

MITTAGUNDI

OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

Directors Report

Well Hello Everyone,

We have been super busy over the mountains at Mittagundi. The power of people and our Mittagundi community has shone through during the last 6 months. We started the year missing a few staff and directors. However, through our amazing Mittagundi family we have come together. With ex-directors and staff, council members and volunteers giving time and energy, ensuring we have still been able to run programs and enable many wonderful young people to experience Mittagundi. To each of those people we are all truly grateful.

Standing beside these people on programs have been the four new staff for 2022. Marti, Kalum, Shae and Zara. This team have been the backbone that have kept Mittagundi's core moving and warm. They bring a wonderful energy and passion for the place and it has been a journey thus far like no other for this crew. Watching the interweaving of stories of people and place as ex-directors and staff work together with the new staff making the Mittagundi magic happen on programs.

Supporting, guiding and working alongside the staff have been what I call my middle men - Josh Docker (ex staff 2020) and then Tom Jenkins (ex staff 2019). They are such amazing people who brought the support, skills and knowledge that have helped guide the staff and have been invaluable.

I am incredibly grateful for their time and support. It has been an absolute pleasure to work alongside Josh and Tom and I feel very fortunate to of had this opportunity to work them. I have no doubt we will hear about them doing amazing things in the future.



Even off site away from Mittagundi we have amazing people like Belinda Black our bookings manager. She has been an incredible support and backbone to Mittagundi in the last 6 months, and a true inspiration. She has worked beyond her role and does what is needed without question or complaint. I will miss all our chats.

I would also like to send a heartfelt thank you to Sam Walmsley (ex-director) and his wife Alena. They have been helping with staff training, coordinating ex-staff, liaising with young people and overseeing programs. We have spent countless hours on the phone together and I am very grateful for their support.

As we approach Winter I will finish my time as Interim Director and Mike Heffernan – an ex Director and current Mittagundi Chairperson, will take the reins and be the Winter Director. Mittagundi is incredibly fortunate to have someone as dedicated as Mike. He has relentlessly given and continues to give a massive amount of time and energy and has been a continual support. If you would like to join him and the current staff there are positions available to join the team for winter, check out the following pages for details. We are continuing our search for our next Directors. We know our new Directors are out there and stepping into this role will be one of the greatest things they do.

I would like to thank all who have journeyed with me at Mittagundi during the last 6 months and stepped up to support such an important place for our young people.

There are times at Mittagundi where the morning air is cold and crisp on my cheeks and as I walk towards the dining room the smell of the smoke coming down from the chimney, makes me pause, breath and smile. It catches me every time, because I love that no matter who is in that kitchen you know you are welcome and that a cuppa and a chat await you.

It has been a pleasure to journey with the staff team and I'm so excited to watch their journey for the rest of the year and hear their stories as they share Mittagundi and those beautiful and yet humbling mountains with lots of young people.

Be where your feet are.

Faith Atcheson
Acting Director



Thank You Hamish

Early this year we bid farewell to Hamish Hueneke after three incredible years as Mittagundi Director. The arrival of COVID meant that never before in a director's tenure has there been such a period of challenge, uncertainty and stress. A Mittagundi Director has many hats to wear: managing, training, guiding and advising staff, managing the farm, managing the programs, and being part of the Glen Valley community are just some. In addition, some significant building upgrades were completed including the gear shed and the dining room floor.

Mittagundi was incredibly fortunate to have Hamish in the Director's role for the past three years and Mittagundi is a stronger and wiser place because of his unyielding efforts. On behalf of all the staff who have worked at Mittagundi over the last three years, all the young people that he has guided on their Mittagundi journey, the Mittagundi Council and the wider Mittagundi community, we say a massive thank you for all you have done Hamish and wish you happy times in life after Mittagundi.

