopy.



*(Image: Vehicles locked into Falls Creek at Trapyard Gap)*

So, our team, which is now complete, has had a great early introduction to snow but has also had a great couple of months running 10-day programs. We've completed four 10-day programs from March to May and have learnt so much from each program which you'll read more about below.

In March we welcomed Raph into the team. She got dropped off by Rick Lindsay who was the director in 1989-1990. We got to know them both and Rick came back to help with our first working bee. Raph has been an excellent addition to our team, cooking up a storm in our kitchen most days, being the munchie queen, being an absolute natural at everything she does. When she's not cooking in the kitchen, you'll find her looking after the chicken's, in the roundyard with Arby and Winnie, on the hikes or making us a delicious lunch on the river side whilst we're rafting. We're extremely grateful to have her with us.



Towards the end of April, we received an email from Jack asking if we needed another team member. He came to Mittagundi for a night to see what it was all about and then decided he would like to join the team and arrived permanently on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. Jack comes from a farm in Shepperton but has been studying and working in Melbourne for the past 3 years. He's certainly hit the ground running and has been swimming ever since. He's been hiking on the High Plains, spending time in our garden and navigating his way around the kitchen. He's volunteered to take care of the plumbing here at Mittagundi which

*(Image: The farm on a sunny afternoon)*

we all know is a rather big job! He's also interested in helping with the cows and getting more familiar with Arby and Winnie.

Lilith, Tully and Matthew have well and truly found their feet as best as they possibly can. They've enjoyed all the training we've done but they've particularly enjoyed starting 10-day programs and getting to work with young people. Mossie has moved back home after living and volunteering here at Mittagundi since October last year. We're extremely grateful to have had her here at Mittagundi while we were settling in as a new team. She has been a rock for the entire team and continues to be while she works from home as our Bookings and Communications Manager alongside her day-to-day life and work.

As for Michael and I, we have settled into the directors cabin and into Mittagundi life. Michael remembers a lot of tips and tricks from 2014 especially as we go into winter. Meanwhile, I'm learning all these tips and tricks and how to be comfortable this winter. My favourite trick so far is a fire in the cabin every day is a must. Especially if I ever want to be more than a ball of clothes all day every day.

- *Dani and Michael, Mittagundi Directors*

*(Image: The full staff team on a day off, skiing at Mt Hotham)*



# NEW MEMBERS OF 2023 STAFF!

There are now seven of us on the farm full time! Our staff cabins are full, the job areas are distributed and it is so lovely to see all our chimneys going at the end of each day.

We are proud to announce the addition of two new Program Leaders to our 2023 team!

## Raph



Our new addition to the team, and beloved Mittagundi sister, Raph, arrived at the start of March from France. Raph has been dreaming of coming back to Mittagundi as a leader since she was 16 and is so glad to finally be living out her dream. She is loving doing hands on work around the farm and being active every day, a real Aussie bush gal. Raph is our dedicated and proud chook Mumma, she also enjoys cooking using our woodfired stoves, and is happy to help wherever and whenever is needed. She would love to work on our orchard this year, and will take any advice on how to grow fruit. Raph loves working with Young People and seeing them evolve and open up so much in just 10 days. We are so glad to have welcomed Raph into our family for the year.

## Jack

Born and raised in Shep, Jack is a country kid at heart. He's spent the past few years living in Melbourne and studying Education. He comes to Mittagundi to experience working with Young People in a non-school setting and to broaden his perspective on what education, and outdoor education can be. He is looking forward to living in the Alpine environment and forming bonds with the Young People. Jack is going to become the fastest milker in the East and hopes to spend his days tending to the garden and making Mittagundi even more reliant on our own home grown produce. He also looks forward to reading books and writing letters. Jack has settled in very quickly and we are so glad to have him here.



