

# MITTAGUNDI

## OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

Hello again, wow how fast a few months goes! It seems like a couple of days ago I was sitting down to write the end of the year wrap up. And now here we are a few days into our second program for the year! That's right you read correctly our second program!

Mittagundi is back to doing what we do best, running programs with young people. We feel very fortunate to be doing what we are after 2020's shutdown.

We started the year with a great handover from the 2020 staff to the 2021 staff and then backed that up with our festival which returned to Mittagundi after a year away due to the bushfires of 19/20. It was fabulous to have our community back in the valley to celebrate the contributions of the 2020 staff team and to welcome in the team of 2021. Many skills were shared, wisdom imparted, boogies had and delicious feasts eaten!

2021 at Mittagundi is set to be a fantastic one with most of our courses up to the end of winter being full already. We will be completing the gear shed renovation pre winter so it's all ready for our winter courses, there'll be the usual follow-up programs full of keen young people, fences rebuilt, wood chopped and many many content young people departing the farm.

But for now we are focusing on delivering great courses for young people, harvesting and preserving bountiful harvests from the vege garden and orchard whilst enjoying this beautiful valley! In this newsletter you will meet the new staff of Kai, Indi, Billie, Dane, Ollie and Laura. Who will shine a bit of light on themselves and what's been happening in their new home.

We at Mittagundi hope that 2021 is as exciting for you as it is for us here! And if you're up in the valley please drop in for a cuppa!

- Hamish & Ludog

# NEW FACES OF 2021



## Ollie - Horses, Fences, Pastures, Forge, Small Motors, Vehicles

A country lad at heart with a keen enthusiasm for outdoor rec and the outdoors in general. He's not afraid to galavant around the tumultuous valley on his trusty road bike, he's been seen as far away as Omeo at times. His one liners are sure to crack you up, or to inspire an album name. His music taste is exquisite ranging from King Gizzard to Courtney Barnett. Just ask him to sing a tune and he will do so without failure. His country prowess comes out in his whip cracking ability. No doubt it will wake you up at some stage. His humble abode was once called the cheese house but he has rejuvenated it into a home.

You'll have a blast when you're around Ollie.



## Laura - Garden, Pigs, Gear Shed, Dining Room, Orchard

*When sun peers over a mountain top,*

*You'll see Laura tending her crop,*

*In go the seeds,*

*There's so many weeds!*

*Her work will never stop*

Laura is our resident green thumb. She arrived at Mittagundi and went straight for the garden where she now lives full time. On rare occasions you'll see her kayaking the Mitta and climbing the local mountains. A girl of many talents, she won the unofficial Mittagundi 2021 masterchef competition and would have certainly won this year's Mittagundi olympics for the new staff, had she been allowed to compete. Come visit and say hi to Laura!



## Kai - Chickens, Plumbing, Joinery, Rafting Shed

Kai is a friendly face that popped up just in time for the Mitta fest after being stuck on the other side of the NSW border. Luckily he came with a solid set of all rounder skills and his boogying feet. Since then it's been a pleasure hanging out, sharing smiles and the opportunistic swim. Kai is thoughtful, hard working and a lover of trees. At Mittagundi, you might find him in the chook shed with his mates, or in the joinery working on a woody creation. He's a problem solver and great at thinking about others. He can most definitely slice cucumbers the thinnest. Not shy of adventure, Kai is someone we can all learn from and create memories with. Come say hi!



### Indi - Horses, Garden, Toilets, Accomodation, Newsletter

Indi is our designated toilet-bin-shimmier at Mitta this year and she's also going to be taking care of the garden (with Laura) and our horse, Arby (with Ollie). Her personality is as vibrant as her hair, and she can often be found dancing, or heard spreading her infectious laughter. She'll never turn down a swim in the river (even before the sun comes up over the knocker!). Indi has been practicing and instructing yoga for the past few years as well, and practices often, even on the dining room floor spontaneously. Of everyone on our team, she's the most likely to become a monk. Indi is a bundle of fun, cleverness, wisdom and thoughtfulness - we can't wait to see what this year brings with her!