From the Mittagundi Council Chair

Here I sit at Mittagundi writing this looking down across this amazing and very special place. I think we all know how incredible Mittagundi is and the powerful influence that it has on so many people. After the last few years of such uncertainty in all our lives, Mittagundi must now be so much more relevant to young people than it ever has been. Mittagundi has got full bookings for nearly the whole year, with waiting lists. Unfortunately, though, I sit here with a heavy heart and a weight on my shoulders as Mittagundi does not currently have a permanent Director(s) or a Program Manager.

What we do have, which puts a smile on my face every time I see them, is four incredible staff (read a bit more about them elsewhere in this newsletter). The four staff are extremely committed and dedicated to Mittagundi, they have done nearly all the required training and they are keen as to get going and provide experiences to other young people at Mittagundi. I hope you have seen their social media post/video, which was fantastic calling out for Director(s). I am extremely thankful to these staff and proud of them for the roles they have taken on.

Without a Director/s in place, the Council have worked incredibly hard to come up with a solution. As an organization, Mittagundi needed someone to be in a leadership role at Mittagundi to support our staff team. We decided to find a caretaker (with a few extra responsibilities), and wow did we get lucky here. Josh Docker who was ex staff two years ago stepped into the role. I have to say Josh has re-enthused my thinking regarding people and the ability to give for no other reason than giving. Josh is an amazing young fella, who lives and breathes everything that Mittagundi is about. Without Josh Mittagundi would be – well I don't really want to think about that right now, so from Mittagundi, I want to say thanks to Josh for helping us out so much. Josh you are amazing.

Following on from Josh, Tom Jenkins (staff in 2019) continued this role with his partner Sarah and their one year old for a few months. Tom has been such an amazing support to the staff team and Faith. We are incredibly grateful for his time, knowledge and support.

I would like to thank the Mittagundi Council for their efforts during this time, we are in unprecedented territory here at Mittagundi as we have never not had a Director. The council have had many robust discussions in our attempts to try and solve this issue. So, from me, thank-you to you all for your ongoing commitment to Mittagundi and for your support in trying to navigate our way through this time.

I want to also thank Sam and Alena Wamsley for their incredible efforts in trying to manage sourcing ex staff to help us run courses and for the training you have provided to the staff. As you might imagine this is a logistical challenge and both Sam and Alena have done an amazing job.

Also, I wish to acknowledge the incredible effort of Jack Skermer and Faith Atcheson. Both these two incredible people have gone well and truly above and beyond with their commitment and contribution to Mittagundi. Faith has taken on the Interim Director role – she is doing it remotely from home with several on-site visits to Mittagundi. Again, without Jack and Faith, Mittagundi would be in all sorts of trouble. Thank-you both for your ongoing support to Mittagundi.

With all this support, we have managed to pull together ex-staff and directors, which means we have been able to run a few courses before winter. This has been fantastic and a great introduction to the staff for working with young people before winter when we will be running a full winter at Mittagundi.

I have managed to take leave from my job and as such I will become the Winter Director for July and August. So, all we now need is two outdoor educators for the running of the ski trips. Please volunteer to help over winter if you can.

I hope that everyone Mittagundi is well, and I ask that you spread the word wide and far of our need to fill the permanent Director(s) position. Please feel free to contact me if you have any ideas or want to have a chat.

Mike Heffernan
Mittagundi Council Chairperson

Meet the 2022 Staff



Kalum

Kalum the chook daddy. A keen kayaker who loves the water and skiing. A man who is dearly passionate about the snow and Winter. Having spent much time in the area he is very excited to have more time in these mountains. Happiness to Kalum is when the garden is doing well, the chooks have been fed, and a beer has been consumed. Kalum has an impeccable taste in music, and diverse taste in books and tea.

You may find him cracking the whip and cracking some awfully good jokes. Mittagundi sourdough is alive and well this year thanks to Kalum. He is also hoping to breathe some life into the rafting shed this year.

Marti

Meet Marti: - A Mittagundi enthusiast to her core. From coming to Mittagundi as a young person, volunteer and now staff. She brings a passion you will no doubt see. Marti can be found baking up a storm in the kitchen, and next minute on her bike down the Omeo Highway.