# PROGRAMS

## Girls #498

We had six girls join us in March for a successful 10 days of hiking, sledding and abseiling! Though a small course of only six Young People was challenging, it meant that they were able to form close bonds and lifelong friendships to last beyond Mittagundi. Some of the girls were reluctant at first to try sledding but before lunchtime were already rating it a 10/10 activity! We knew that Mittagundi way of life and the outdoor activities were completely new to these Young People and we loved watching them give things a go and push themselves. Our hike out was certainly unique, we had a lot of good laughs cooking dinner on the fire at the Octopus Tree, and even making croutons! Thank you to Holly, Milla, Ally, Hannah, Krystal and Darcy for being our first group for the year!



## Boys #499

Our first boys' program of the year was full of energy. We were so grateful for the way the Young People got stuck into Mittagundi traditions such as "washuuuppp", and Thankyous before dinner. We were so pleasantly shocked on the first morning on the farm when 8 boys woke up early to come milking. It was so nice to see some of the boys get to know and love Dane the calf, and we'd like to reassure them that he has not been eaten...yet. On the farm we de-barked some fence posts, chopped wood and weeded the poly tunnel. Our hike out was very rainy, and due to the weather conditions, we hiked the group back down to Ian's Hut for the last night and one last huzzah on the farm. Thanks to the boys for bringing so much enthusiasm!

## Mixed #500

Program #500 was a momentous occasion for us all here at Mittagundi. We helped the Young People, who had never been to Mittagundi before, to see the significance of what they were now a part of. Our hike in was fantastic, and many learnt the valuable skill of trying to ignore the fact that there are leeches under your gaiters. On the farm we built a new chicken roost, worked on the woodshed drainage and put all the fence posts in for our new fence and ran the wire. We also chopped wood and built a whole new beehive of wood! We were so happy to have a course of 20 Young People complete the hike in, the abseil, the rafting and the hike out! Comments from the Young People on this program can be found below.



## Boys #501

These boys hiked through enough snow to form a snowball and have a snowball fight during the hike out. Waking up at Wildhorse Creek was frosty and fresh with frozen drink bottles and shoelaces. However, nothing was going to get these lads spirits down, not after a great course filled with lots of woodchopping and beehive making, wedding the garden for winter prep, picking the last of the fruit and vegies and beginning the pruning process, helping to patch up the pig pen and paint some signs for our front paddock. A very good week was had on the farm in between the activities that the boy couldn't be more excited and happier with. Thank you to the boys on this course for making it a productive and memorable one.



## Cathedral College

Week 1 – For the first time this year we had both the main farm and Ian's Hut in operation with over 45 students and 6 Cathedral College staff members. Both groups spent days on the farm doing various tasks such as cooking meals in the kitchen, working on our new fence, feeding the animals, cleaning out the silt traps and as always, chopping and restocking our wood supplies. The Young People were also given opportunities to work in the joinery making spoons and operating the lathe, and in the forge making fire pokers and fence pegs. One group went abseiling and rafted on the Mitta, and though their toes were frozen they loved the experience. Our other group had many activities arranged by the school and we went on a day hike up Mt Wills where they saw snow!



Week 2 - Another successful week with 46 fantastic Young People, plus staff, from Cathedral College. Thank you for bringing so much energy, it was so great to see the Young People, who were reserved at the start, come to love and engage with Mittagundi. We had heaps of people join us for milking in the mornings, we found our lost chickens (they were hiding on the high roosts), and we chopped more shower wood for winter. We also, rafted, hiked and got 30 Young People down the abseil! We would like to thank the Cathedral College staff who volunteered to spend the 6 days here with their students and help them experience Mittagundi.

# PROGRAM #500

## A MITTAGUNDI MILESTONE

In its forty-five-year history, Mittagundi has seen many changes and reinventions as new people, ideas, and philosophies come and go. People often wonder what really makes Mittagundi what it is. Is it the Leaders, the animals, the porridge, the Knocker?

Young People may often find themselves disappointed when returning a year later to find the place changed, with new faces, and will tend to carry a sense of sentimentality for the Leaders and animals who were there on their first program(s). Nonetheless, as each year ticks over, Mittagundi continues to offer Young People a place of refuge from the modern world, and the burdens of teenagerhood. Each year, Young People arrive and over the course of ten days are able to completely engage with and understand its purpose and activities.