### Billie - Cows, First Aid, Kitchen/Pantry, Merchandise, Orchard

Meet Billie - our residential fashionista and stylist. This groovy human is known to carry her bubbly, confident attitude with her around the property and is ever ready for a project that involves applying her crafty talents. You might find her in the orchard amidst the fruit trees or having a boogie in the kitchen, fixing an unfixable sewing machine or with buckets in hand ready to milk Tessy the cow, taking her next polaroid picture or perhaps organising the world that is our pantry (thank you!). And so I say again, Meet Billie - a friendly face who is both ready and excited to encounter the plethora of experiences that await us in our time here at Mittagundi.



### Dane - Cows, Plumbing, Wood Shed, Gas/Fridges

*Welcome Dane - I'm glad you came.  
From Beechworth you did come,  
bringing us your green thumb.  
Your beard is thick, your head is smooth,  
but we all like your groove.  
Chopping wood with your splitter,  
getting us ready for a cold winter.  
Summer is hot, your hi-vis is not,  
it's about time you took it off.  
Your dog makes me ponder,  
what goes on in her head so yonder.  
Moving to the country, working on a farm,  
she fills us with her charm.  
Who knows what this year will bring,  
hopefully a cough with a little less zing.  
We're all glad to spend this year with you,  
hopefully I'll learn how to do a poem too.*

## THE FESTIVAL

2020 left us with an endless list of things to celebrate our gratitude for at the Mittagundi Festival - a festival unlike any other. Thanks to our very generous audience, ripper MC's (Hamish, Rowdy and Ya) and our skilled community members that donated such beautifully crafted pieces, we managed to raise over \$8000 from the auction alone. Although we missed our beloved shindig at the Glen Wills town hall, we certainly weren't lacking for time spent on the dance floor. For that we have to thank the *Shadycrest Family Band*, members of *Godspeed*, *Brotherman* and the bangers playlist curated by the current and last years staff teams - can anyone remember how many times 'Spirit in the Sky' played?

It's not a Mittagundi Festival without the olympics and I think it only fair that we settle the dispute over the claiming of the championship title. This has been a point of contention between the Mitta and Woll staff throughout all of our joint trainings, mostly out of the bitterness and sore losing of the Woll team. For clarification, the final rankings were:

1st: 2020 Mittagundi staff

2nd: 2021 Mittagundi staff

3rd: Friends & family 1

4th: 2021 Wollangarra staff

5th: Friends & family 2

Pre season training for the 2022 festival olympics is well under way at Mittagundi. Laura is wearing her gumboots daily, Dane is chopping wood at any chance he gets (even as I write this...), and I have been practicing my porridge slurping with the young people - watch out Hannah Waite!

Thank you to everyone who demonstrated, made music, donated, cooked, cleaned, held ladders, competed in the olympics, cracked their stock whip and danced the night away. It was a truly unique and special festival this time around.

- Billie

## TRAINING PERIOD



'Twas a hectic start to the year for the 2021 crew when it comes to training. It all started when the fabulous 2020 leaders flexed their knowledge to us in all their areas across the farm. Their unmatched passion and experience was empowering to see and we are all grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from them all.

Next came our certified training which kicked off with 4WD under the guidance of the brilliant Whitey, who safely directed us through the gorgeous Glen Valley.



Moments later we completed our Food Safe handling practices. I'd like to thank Sam and Alena for allowing us to stay the night prior and supplying a feast - that in all honesty was fit for a king.

Soon after, we opened the farm to accommodate an array of people for complex trauma training. Problem solving was key, as was opening ourselves to thinking in trauma sensitive ways and inspiring fierce dignity within those we work with.

Next up was Wilderness First Aid. Once again, the farm was opened up to those far and wide. Thank you Rowdy for cooking all week - everything was delicious, especially the zaatar flat bread! Thank you too Heidi, for going above and beyond, for venturing here, for teaching so much, for being so adaptive to the environment. The confidence we gained has definitely put us in good stead for the future.



We soon hit the road again to learn defensive driving. Shout out to Ally, Paul and Hazel for putting on another ripper feed and being so accommodating to us and Wollangarra. Thank you to Skidz for their expertise and allowing us to experience driving and evading obstacles at various speeds in a safe environment.

Last to mention but certainly not least, was our time with Suz and Shae. Thank you for spending a couple of days with us for communications training - a vital one it was and is! It allowed us to better understand one another and how we can support the team in functioning as a well oiled machine. Our conversations we shared together continue to surface here and there, reminding us of our strengths and values.