Marti loves a yarn and will happily talk politics all day if you're interested. Her love for insanely early morning has made her a keen milker, despite being a lactard. Marti serenades the surroundings with her guitar and voice, come hear, and get excited for the Marti parti.





Zara

Introducing the beach bum from Byron...Zara. Mother to Ruby Dog, lover of whip cracking and enthusiastic apple cake maker, Zara is the good soy boy of Mittagundi. She brings many years of horsey knowledge and a soft spot for all things camel.

Well-travelled from the desert to the coast and a cultured beer drinker, there have been many places before Mittagundi Zara has called home. Zara is very excited to learn more about the Mitta Mitta river and kayaking. One of the two green thumbs this year, Zara is delighted to get down and dirty in the garden.

Shae

One unsuspecting Mittagundi afternoon a young woman from Mallacoota with long flowing blond locks and her kelpie Blue in tow walked into the dining room and the Glen Valley was changed forever. Shae is a Mittagundian from way back, as a young person and caretaker. Shae will always give you a good laugh and will never turn down an opportunity for a good game of 'what are the odds', so be careful.

She is a strong believer in some of the tall stories around Mittagundi, maybe because she's a good storyteller herself. Shae is a talented musician and is in her element around the fire at night with her guitar and Blue by her side. Shae is an enthusiastic stove lighter, cow milker, woodchopper and thistle wacker. Shae's favourite word is Omen and she's never met a beer she didn't like. She'll be here all year folks.



Staff Training

4WD

In late January we spent a few days getting the troopy stuck and unstuck in various places around the Glen valley with Whitey. It was a good chance to explore the dirt tracks around the area and learn some valuable 4WD skills for our year ahead. After bumping around in the back of the troopy all day it was wonderful to indulge in some fresh fish from Whitey each evening. None of us expected to be left dreaming of hand winching, bar and breaches and stall recoveries for the next month.

Wilderness First Aid

Toward the end of February, we made our way to Wollangarra for the first for most of us. There we undertook a 4-day wilderness first aid course. Our days were filled with good food, scenarios, fake blood, conversations and more good food. We learnt much from our awesome trainers Adam and Heidi as well as the other people on the course. A big thank you to Woll for having us and making us feel welcome.

Handover

Our handover period was a week of information overload and contained all things Mittagundi. Thank you to the 2021 staff for imparting their knowledge onto us, some of which we remember.

Defensive Driving

We travelled to Sale for defensive driving, it was great fun to see the Wollangarra crew and do skids. Valuable skills were learnt by all, kudos to instructor Kev from the city for the patience to teach eight country humans, in much loved troopys & hilux's.

River Training

In early March we were blessed with the presence of much loved Mittagundi legend Arby. We spent a couple of days on the river talking all things sledding and running through scenarios. There was also a fair bit of shenanigans and bumping tail bones along the top section of the Mitta. All in all, good times were had, and the crew are keen for more river adventures in the future.

Reccy Hike

In a two-part escapade complete with baby Davo in Alena's hiking pack, we wound our way through track 107. Joined by every type of weather we could have imagined and not imagined, the training for program hike was relatively seamless with only the occasional pause after a rather large hill. Joe Blake visited a few times, a lovely friendly reminder of why gaiter donning occurs. Sam & Alena's knowledge of the area and wonderful skills and stories were nothing short of mind-blowing. It was the ideal way to get excited for the Mittagundi march into the farm.

Programs

Marcellin College

We all were very excited to be running our first trip for the year after a couple of months training and preparation. 14 boys made the trek up from Melbourne to join us on the farm for 5 days. There was much farm work completed including wood chopping, sapling whacking, digging posts and cooking up many storms in the kitchen. Mittagundi felt very alive and it was good to have lots of hands around the place again. Sledding took place from the bottom of Mittagundi gate and the whole group got to experience the freshness as they spent the morning bumping, gliding, giggling and shivering down Middle Creek. Safe to say everyone was very grateful for a warm lunch and hot chocolate waiting for them at the end. Midway through we have two calves arrive which everyone fell in love with (pictured). The program ran very smoothly it felt like Mittagundi had begun the year humming along nicely.