Those who have been introduced to Mittagundi in recent years may have no comprehension of how programs were run in the beginning. They may be totally unaware that the pantry used to be the kitchen and visa versa, or that even before that the Young People would sleep in busses and were hoisted above head height on toilet seat pulley systems to build cabins. Perhaps if they knew the challenges Young People were presented with on programs in the past, they would not be so fast to complain about the cold in their countless layers of thermals, fleeces, woollens and Gore-Tex jackets.

However, at its core, Mittagundi remains the same, and its values are passed on between generations of Leaders, guided by Directors, and imparted upon Young People. Fairness, respect, responsibility and safety look different in 2023 to how they did in the 1980s. We have a greater understanding of gender, cultural and social diversity, and of mental health and neurodivergences. We have changing tolerances for safety and risk, and an understanding that Young People's comfort zones begin and end at different extremes. Yet these values are still as relevant as ever and continue to help guide Young People in their lives beyond Mittagundi. The challenges and accomplishments of climbing Mt Nelse, or braving the cold of the Mitta Mitta, or not checking social media for ten days, continue to equip Young People to become resilient and self-aware Young Adults.



*(Image: Program #500 on top of Mt Nelse)*

**Program #500 is one of many Mittagundi milestones that encourages us to look back and reflect upon the value and purpose of Mittagundi. Here is what the Young People of Program #500 have to say...**

*'I'm the fifth person in my family to come to Mittagundi. It's a great experience to make new friends and try new things. I will definitely be coming back as a volunteer or hopefully a leader.'* – Sam

*'I felt as though I had found my place, I felt so at home and relaxed as I gardened, chopped wood, played games and music, and made so many new friends.*

*Mittagundi is an experience I will never forget, one day I hope to be like the leaders I look up to so much.'* – Eloise

*'I wasn't feeling too confident coming into (Mittagundi) as my social skills aren't the best, but very quickly I found myself loosening up...I can't wait to hopefully come back on a follow up and meet many more beautiful people.'* – Amalia

*'Being here made me realise that we think we need all these things in our lives, but we don't need them at all. I have loved it here because all the distractions of the world aren't here, just people who have made the experience amazing.'* – Anja

*'The experiences I have had here are ones I will cherish forever. The laughs, memories and photos will constantly replay in my mind and will continue to make me smile.'* – Charli

*'Whilst tough and challenging at points I feel that each and every moment was either, fun, taught me something, or both...I thought that it was impossible to build such strong connections with others over the span of only 10 days...I feel honoured to be a part of the Mittagundi community and will treasure my learnings forever'* – Tali

*'I love the outdoors and this place has made me want to spend the rest of my life out here and in other places...I would recommend this place to everyone I know and I hope I can come back.'* – Brielle

*'I've made so many new friends and had so much fun playing music, washing dishes...and even eating porridge.'* – Kiki

*'This camp was just so different to what I have done before... I really enjoyed not being constricted by the time. I felt like I was free...I wasn't going to a formed schedule... I really enjoyed the family we came to be, connecting over things like 'the portal', 'washup', and so many more. When I first came to the train station it was weird looking around to these people I have never seen before...who I would get to know so well and become my second family... I am so grateful to be able to be here especially on the 500<sup>th</sup> program.'* – Amelia



*(Image: Program #500 about to hike into Mittagundi)*



# PROGRAM #1

## MITTAGUNDI IN THE BEGINNING

### A Reflection by Gina Bladon

Year 9, 1983 and my friend Virginia and I sat in assembly with 1,000 other girls at our school in Melbourne. Onto the stage came a bearded man in Hard Yakka shorts, work boots and a tie, with energy, passion, a gift for storytelling and an ability to reach into our teenage minds and inspire us to seek a crazy adventure to a place called Mittagundi, in the far-flung reaches of northeast Victoria. You guessed it, that man was Ian Stapleton, spruiking for participants for Mittagundi's first 9-Day program. Ian's strike rate was 0.2% that day as only Virge and I signed up, but it was 100% life-changing for the both of us.