Us newbies were invited over to Stewart and Meredith's place to learn about leading and understanding horses. I was lucky enough to be learning from their gorgeous Bill, who is as reliable as you can get (Lord of the Rings reference for those hardcore fans). Our bellies were filled with delicious white choc and raspberry muffins for morning tea and a yummy lasagne lunch. Thank you both for your patience with us and expansive knowledge.

As a 2021 crew we also did a hike, abseil and rafting reccy. The hike was a mix of the programs' infamous hike-in and hike-out and was Arby (the horse)'s first time doing an overnigher with geared up pack saddles. He was incredibly brave and pushed on even when face by his anxieties.

We also did an overnight trip with Arby (the human), who we rafted with down the beautiful Mitta Mitta. Through the treacherous gorge we travelled, down rapids like the 'Graveyard', 'Waterfall' and 'Gobbler'. The night was filled by Arby's story telling of his experiences and thrilling journeys lived in faraway places.

Another big thank you goes to Max Tucker for sharing his blacksmithing skills with us all. Your knowledge is astounding and your humbleness is admirable.

I'd like to finish off by once again thanking all of our instructors, all those who helped us out and all those who participated.

- Dane

## #479 - OUR FIRST PROGRAM OF 2021



A full year since our Mittagundi troopies last entered Albury train station, nerves were high. Our attempt to calm our minds with a morning swim in the Falls Rocky Valley Lake had failed, only improving our hygiene. Now, we debated questions like *what if they don't show up? What if they don't like us? How do you even talk to a young person?* Luckily, a few short hours later we were blessed with 15 equally nervous young people staring back at us.

That moment seems like a distant memory now as the awkwardness quickly turned to excited chatter and shenanigans that would last the following nine days. Our hikes were filled with blue skies, frosty mornings, Indi's wake up songs and an abundance of food. Arby the horse was a good boy, enjoying the increased attention and the ever energetic young people. Our farm days consisted of an ever increasing pot of porridge for breakfast followed by abseiling, sledding, garden work, kitchen cooking, chicken chasing, orchard harvesting, tree chopping and production of treasures out of the forge and joinery.

A word to describe the group would be persistent. Whether it be their persistent positive energy on the hikes and during farm days, their persistent nagging for seconds over the dinner table or their persistent whip cracking throughout all hours of the day... thanks Ollie.

Overall we had a blast and can't wait to see more fresh faces arriving sweaty and exhausted on our Mittagundi doorstep. Bring on 2021!

- Kai

## FARM UPDATES

### Garden

It is fair to say that all Mittagundi visitors, leaders and young people of 2021 thus far have been thoroughly enjoying the space and produce of our beloved garden. We owe a huge thank you to former leaders Josh and Rowdy (as well as gardo generations before) for leaving us in such good hands! Since being here we have harvested a plethora of fruits and vegetables including carrots, cabbages, zucchinis, broad beans, tomatoes, cauliflower, cucumber and potatoes. There is honestly something for everyone growing in those soils and boy oh boy is it exciting to be a part of it in our own way now. Seeds are being sewn, beds are being prepped, baby capsicums are soon to be, along with an abundance of salad greens. We hope you are just as keen!

*Life aplenty grows  
Where the water sprinkles  
Tickling leafy toes*

*Up the spinach climbs, twisting all about  
Zucchinis forming long green logs  
Capsicums, red and stout*

*Wandering in the garden, you'll find many things  
Like pumpkin so smooth  
And chillies, that zing*

*A plethora of herbs, to enlighten your meal  
Dancing flowers  
And potatoes in a wheel*

*Sun drop tomatoes  
Rhubarb and leek  
Baby bok choy, through soil peaks*

*A delicious veggie for every soul  
A wonderful treasure hunt  
In every bowl*

*"I love you garden!" one might say  
A place that doesn't fail  
To brighten your day*

- Indi & Laura (poem)

# ANIMALS

## Cows

COME ON! The magic words that can get any cow to move... or at least we like to think so. Most days we blast those words to Tess and Geordie to get them up into the dairy and off to bed. Tess is a beautiful Jersey who provides us with fresh milk and damn it is delicious! We got the tick of approval from the trusty Bloggs, who we would be lost without, when he came to check in on our girls recently. Aside from the mother and daughter duo, we've also got our 4 cheeky teenagers; Noor, Gilly, Mossy and Jacob. They've been up and down from the dam to river paddock recently, keeping us on our feet with their mischief as we chase them back and forward across the paddock. Naughty cows. The teenagers have also been helping Arby (the horse) mow the lawn by the river and assimilating him into their squad. Mon cow still hasn't returned from the bull and so we haven't got to know her yet but we're hoping she will be pregnant when she returns! Yay cows!  
P.S. No one has drunk straight from the teat, yet...

