

MITTAGUNDI

OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

SPRING 2023



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DIRECTORS REPORT

Spring at Mittagundi... The time when you're not sure if you're going to be wearing 2 jumpers or melting in a T-shirt. You're not sure what animals are coming out of hibernation because it's been so long since you've seen them. However, you can be sure it will rain at some point in the day and flowers will bloom from places you didn't even think the flowers existed!

The high plains look stunning in spring! So many beautiful colours make it even more inviting. We're happy to be back in the high plains hiking in and out of Mittagundi as part of the 10-day programs. We're so happy to be cooling off in the water as we raft on the Mitta Mitta thanks to the warm days. We're also happy to be abseiling with longer, warmer days making it a pleasure to be in the shade outside getting the chance to give the young people multiple goes at abseiling.

The farm is looking and feeling great, we've had the pleasure of having young people return for three follow ups now and the garden is an obvious standout result of the follow ups so far alongside our beautiful outdoor tables and new outdoors BBQ (both built by young people, demonstrators, and leaders).

As a team, we're getting back into the swing of 10 days and have so much to look forward to Woodchop Follow Up, CHRISTMAS!!!, two 10-day programs in January before our festival that we're excited to be organizing. Our 2023 team leaders have been doing such an amazing job and they know that they're creeping into the time of the year where they get to proudly hand over all their hard work and show it off.

All our leaders constantly do so much, but some highlights for us have been the fact that Jack has absolutely owned the plumbing side of Mittagundi, and our horses are enjoying two new troughs as a result of this. Raph has been our pantry queen setting everyone up to be able to cook great meals! And she's putting together our 2023 photo album which is already making everyone in the team so happy as we go back in time. Tully absolutely nailed everything garden party related turning all of our garden beds into produce for the upcoming season! Lil took a great lead in organising the Enterprise Follow Up which was an amazing 5 days that you'll read more about soon! Matthew has been doing a great job at getting our woodshed prepped for our upcoming Woodchop Follow Up which will see all bays full of wood, ready for next winter. And these highlights are just from the farm. When it comes to programs, it is evident that the team has come such a long way, is doing so well, and are enjoying leading young people.

We'd also love to thank all of the wonderful volunteers who have come up to help us especially in the recent months as you've brought a breath of fresh air and extra hands to help on the farm and on programs.

We have so much to update you on! And can't wait for you to read all about it.



2023 Team! Winnie (horse), Tully, Raph, Jack, Lil, Matthew, Michael, Dani, Arby (horse) and Vinnie (dog)!

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS



Playing games on sunny afternoons with VOLLIES and Young People



Running a program at Wollangarra with the team and Volunteers



Rafting in dress ups on an afternoon off



Sunny team meetings



Staff rafting trip on the Snowy River with Arby



Hiking together, rain, hail, or shine!



Seeing the Mitta Mitta in flood at >3.0m



Spending time together on the farm

SPRING PROGRAMS

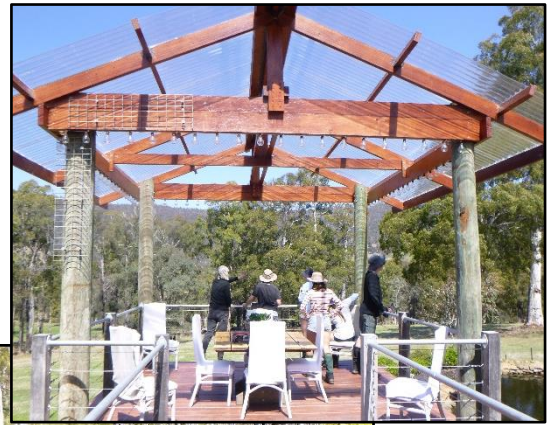
Mixed #502

In September, we did our first 10-Day program using the Spring hike track. The group hiked down Big River Log Road, involving many steep hills and a creek crossing or two. On the second day the group was met at Big River for an exciting river crossing using the raft. This group of Young People focused a lot on fun, and we are thankful to those who were passionate about Mittagundi. Every single person abseiled and rafted down the Mitta Mitta, our first rafting trip of the season! A few keen Young People were also invited to spend a morning working in the garden at Payne's Hut with Tess and Graeme. The maturity and enthusiasm they displayed was incredible.



Marcellin College

Marcellin Boys spent a jam-packed five days here on the farm. We worked in the garden and orchard, maintaining and weeding. We visited the silt traps, and fixed potholes. We also finished the Wills fence! We spent two days in the sun on the river, thanks to Paul for joining us for our river days. Thanks to the boys for a fun and high energy program. We'd also like to thank the Marcellin staff, Steve, and Hugh, for their help and willingness to embrace the Mittagundi culture.



Mixed #503

We are so thankful for the energy and spirit that the 20 Young People brought to this program. From day one they were engaging with Mittagundi and making friends. Our hike down Track 107 was full of laughter and conversations, we also saw the last snow of the season, and did the highest water level crossing of Wildhorse Creek for the year! We enjoyed two full days of sun on the abseil rock and had great fun rafting. On the farm, we made a lot of progress on the Wills fence project. The hike out was challenging due to constant rain and cold weather, though it was a group worthy of the challenge.