To paint the picture, in 1983 we hadn't heard of mobile phones, there was no internet, the first Star Wars movie was released and we were scared of nuclear war between Russia and the USA as the Cold War continued. 40 years is a long time ago!

We didn't realise that the adventure we were about to have would be the most challenging and wonderful experience of our teenage years. We travelled alone on the train to Albury, we were picked up in an old Troopy and slept the night in the Tawonga Hall. There were 10 girls from all walks of life, all with little hiking experience and little idea of what we were getting ourselves into.



*(Image: Program #1 girls, photo taken from Something Small)*

The walk into Mittagundi was an absolute delight. So incredibly beautiful, with lots of talking, plodding, sore shoulders and good spirits. At Mittagundi we abseiled, white water rafted and helped build the Store Shed and Drying Room. These were the first permanent buildings at Mittagundi. We slept in rough old buses that dripped with condensation and were rudely awakened by Ian walking through our sleeping quarters in the old bus, with a chainsaw in full flight! Mittagundi-inspired firsts were long drop dunnies, a shower with no walls, killing chooks for our dinner and cooking on a wood stove, supported by Wendy, Cathy and Linton, our fabulous leaders.

The hike out was far more challenging, as winter came early. We were caught by snow and spent a freezing night shivering in a tent that eventually collapsed in the witching hours. The gear was not blizzard proof and it was a pretty rough night in the cold and wet. However, it was a defining moment for me and taught me a

huge lesson in grit, determination and leadership. We all walked out together, soaked, frozen, bedraggled and elated. Teamwork, humour and Savoy biscuits got us through.

Mittagundi was the first time as a teenager that I felt seen and heard as the person I would become. Ian's superpower is his connection to young people, his ability to inspire. This was incredibly transformative. Around the outdoor campfire we had conversations about our dreams for our futures and the future of the planet.

For me, Mittagundi Course #1 inspired so much. A connection to the outdoors, many Mittagundi work parties, Wollangarra Committee membership, more work parties, my husband Matt starting Typo Station, and now has come full circle with our son Max enjoying a course at Wollangarra and our daughter Eadie participating in four Mittagundi courses and completing the Mittagundi Wollangarra Alpine Walk.

To all those who have contributed in so many ways to Mittagundi, you have done a great thing for thousands of Young People across many generations. I hope many, many more young people have the opportunity to experience Mittagundi as I did.

I am so grateful for all that Ian and Mittagundi have given to me. Thank you a thousand times over.

- **Gina Bladon**

## ALPINE WALK 2023!

Well, they say the biggest challenges are the most rewarding. The 10 young people and 2 Leaders who hiked the Annual Alpine Walk in April, may also say this. Ella, Henry, Jasper, Hazel, Lydia, Rosie, Mossie, Will, Alex and Matilda, were lead from Mittagundi to Wollangarra along the High Plains, through the Barry and Viking Wilderness areas and through to Macalister Springs by two of the best, Zoe and Maeve, Leaders from 2022 Wollangarra Staff. The 5 Mittagundi and 5 Wollangarra young people were selected from the 2022 staff of both organisations.

The enormous task of planning the Alpine Walk was handed to Maeve Nunan of Wollangarra, a Wizard of outdoor education (currently walking from Mexico to Canada along the PCT), Maeve was supported by fellow 2022 Wollangarra Leader Zoe (who is dipping her toes in the outdoor education world) on the 10-day Hike.



*(Image: Alpine Walkers in Mitta Mitta)*

Here's what some of the young people had to say about their Magic moments of the Hike....

"Walking to the top of Mt. Speculation and watching the sunrise" – Jasper

*"I loved every second, I can probably do a top 3 favourite moments. Waking up early to see the sunrise from the top of Mt. Spec on day 10 and how the clouds and mountains lit up in the sun. The swim at Dibbins Hut despite it being freezing, everyone was so cold but laughing so hard. Lastly the lunch on the top of the Viking, pineapple and all, oh and of course the food drop, sitting around the fire with guitars."*

– Henry

A huge thank you to long-time supporter of the Alpine Walk, Kevin McGennan. Kev has been involved with Alpine Walks for over 20 years! Thanks for everything Kev, from borrowing your Sat phones and water barrels to the beautifully printed and well detailed maps you provide to leaders and young people.