- Dane & Billie

## Horses

Hello world!

Saddle Club has started strong this year with Ollie, Indi, Arby (the horse) and our newest addition of Winnie, at its heart. We thank Stew, Meri and Hamish for their continued guidance, Gary Peterson for so generously donating Winnie to Mittagundi, last years' crew for building such a stellar round yard. A special mention to Josh for all his work he did with Arby. I'm sure you'll all be pleased to hear that Arby's good boy rating is set on a steady incline, as he slowly but surely conquers his fears such as crossing the almighty creeks that surround this place. Winnie and Arby have been introduced and a friendship is well and truly in the making. Arby's first program was overall a great success, having made it both up and down the high plains with only a few hiccoughs along the way.

Over and out,  
The Saddle Club

- Indi & Ollie

## Chickens

The new year brought few changes to the Mittagundi chook house. It has been a time of rest and easy living. "Too easy" as some Mittagundi directors might say. Indeed, with the eggs stores at an all time low (3 per day), it is time for our feathered friends to welcome some new faces to the fold. No one is more excited than our lovely chook enthusiast Izzi, who has long lost any ounce of attention to our current flock. Our young people have also been hard at work preparing for this change. The chook house is rapidly becoming a chook home with a full clean out and a new roost on the way. Great things are coming with the changing of seasons. And hopefully more scrumptious eggs!

- Kai (Mittagundi top chook)



## 2021 Program Bookings

We know many young people are keen to get to Mittagundi this year, most of our programs are now open for booking, book online now so you don't miss out on a place!

### 10-Day Programs

MIXED #482 Friday 23rd April - Sunday 2nd May 2021

BOYS #483 Friday 17th - Sunday 26th September 2021

MIXED #484 Friday 8th - Sunday 17th October 2021

MIXED #485 Friday 22nd - Sunday 31st October 2021

MIXED #486 Friday 5th - Sunday 14th November 2021

### Follow Up Programs

ENTERPRISE FOLLOW UP Thursday 20th - Monday 24th May 2021

WINTER FOLLOW UP Wednesday 30th June - Sunday 4th July 2021

GARDEN PARTY FOLLOW UP Wednesday 29th September - 3rd October 2021

WOOD CHOP FOLLOW UP Wednesday 15th - Sunday 19th December 2021



# THANKYOU

Without the generous contributions we receive from the Mittagundi community, we wouldn't be able to run the programs that so many young people deem 'life changing'. Mittagundi is a collaborative effort, a place created over many years, with the help of many people; whether they are young people contributing to the farm, volunteers giving their time and skills, or much-needed donations of money and goods. This only goes a small way to acknowledge you...

- Brian Beasley for cash donation
- Sarah Shredder for cash donation/horse things
- James & Michelle Ray for all things catering
- Jack Gilbert for auction items and demonstrating
- Hannah Waite & Trav for festival help
- Cassidy & Daph for festival help
- Andy Hoylee for demonstrating
- Max Tucker for demonstrating
- Shadycrest Band
- Ya for so many reasons
- Sam Walmsley & Alena for spit roasting
- The Skermers for festival gear
- Wollangarra for festival help
- Steve Carroll for demonstrating and donating goods
- Alpine Shire for sound system gear
- Grumpy & Ange for cool room lend
- Rod Patton for generator lend
- Coffee Basics for coffee donation
- Phil & Dawn for their seedling donations
- Gary Peterson for Winnie the horse donation



## 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

- Sewage rods
- Safety glasses
- Tree saplings
- Jack planes
- Draw knives
- Sand paper (120 + 180 grit)
- Building 2H pencils
- Garden gloves

*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 Business  
ENB 403653 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?

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 on 0467 678 818