Templestowe College

@Wollangarra

In November, Matthew, Jack and Tully went across to Wollangarra for a week to help run a program with Templestowe College. They went on an overnight hike along the Contour Track and had campfire singalongs. They swam in the river at the flat and had an epic mud fight. They also chopped wood, cooked in the kitchen, and had a generally awesome time on the flat. The two groups, Kangaroos and Wombats, were made up of great Young People, and were led by Mittagundi staff, Wollangarra staff and brilliant volunteers. We also really enjoyed getting to know Wollangarra a bit better and taking the chance to have a change of scenery and lend a hand.



Templestowe College

@Mittagundi

27 Young People from Templestowe College joined us for a great week on the farm. We made great progress on the Dam/Knocker gate, with many people learning fencing skills. The garden was bustling all week with keen weeders and the orchard also received a bit of TLC. The woodshed was a hive of activity as we deconstructed beehives of wood and chopped plenty more. There were wood collection missions to retrieve rounds from around the property in preparation for our Woodchop program. The Young People faced a few challenges in adjusting to Mittagundi life, but they enjoyed great times on the farm, playing music and games around the dining room.

Girls #504

This 10 Day program was a delight and thoroughly enjoyable! We took both of our horses on the hikes, giving so many Young People a chance to lead them and get to know them. We told many riddles around the campfire and while walking across the High Plains and down Track 107. We had a lot of fun rafting, and every person had at least one go at the abseil. On the farm we collected wood, weeded the entire garden, and re-oiled our new outdoor tables (and ate dinner on them!). We sang songs and played guitar and games, including charades every evening. This was such a lovely group of Young People who all really wanted to be here and brought a huge amount of positivity.



Garden Party 2023

Garden Party was an incredibly successful and productive week spent working on both the garden and the orchard! The photos included here are proof of the Young People's hard work and their enthusiasm. We are so grateful to have had many familiar faces of Young People returning to help out, give back, and share their love for Mittagundi!

In just 3 days of work on the farm, the garden has completely transformed as a space. We managed to rejuvenate all of the beds, which was a long process of weeding, mulching, spreading out cow manure and laying out straw. We reconstructed one of the garden beds that was sinking into the ground, and also built a simple new flower bed by the gate.



By the end of the week, almost every bed had something planted in it. The long list of produce planted includes spring onion, pumpkin, cauliflower, broccoli, broad beans, spinach, beetroot, strawberries, tomatoes, garlic, mixed lettuces, and zucchinis! Not to mention the seedlings that have been put into trays and will be put into the ground in the coming months! We would like to thank Phil and Dawn for their generous donation of seedlings!

The orchard is looking better than ever! During the week, almost every tree was fed, composted and netted. New gooseberries were planted, and old berry plants were pulled out. The cherry tree was pruned, a plum tree was planted, and the Young People also helped to build a new wooden structure for new trees to grow on. The orchard compost received a lot of attention and care and is ripe for using on our trees! We also had a lesson on grafting fruit trees from Campbell, which was fascinating. We would also like to thank the many wonderful volunteers who joined us for the week!



ENTERPRISE 2023

Enterprise 2023 was an incredible congregation of skilled, passionate, Mittagundi-loving people. We had a total of 42 people join us for the week! This comprised of Young People, Program Leaders, Directors, ex-staff, 7 volunteers, 4 demonstrators and 3 parents of staff, making this one of the biggest Enterprises to date.

We had 22 Young People, most of whom had already been on a program this year, familiar faces returning to Mittagundi with great enthusiasm, and we had four talented demonstrators leading projects all week.



Brian Beasley, who has been involved with Mittagundi for seventeen years, brought his passion for bush woodcraft. He facilitated many meaningful conversations among Young People as they sat in 'knitting circles' on the wood shaving horses. Using traditional bush skills, they created stools of cherry wood, mountain ash, messmate and radiata pine, including a milking stool, some one-legged stools, chairs, and a beautifully finished indoor coffee table. We would like to thank Brian for his continued contributions to Mittagundi and for his singing and tunes on the ukelele and harmonica.



Byron the Spoon Maker, a good friend of Brian's, returned to Mittagundi for his fourth time to deliver immaculate and detailed spoon carving sessions to Young People. His depth of knowledge and attention to detail is endless and invaluable, whether it be a breakfast conversation about bee keeping and honey, or a demonstration of the use of a wood carving tool. Byron transforms our joinery into an education and productive space. We would like to thank Byron for creating an atmosphere for Young People and volunteers to develop their skills and enjoy their surroundings and company as they whittle away.

Fiadh, an ex-staff member, has returned for their fifth Enterprise, now as a Demonstrator. Fiadh is many things, a wool-spinner, a screen printer, a creator, a bringer of laughs and so much more. Fiadh has a love for Mittagundi and a natural ability to positively impact people's lives. Fiadh has spent their whole week creating a space for Young People and volunteers to yarn and 'unwind' as they design screen prints, learn to spin wool, and chat about life. As one Young Person said, "there's a lot more to wool than you might think". We would like to thank Fiadh for gracing us with their presence and bringing energy, laughs, music, and good conversation.