Other people to thank are of course the young people, who raised over \$1,000.00 each for the organisations, thank you for your efforts and creative measures to produce these much-needed funds. Thank you to the parents and loved ones of these young people, not only for allowing you to partake in this hike but for supporting you in the lead up and for those who could attend the Alpine Walk Dinner at Wollangarra. Thank you to Wollangarra Directors Toby & Kay for hosting the Dinner and the Woll staff and Vollies for setting up, packing up and the endless Foxing of guests. Thank you to the Directors of Mittagundi, Dani and Michael for supplying the hike gear and the Mittagundi 2023 Leaders for hosting the group on nights 1 & 2.

A shoutout to Ian Stapleton for a delightful chocolate cake and many stories at Mt St Bernard. The rain held off for a few hours and many laughs were had, a moment that all of the young people reflected upon as a highlight! Thank you to Emmah (2022 Mitta leader & 2023 Woll leader) for assisting me on the Food Drop at Mt. Murray, providing great chats and laughs along the way. I could go on however the point is, it takes an army to make the Alpine Walk happen. Year after year the leaders of the Alpine Walk take their personal time to make this all happen behind the scenes, the endless hours of logistics, emails, calls, and planning.

And here is a poem from Jasper, one of our Mittagundi alpine walkers:

*The rain was heavy the mud was thick, the smiles on our faces were somewhat bleak.*

*As we drew closer to our fabled camp thoughts of food were close to hand.*

*Mossie and Emmah pulled in with crates of food and most importantly a choc ripple cake.*

*The rain passed and the fire burned bright underneath the starry night.*

*We woke up in the morning with a 'ca caa' as our call, the rain the day before almost made us crawl.*

*There was mist on the mountains, dew on the trees, it was due for a freeze.*

*The day was sunny, bellies were full.*

*We were halfway there with a new pineapple to wear.*



*(Image: Alpine Walkers about to leave Mittagundi)*

# 'We Are on Top of The World'

## A creative piece by Liam – Program #500

*A shiver goes down my spine. I am standing on the top of a rock. It just so happens that the rock is very high in the air. The wind blows over my face keeping me cool. My hair flips around, swirling with the wind.*

*It's peaceful up here. The birds are singing, the crickets are chirping a beat and the river roars far below. From where I am standing I can see the river flowing through the valley, weaving around trees and over rocks. I would love to feel the cool liquid over my skin. But first, I need to get to the bottom of this rock.*

*Looking at my feet I see a confusing tangle of rope. A lovely leader is clipping rope into the harness that I am wearing. She is explaining that the confusing mess is actually very organised and it will stop me from falling onto the rocks below.*

*I take a peak down over the drop and instantly wish that I didn't. My heart jumps into my mouth as an encouraging leader waves up at me. He looks more like an ant.*

*Before I even know what is happening, I am walking backwards, out over the edge of the cliff. I find putting my trust in the rope nerve racking but I push through. The encouragement from above stills my racing heart. I am now hanging halfway down a cliff.*

*I look out along the valley. There is nothing but trees for as far as the eye can see. A gust of wind makes me rock from side to side. I feel like a pendulum. Releasing some of the rope in my right hand, I glide the rest of the way down onto solid ground.*

*Standing up, my legs shake with excitement. The coolest leader of them all fist-bumps me. I can hear cheering from the lovely leader at the top. Once I am unhooked, I run back to where everyone is waiting. My body is pumped with adrenaline.*

*The best leader of all is waiting and asks how it went. I tell her how awesome it was and she listens intently, happy that I had the time of my life. Everyone then sits around and plays games, gazing out along the valley like we are on top of the world.*



- Liam Gilbert

# On The Farm

## Cows

We have continued to milk our cow Jeanie and have had many keen Young People wake up early to have a go at milking! Her calf, Dane, is now huge and will soon be weaned off.