Girls Program

Super fun, musical group – everyone loved singing and came together really well as a group. Great energy and even brought a uke on the hike out! It was beautiful to see how well they connected with the farm especially the animals.

Very Special Kids

This program is an opportunity to siblings in families with terminally ill children to have a space to come together and support each other. This Mittagundi journey was of people with similar backgrounds and hopefully finding some peace in the mountains. They walked up Mount Wills on a day trip which was thoroughly enjoyed. The group were very caring beautiful young people who really embraced the Mittagundi challenges.

Caretaking

Mittagundi would like to extend a special thank you to David Jones for caretaking over June. David has also been on a mixed program and helping out on the farm prior to winter which has been of great assistance.

Sam and Alena are also caretaking for parts of June, Mittagundi is very lucky to have them step in. They both have such wonderful knowledge of the place and have helped out on a number of 2022 programs as well.

Thanks so much to the caretakers that step in to keep the Mittagundi animals fed and the place maintained. It's very special to know the place is in safe hands while the staff have a break before winter programs begin.

Animals

Cows



Shae likes to kiss Monica cow,
best of friends are they for now

Marti is allergic to moo milk,
but makes butter anyways so screw it

Shae loves the cows' little personalities,
Marti favourite energy is Geordies

Rowdy cow is a pain to get into the pen at night,
but Marti is a runner so chasing it's alright

One with the cows' udder juice is Shae,
she carries the team with her milk drinking ways

Between heifers and steers we give the cows a
big cheers,

can't wait to see all the cheese makers thrive as
we move through this year.

Horses

The horses have been enjoying getting back into work and are going really well. We've been going for arvo walks and doing work in the round yard in preparation for our programs to begin.

Winnie has been taking everything in his stride, and I'm excited to see him out of the trails this year. Arby has been wonderful on program and is looking forward to being back out on hikes again soon.



Dogs

Meet Ruby and Blue dog!



Chickens

The Chicken job area has been a roller coaster of emotions so far. From the lows of a pandemic which saw two chickens drooling from their weird little beaks and ending up in the orchard. On top of this Ruby dog decided to dabble in chicken for the first time and our numbers were reduced to 11. The silver lining of this dilemma has been an increased egg production with over 80% of the chooks laying. There are also plans to bring some life back to the chook shed, so stay tuned for the upcoming renos.



In the Garden

The garden is flourishing with the recent sunshine and rainy spells. We've been busy harvesting tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, corn, capsicum and leafy greens. Thank you to Laura and Dane for all your planting last year and a huge thank you to Phil and Dawn for their generous seedling donation. We're so excited that all the beds are now full, and we are looking forward to all the garden goodness to come.





In the summer the Mittagundi Orchard has been producing lots of silvanberries and apples. We have been preserving left right and centre, as well as having a good fresh munch. As winter approached the berries were sorted out for hibernation and the netting has been removed. See you in the spring Orchard!



New Winter Staff



Welcome for Winter David Jones! From rafting back up, hay collection, sink building, coffee grinding, troopy driving and horse hiking David has already helped out immensely. We are very excited to have David join the team for winter.

Animal of the Month

Monica Cow



This happy and oh so friendly cow is a joy to milk. She is very patient with her troublesome but aesthetically pleasing calf, Rowdy. Mon is a big hit on all the programs, who doesn't love an early morning wake up by clanging milk pails and then the greeting of a big loud moo.

The City Hop is back in 2022!

It's been 3 years since we all gathered together for a HOP and celebrated all the awesome hard work the staff, directors, board members and supporters have contributed to both Mittagundi and Wollangarra. The HOP will be a great chance to build much needed morale, have some fun, fundraise and inspire our current and future staff.

