

MITTAGUNDI

OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

Directors Report

by Hamish & Stacey

As we write this the fire on our doorstep was just declared 'contained'. Which will bring to an end our constant monitoring of the hill behind us, uncertainty around courses, the beep beep beeping of machinery in the bush, and the concerned phone calls from family and friends.

We were extremely lucky with the weather and the time of year, the fire never showed any strong signs of threatening any 'assets' (as those in the business call it). The whole saga got off to quite an amusing start with a few phone calls before breakfast one Friday morning. One phone call in particular from Shirley, up in Glen Valley, saying she could see smoke and it looked like it was 'right on top of Mittagundi'. For a moment we tried to convince her she must be mistaken before jumping in the car and going for a drive. It turned out she was nearly dead on – out by just over 1km! From then it was on and we have received huge support from DELWP, Parks, the CFA, our neighbours in the Valley, and many of your in the real world with access to information/updates that we weren't privy too. We can't thank any of you enough!

We were also fortunate enough to be able to continue running programs in spite of the fire. The young people on the 10 program that started a week after the fires had the unique experience of hiking through a blizzard only to arrive at Mittagundi and be updated on the fire situation at our back door. The next day we had half the National Park closed because of bushfires and the road to the other half closed because of snow! It's been crazy times.

Woodchop is currently running and then we are all off for a bit of a break over Christmas. When we return it will be all winding down for the current staff and getting ready to welcome in the new staff team. We will be so sad to see this year's staff leave. They have been great to us in our first year. They have trusted us, been patient with us, worked so so hard, laughed with us, been kind to us, been honest with us, been flexible, and we are glad to count them as our friends. Thank you Tim, Pip, Geordie, and Tom.

We are looking forward to getting to know and work with our new staff team.



We hope to see you all here for the Mittagundi Festival in January so you can meet them too!

Until then have a great Holiday season!



**2020 MITTAGUNDI
FESTIVAL**

17 & 18 January

**BUSH DANCE, OLD
SKILLS
DEMONSTRATIONS,
OPEN WEEKEND**

**TICKETS AVAILABLE
ONLINE!**

Winter Report

Clear blue skies, vibrant yellow wattle and the sight of Stacey's jumping-jack-ready adrenaline bum-bag are proof that spring has truly sprung. While we all welcome the warm weather and longer days, we can look back on winter and see it for the very fun (albeit hectic) time that it was. Cooking dinners for double the people, precariously carrying them in wheelbarrows across the deeply rutted, muddy 4WD track to Ian's hut, and heading out into the snow with young people made for many exciting times.

Lots of work got done during the time spent on the farm, thanks to the many hardworking young people who visited. A new fence was built around the dairy, which has already been useful for many things, including teaching Hamish the art of forgiveness, after he discovered Geordie had spent the whole afternoon putting in one of the gateposts, only to have placed it incorrectly. All's well that ends well though, and we now have a beautiful new fence to protect our dairy from becoming the muddy slush-pit it usually does in winter. Another mission we succeeded in over winter was the creation of a firebreak up near the weekender. Countless young people spent many hours whacking away at the brush, creating something that has already caught the attention of the fire crews (they were very impressed – thanks to all who were involved!!).

Being the very serious and well-prepared people that Mittagundi staff always are, when we pack our hiking packs for the snow, we only bring the essentials – everything we need but nothing more in order to save on weight. For Tom and I, this of course had to include our 80's style ski suits, which were the envy of all the young people, and meant we looked very snazzy (although not entirely water/snow-proof) as we skied around the high plains.



"I had such a fantastic time. Mittagundi has shown me to enjoy the little things in life as well as not to judge and instead to get to know people you thought you would never talk to"

"... the most amazing experience of my life and I would do it again in a heartbeat. I got so much out of this and hope that I'll get to come back some day in the future"

"Mittagundi is something I will remember forever. I have made so many amazing friends and had so many once in a lifetime experiences that have changed my views on a lot of things. I am very thankful for being able to be a part of such a special place"

Above: Comments from the Mittagundi Visitors Book



Hut sing-a-longs in the snow were of course a must, and there were some top notch dinner performances too, including a song parody to Shannon Noll's 'What about me(at)?', and an excellent rendition of 'Can you eat the dahl tonight', which felt like it had come straight out of the Lion King.