Our five other cows have enjoyed a few weeks down in the River Paddock and have returned to the Knocker for their Winter break.

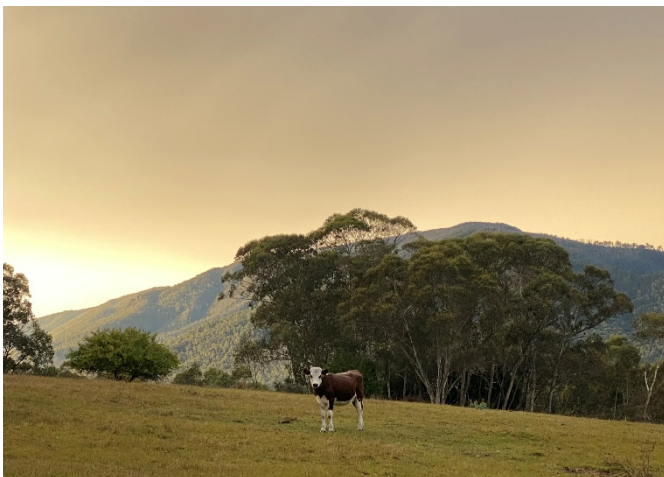
We are also grateful to have sent two of our cows, Billy and Mon to the butcher and are now enjoying their meat in our lasagnes and roast dinners on programs

## Horses

We have spent the past two months leading Arby up in the high plains with Young People Arby loving hikes, very fit and strong He's approachable and many Young People have been able to lead him and bond with him on hikes. Winnie is on a strict diet and exercise regimen in the hope of getting him fit enough for future hikes. Our horse masters, Dani, Tully and Raph are improving their skills in the round yard as we work them multiple times per week and have formed a relationship with them. Overall our two boys are happy and well

## Chooks

Our new chickens that we received in March are growing up and it looks as though we have a few roosters on our hands. We built them a new roost on one of our programs which they are now using. Sadly though we are missing four of them, so if you see any chickens running around please let us know!



*(Image: Sez (Sarah) Cow and Mt Wills)*



*(Image: In the garden while it snowed one morning in May)*

## Pigs

Our two pigs, Bae and Connie, surprised us just this week when Matthew went down to feed them and found piglets! An unexpected surprise for us all! Though we lost the first litter from Connie, we were delighted when Bae's litter arrived the next evening and we found them all suckling away, all seven of them. We now have our hands full, and it will be a steep learning curve for Matthew as we learn how to look after our new piglets, particularly in this cold weather!

## Garden

Our plans for the garden are taking shape as we weed, feed, and cover our beds. Our main goal is to grow some essential produce, such as carrots, garlics, potatoes, kale etc. As well as this, we would love to, by the end of our year here, be able to hand over a garden full of healthy fertile soil and well-maintained garden beds. This will continue to involve endless days of weeding, composting, adding layers of poo and cardboard and hay, and leaving the beds to rest. A highlight of the past few months was the morning it snowed! We all went down to the garden, where we could see a dusting of snow up on the Knocker. The garden is a beautiful place to be!

# Working Bees

## March Pre-Course Working Bee

Well, we put the call out there for help and it was certainly answered. Over the March long weekend, we had our first working bee of 2023. It brought family and friends of the Mittagundi staff and community to the valley to tackle some big tasks, not only around the farm but we also managed to clear track 107 ready for 10 Day Programs to begin. We had our amazing and reliable locals stop by to excavate and even a couple council members pop in to lend a hand with our stove flues. The Saturday night drew a crowd to the gear shed (which had been fully organised and stocked ready for courses) for a celebratory birthday party for one of our Directors, Michael. By the end of the four days, we had ticked off the key tasks that were needed to take the pressure off staff with programs beginning. The vehicles were squeaky clean with fresh stickers on the sides, the pantry was organised and ready to fill, and the property was looking neat bar the few felled dead trees ready to be chopped by Young People!