**MITTAGUNDI
WOLLANGARRA
CITY HOP**

**SAT 23RD JULY
COBURG TOWN HALL**

6PM-11PM

**BUSHDANCE - RETRO DISCO
BAR - FOOD - GOOD VIBES**

**FAMILY FRIENDLY & DAGGY DANCE FRIENDLY EVENT!
ALL PROCEEDS GO TO MITTAGUNDI & WOLLANGARRA**

TIX - WWW.TRYBOOKING.COM/BZWLQ

Thank You

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...

Thank-you to...

- Sam, Alena, Vikki & Davo for taking us on reccy hike & teaching us many things.
- Faith Atcheson and Jack Skermer for helping out on the farm & sharing their love and knowledge of all things Mittagundi.
- Mason, Arthur and Banjo for keeping us on our toes, making us laugh and being great friends.
- Mike for helping out on farm, hanging out.
- Mossy for stepping up to be the new staff liaison officer.
- Hamish, Dane, Ollie and Laura for handover
- Caz Mudford for the spurtle (porridge stirrer)
- Hamish Skermer for toilet chat.
- Coffee Basics for continual support with monthly coffee donations
- Josh Docker for spending many beautiful weeks with us, your knowledge and laughter is invaluable.
- Arby for river training guidance, and a genuine good time on the Mitta Mitta.
- Wollangarra for hosting WFA and catering for all our crazy dietary requirements.
- Pete Christison, Sam Walmsley and Anneke Top for running abseiling and helping out on program.
- Paul for rafting guiding and sharing your expertise and lending us extra sledding gear.
- Kev McGennan for being such a support on program.
- The many thoughtful and kind sponsors of young people to attend programs. Your continued support is very special.
- David Jones for caretaking, and being the biggest help so many times.
- Russ from Cranes for organising the driveway.
- Alex McCarthur from Maffra – giving us Alex and Olivia (our two new poddies that will become our long-term milkers).
- Marg Skermer for making/sewing pack saddle liners.
- Tom, Sara & Donny for coming pre-winter to help us prep, provide direction and just a lot of love and especially Toms' knowledge and passion for Mittagundi.
- The many invaluable vollies and sessional staff – Dan O'Brien, Kai Schaefer, Katherine, Sophie, Gabby, Hannah, Scott & Emma.
- The Marcellin Staff Bridget and Sam and the VSK Staff
- The Alpine Walkers (Alby, Ned, Phoenix, Lillian, Toby and Sally) for being amazing and for collecting donations for Mittagundi.
- Ross Gibson for donation.

Come and work at Mittagundi!

We are looking for a Director/s for 2023, and more program leaders for the remainder of 2022.

Mittagundi Director/s

The Director's role is immensely challenging and rewarding. As the Director(s) you will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of Mittagundi and executing the strategic plan set down by the Mittagundi Council. Your primary focus will be to run successful and rewarding programs for young people.

To do this you will be required to draw on a large range of skills including outdoor education, knowledge of the bush, educating others about environmental sustainability, practical farming skills and fund raising to support our small successful non-profit organisation.



Program Leaders 2022

We are looking for applicants that have a passion for working with young people in an outdoor education and working farm environment. The position requires the leader to lead young people in outdoor adventure activities (cross country skiing, snow camping, hiking, white water rafting and abseiling), logistics activities in support of these activities, and farm-based projects (such as feeding animals and gardening).



See our website for more details on both roles www.mittagundi.org.au/jobs



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

Soup!

This Winter we are trialling a new and different Winter hut menu. One of the things we want to do is to give the young people warm, wholesome home made soup in the huts after the days skiing. If you are able, we would love donations of home made soup, frozen in 2 litre containers with all ingredients listed. Please contact the farm to arrange collection.

Other resources we need:

- Paint
- Car Seat Covers, Hilux & Troopy
- Hand Trowels
- Guitar Strings
- Cassette Tapes
- 50 big coffee mugs
- 50 big soup bowls
- 50 knife, fork & spoon sets
- Two decent double/queen bed sets and mattresses
- Several decent couches
- Honey
- Fitted single sheets in good condition
- Stockwhip
- Frozen Soup
- Oven Mits
- Directors
- Gas Lantern Heads
- Chest freezers

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?

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