Our new horse, Packer, was also pretty busy over the winter. In preparation for his new job as the Mittagundi packhorse, he has been doing many practice walks around the property. On our second spring program he even got to walk the first day of the hike out with the young people, something he was very excited about.



To top off winter, Geordie decided it was finally time to live out his life-long dream of becoming an 'inner-north bogan', and so he chose the most qualified young person (who's only qualification was that her mum was a hairdresser) to chop his locks into a fine mullet. And that about sums it up - ahhh, winter... what a season, ay?

By Pippa



Rod, Bruce's latest progeny



Farm News

Cows

The Mittagundi cow society has been rocked at its foundations in recent times. Bruce's son, Lorenz, will not live to destroy another fence and will now be enclosed in an even frostier environment than the high plains of Victoria. The departure of Bucca, the gentle giant, was a sad, but nonetheless necessary after close to ten years of faithful service and delicious milk. Monica-cow, donated in

calf by Jakob Malmo (same as Bucca, all those years ago), has since given birth to a beautiful jersey calf we have named after Jakob for his incredible generosity. Monica is now the Mittagundi milker and is a joy to work with. Not to be outdone, Bruce has also given birth to a very cute Hereford we have named after one of our beloved neighbours and supporter, Rod Patton.

By Tim



Pigs



Our little piglets all grew up, and enjoyed their last few months running around their pen, wallowing in the mud, and getting plenty of pats. They now, however, have all been butchered up beautifully, and if you are able to make it to festival this year we're going to be eating one of them on a spit roast. Their parents, Pippadeli and Ham-ish, are also making our lasagne meals exceptionally tasty.



Garden Party

Our second follow up of the year came around right in time for the sun to poke it's bright, warm face out for the entirety of the five days on the farm. Amongst the excitement of having returning young people back at Mittagundi, the days in the garden proved mighty helpful in getting a lot of preparation in motion for what will hopefully be a fruitful and plentiful growing season (although it is unbelievably short). Preparing beds had sweat on the brows and propagating seeds had the fine motor skills hard at work, which meant, of course, that some lunchtime naps in the sun were required. The dormant nature of the garden here over winter was shaken off in style with enthusiastic dinner performances and musical entertainment at an all time high. The garden got a massive dose of care and attention and has been set sailing in a vegetable rich direction.

By Tom

**Editors note: despite waiting patiently until a week after Melbourne Cup (as is the rule around these parts) before planting outside. We were hit with 7 frosts in 10 days! Tom has been working tirelessly (and successfully) to salvage something from the frosty mess!*



Enterprise

In our 3rd follow-up program of the year, youth whom have attended previous courses decided to return in order to use an assortment of materials and tools to create things for Mittagundi to sell for fundraising. We count ourselves so lucky to have people among our community who willingly donate their time and share their knowledge; with Brian Beasley and Colin Marion in our joinery helping create beautiful wooden jewellery and stools, Jack Gilbert creating leather covers for an assortment of tools, Lance Tucker working tirelessly in the forge to create items of beauty and utility alike, and finally newcomer Tony shared his experience and enthusiasm as an art teacher to facilitate the embroidery and printing of clothing with designs created by our wonderful youth.

By Tim



Staff Reflections

Pippa

I'm going to miss...

Living in a log cabin in the bush. Bulk cooking sessions making meals for sixty plus people on a wood fired stove. Games of 500. Opening 20kg bags of oats. Lighting the stoves in the early morning when no one else is awake and the place is like something out of a storybook. The terrible jokes in the Omeo newsheet. Wheel barrowing dinners across muddy four-wheel drive tracks. Endless laughter and friendly teasing. Sing-a-longs by the piano at Ian's hut. Sleeping in tents in blizzards. Receiving letters in the mail. Glorious days spent rafting. Home job haircuts. Scoffing mint slices and marshmallows in the pantry when the young people aren't looking. Playing with Lu-dog. Soooooo much cake. Weeing wherever I want. Starry nights spent under tarps. Wrestling (hugging) the calves. Meeting so many new people every week. So many hugs. Great chats with the young people. Groovy woollen gear shed jumpers. Misty mornings. River swims! There have been so many highlights this year, I can barely even scrape the surface. Yet by far the biggest one has been the people I've worked with. Being the baby of the group meant I initially felt as though I might struggle to connect with the others (to quote; "I didn't realise 27 year olds could actually be fun!"), however it hasn't affected the friendships I've formed with my team at all, and they truly feel like family to me now. Although we spend virtually all of our waking hours together, I never find myself getting sick of their company, and instead miss them when we're not all together, even just for the couple of days when half the team is on hike. I'd also like to say a huge thank you to Hamo and Stace, for being so good all of the time. You guys have truly done a wonderful job of being such compassionate and hardworking people, as well as incredible friends, and I have so much respect for everything you do. My time at Mittagundi has gone by in an absolute whirlwind of emotions, with so many laughs and tears, but ultimately so so so much love.