## Pre-Winter Working Bee



Snow fell! Before the working bee which was on the 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> May. Yes, it slowed us down but it sure didn't stop our team, vollies, and working bee helpers from stocking the huts, sorting the winter food order, getting the farm a little more ready and getting ourselves a little more prepared. We had members of the Mittagundi community come from all over to help us again – we cannot thank you enough! We even got to learn a little about wool spinning as we had the pleasure of having Mark join us. We only managed to get the vehicles stuck three times in two days and get ourselves locked behind the Falls Creek gate. It was a great learning experience for the team as we wrestled snow chains on and off and got to

put our training to use.

*(Image: Stocking MacNamara Hut)*

# Council Chair Report

It is fantastic to be writing this looking at where Mittagundi is now. We are very lucky to have Dani and Michael as our directors. Together they are doing an incredible job and it is pleasing to know that Mittagundi is in great hands with them. It's even more exciting to have a full staff team, all of whom are thriving on their time so far at Mittagundi. As you have read, Mittagundi courses are up and running and we have given purposeful and meaningful experiences to lots of young people.

Winter bookings are full, the snow is starting to fall, the huts are ready, all-in preparation for another busy and probably eventful winter. Thanks to the helpers that have volunteered to come.

I was at Mittagundi the other day to meet with DELP regarding the government initiative (or should I say disaster) to dedicate river frontage licence campsites, which it seems we might be unlucky enough to get two. We are hoping this does not go ahead, but it seems like it will.

Anyway, while I was there it was great to see Eadie and Tex, two ex-young people at Mittagundi volunteering to care take the place. They both looked very happy and comfortable to be there.

The Mittagundi council have been busy with all the behind-the-scenes things we do. I'd just like to thank them all for the hard work that they put into the various tasks they do for Mittagundi.

We are currently looking for more council members, specifically a secretary, a fundraiser, and an Outdoor Educator. If you are interested or know anyone who might be, please contact me via [chair@mittagundi.org.au](mailto:chair@mittagundi.org.au) or 0417 502 331. It can be anyone, you don't have to know everything there is to know about Mittagundi, you just need a willingness to contribute.

I hope you enjoy your winter; I know the staff will.

Lastly, Thank-you to the 2023 staff team from me, the council and the Mittagundi community for the amazing job you are doing. Mittagundi is thriving.

Mike Heffernan



# Thank You Jakob

VALE JAKOB MALMO

Dear all

We are all aware of Jakob's enormous contribution and love of our profession, and his love of a fast car. Perhaps a less known attribute was his generosity and compassion.

For the last 25 years, whenever Mittagundi Outdoor Education Centre needed a milking cow, a phone call to Jakob was always answered "When does Mittagundi want to pick one up?" Offers of payment were always howled down.

At Mittagundi there is still a cow called "Jakob" (naming cows with boys names is a tradition), but there is also a "Jeanie"  
Imagine Jakob's mortification when one of his donated animals turned out to be a persistently infected pestivirus shedder!!

So indirectly, Jakob has enabled so many school kids to try hand milking at Mittagundi, and helped them learn the true origin of milk rather than from the carton.

The cows at Mittagundi and hand milking is a small but significant part of the Mittagundi experience, along with the hiking, rafting, abseiling and learning to work as a group together.

Thank you Jakob.

- *Bloggs*

## Thank You

There are many characters that make Mittagundi what it is, many of these people working quietly in the background. So, as we continue to collaborate with one another and build upon this wonderful community, here's a special thank you to those who have contributed in one or more ways in the past few months:

### Thank you to...

- Anna, Matt, Alby, Sally, Ben, Ric, Gordy, Chloe, Aly, Hazel and Maeve for their efforts at our working bee in March, both on the farm, in the kitchen, and up Track 107.
- Liv and Ian for the honey.
- Tim and Michelle for the gas fridge.
- Wren, for the wool spinning demonstrations at festival.
- Sam and David for assistance on the farm, with maintenance and on Program #498.
- Sally for her perpetual volunteering and company.
- Aiden for volunteering his time, effort, and enthusiasm, for our past three programs.
- Caitlin for building our new washup station box.
- Mark the hand spinner for attending our working bee and teaching us some skills.
- Anna, Alby, Milla, Annie for their help on our winter preparation working bee.
- Gina Bladon for her reflections on Program #1



## How to get involved more

**Follow us on social media: @mittagundi**

### Come Volunteer at Mittagundi

Mittagundi is passionate about providing opportunities for all to experience the outdoors and fall in love with the mountains. If this is something that interests you, then volunteering at Mittagundi may just be your cup of tea.

**10-Day program and follow up volunteers:** We are always looking for enthusiastic and energetic volunteers to help throughout the year. Our 10-day programs run from September to May with shorter Follow Up programs interspersed. Spring and Autumn are particularly beautiful times to be up at Mittagundi and they are very productive times on the property too. There is always plenty to be done in the garden, with the animals and ensuring our programs run smoothly from behind the scenes. We would love your help and would welcome you warmly into the Mittagundi community.

**Winter volunteers:** Our Winter courses are 6, 7 and 9 days long and involve 3 day trips in the snow as well as time on the farm at Mittagundi. We require 2 volunteers per Winter program. There are many ways that people can help at Mittagundi during winter. Some volunteer helpers will go out on ski trips, some may be helping out at the base around Mittagundi milking cows, baking bread, chopping firewood and so on. It's a great way to be involved in a quality Outdoor Education program focusing on community, lifestyle and personal values. A great place to stay in the Mountains and a unique experience helping young people to learn and grow.

*To enquire, apply or learn more, please visit our website: [www.mittagundi.org.au](http://www.mittagundi.org.au) or contact us on 03 5159 7238*

## If you would like to help Mittagundi here is how you can

Check out our list of essential resource needs below. Any financial help you can provide this year to purchase these items would be immensely appreciated! Or maybe you know someone who can help? Give us a call on 03 5159 7238

## - RESOURCES WE NEED -

- Small can openers
- Coloured paint
- Scrap steel for the forge
- CDs of music
- Stock whip
- Sports equipment eg nets, balls, frisbees, wickets
- Tupperware (good condition & with lids)
- Gortex pants
- Hiking boots (large sizes)
- Cross Country skis

- Long sleeve collared shirts (non-cotton)
  
- Car seat covers (for Hilux and Troopie)
- Wetsuits (full length)
- 2x throw bags
- Barrels (for rafts)
- Large Photo Albums (Hard cover if possible)
- Saddle pack bags x 2 (good condition)
- Gardening utensils: hand trowels, small spades, weeding utensils etc.
- Drill bits 5mm and under
- Thermals (especially large+ sizes)
- Fitted bed sheets (single and double)

*Mittagundi is a non-profit organisation that receives no funding from the Government. Our programs are heavily subsidised and we are reliant on a fantastic community of supporters for about 30% of our operational costs.*

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

CHEQUE ATTACHED FOR \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I have made an electronic deposit to your Westpac Account of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

on \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ ACCOUNT DETAILS: Westpac Bairnsdale

BSB 033653 A/C 630000

Please debit my: Visa/Mastercard Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_ CCV Number: \_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

DONATIONS CAN ALSO BE MADE VIA THE WEBSITE: <http://www.mittagundi.org.au/donate/>

## What is Mittagundi?

Mittagundi is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with outdoor programs available to all young people aged 14-17. It was established over 40 years ago with a commitment to provide opportunities for young people from all walks of life to live and enjoy the challenge of a remote and simple lifestyle.

The atmosphere at Mittagundi is simple, honest and happy. There are no watches, no timetables and no money. Instead, there is an opportunity for young people to live and work together in an environment where people matter more than anything else. Mittagundi is run by a professional and passionate team of volunteers and a whole community of support.

To book into a program or be involved with Mittagundi please visit our website [www.mittagundi.org.au](http://www.mittagundi.org.au) or contact us via emailing [info@mittagundi.org.au](mailto:info@mittagundi.org.au)