Tom

For me this year has been many things and trying to piece together the year-long Mittagundi puzzle seems unlikely. That's not what seems important though, rather the people and the strange and wonderful moments are what I think will stick with me. I've found the happenings quite surreal out here and will be forever grateful for the opportunity to contribute to a place that provides what Mittagundi does. This huge thanks extends to the amazingly interesting Mittagundi community for all that you do and the hugest thanks stays here with the 2019 Mittagundi staff team.



Tim

It is hard to believe I am at the end of my time at Mittagundi, even considering all the challenges and difficult times I have faced throughout the year, it has been a wholly good and beneficial experience. The things I will miss far exceed the things I will not, I have learnt more, laughed more and worked harder than any other time, I can say with some confidence, that I am better now than I was a year ago, I believe that to be a reflection of the staff team, the community, and the way of life at Mittagundi. Thanks everyone for the laughs, the hugs, the head pats and the chats.

Love ya,

-Tim



Geordie

As most Mittagundi staff members will tell you, trying to sum up a year at Mitta is like trying to start and finish a job on the farm in one day – not impossible but very difficult. As a very regular young person at Wollangarra, I thought I had a pretty good idea about how a year at Mittagundi would pan out... I was rather surprised to find that the two places probably have more differences than things in common! As it turned out some of those differences ended up being challenges which ended up being some of my most rewarding and cherished moments here. I feel outrageously lucky to have been able to call this beautiful place home and even luckier to call my staff team my Mittagundi family. I would like to say a special thankyou to Lu-dawg for being one of the best dogs. It has been a wonderful year and I will hold the memories of it close to my heart. I'd like to thank Hamo and Stace for all that they did/do to continue to make Mittagundi such a special place, you've done an incredible job and I couldn't ask for better directors. I was told once that more people had been to the moon than had worked at Mittagundi, I don't know if that's true but if I had to choose between them I know I'd be back in our little mountain home.



Thank you... Without the generous contributions we receive from the Mittagundi community, we would be unable 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...

BIG THANK YOU'S!

- Coffee Basics – So many delicious beans
- Jack Semmlar – Seed donations
- Fallon Coad – staff care package
- Neri & Hylke – Alexandra farmstay legends
- Sal Kimber – Alexandra farmstay legend
- Nat Palmer – gumboot donation
- Brad Rowswell – road base haulage costs
- Camille Bernadino – coffee gifts
- Eirene Lucus Foundation – a fantastic financial donation
- Phil & Dawn – Seedlings seedlings seedlings
- Colin Marion, Jack Gilbert, Lance Tucker, Brian Beasley & Tony Rake for all their Enterprise help!
- Gregg Muller (Useful Seeds) – seed donations
- Patty Johnston – Awesome winter vollie
- Jack Skermer – living plumbing encyclopaedia
- Joy Potter – Woollen donations

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- David Burder
- Peter Hay
- Doug Millen
- Johan Top
- Ross Johnston
- Lynda Newman
- Brad Rowswell
- Darren Murray
- Peter Hogan
- Jenny Daly
- Simon Paton



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

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Axe Handles | Woollen socks |
| Brown dripper pipe 13mm | Bird netting (to stop bugs and birds) |
| Nalgene containers for food storage | Tin mugs |
| Ski boots (bar bindings) | Hike boots (Especially in big sizes 12+) |
| Gortex raincoats and overpants | One Planet Industrial Packs, Large |
| Helpers for the Festival | |

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.

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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 or contact us on 0467 678 818

Thanks so much for being interested!

We absolutely love how many people enjoy staying updated with our newsletter. However, we have come to realise that many of you may have changed addresses, or no longer feel the need to receive a printed copy of this newsletter. If you would like to continue to receive it in the mail, please remove the slip at the bottom of the page, fill out your information and send it to:

Mittagundi
4385 Omeo Hwy
Glen Valley, VIC, 3898

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Yes, I would like to continue to receive printed copies of Mittagundi's seasonal newsletter.

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