Mat Boyle is the father of a current staff member and has been involved with Mittagundi for roughly 20 years. This week, Mat engaged Young People in two major projects, building outdoor dining tables, and building an outdoor barbeque. The tables are made of welded steel frames (pre-made by Mat), topped with Messmate planks, all assembled, carved, sanded, and buffed by Young People. By day 3 we were sitting, all 40 of us, around our new tables for dinner by the dam. Many Young People became apprentice brick layers this week through their work with Mat on the barbeque and went on to teach other Young People their new skills. We'd like to thank Mat for his encouragement of Young People, his cool dance moves, and for working tirelessly through the days to get these projects finished.



Enterprise 2023 was an incredibly enjoyable and productive program. It was fantastic to see so many aspects of the farm alive and being put to good use. The forge, the joinery, the workshop, the kitchen, and much more. Not to mention, we now have an outdoor dining table for 30 people to eat meals around, and a brand-new brick outdoor barbeque!



MITTA FESTIVAL 2024!

26-28TH JANUARY 2024

FRIDAY 26th

- Bush dance at the Glen Valley Town Hall
- Live Bush Band
- Barbeque
- Bar
- Troopie Shuttles Between the Farm and the Hall
- Camping in Wills Paddock

SATURDAY 27th

- Open Day
- Pioneer Skill Demonstrations
- Mittagundi Café
- Live Music and Open Mic
- Mittagundi Olympics
- Mittagundi Op Shop
- Barbeque Lunch
- Auction
- Camping in Wills Paddock
- Roast Dinner and Bar
- Speeches - 2023 Staff Farewell, 2024 Staff Welcome

SUNDAY 28th

- Pack Down

Please stay tuned to our website and social media platforms for more information and ticket sales!

If you would like to demonstrate a pioneer skill, volunteer your help, or play live music, please email info@mittagundi.org.au!

ON THE FARM

CHOOKS

We have welcomed two baby chicks! Their names are Bodge and Coleslaw, and they are growing up fast! Raph built a sturdy new small chicken house with tin roof and chick wire which is perfect for broody chickens and hatching chicks! We also fixed their water trough, and the chickens are overall happy and healthy.

HORSES

Our two horses, Arby and Winnie are being worked in the round yard every second day. Arby was sore in his front left leg, so we worked him accordingly and he has now recovered. Winnie's condition has improved greatly over Winter due to being exercised regularly and kept on a diet. We are so happy to say that he has just successfully completed a hike in and part of a hike out! Well done Winnie!

FENCES

We finished the section of Wills Fence that we've been working on! Many Young People and Volunteers have put significant effort into digging post holes, attaching wire and putting in new star pickets to complete this project. Our focus has now shifted to the reconstruction of the Dam/Knocker fence and gate! The strainer assemblies are in, next step is to hang the gate and strain the wires!

COWS

Our eight cows are all happy and well! And we finished building our hayfeeder!

Two cows, Jakob and Stuey, are visiting a bull near Omeo, hopefully to have calves next year. Five of them, Jeanie, Dane, Alex, Liv and Sarah, are happily spending their days in the Knocker Paddock. Our gorgeous milking cow, Dory, has gone back home to the farm we loaned her from just in time to have her calf! We will be loaning a new Friesian milking cow in the New Year.



PLUMBING

There have been many successes in the plumbing world in the past few months! The new trough for the Depot paddock is finished and operational, allowing us to have Arby (horse) living in there. The garden drippers are all functioning which is a huge help in keeping the garden beds moist on hot days.

PIGS

Our current piggies are little black Raphie and spotted Patty. They are now five months old, having been birthed in May here at Mittagundi by our old pig, Bae. Bae is now in the freezer, and we are using the meat for our meals with Young People. Raphie and Patty will continue to happily live their lives here on the farm for the next few months, and then we will be taking them to the abattoir and putting them on the spit for Festival.



GARDEN

Please read a full update on the garden in our report of Garden Party!

Tully and Jack and the team have been putting in hours of love and care every week to ensure the garden stays watered and weeded, especially as the days grow hotter.

We are very glad to now have a much tidier garden, free from hard rubbish and materials, and growing veggies to eat on program!

Joke of the Season!

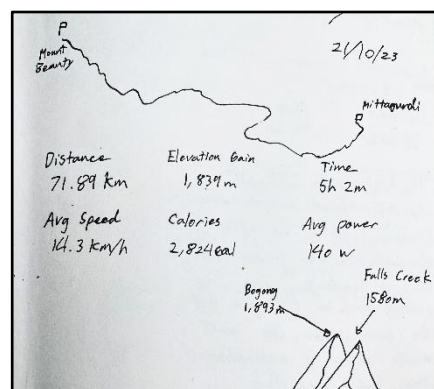
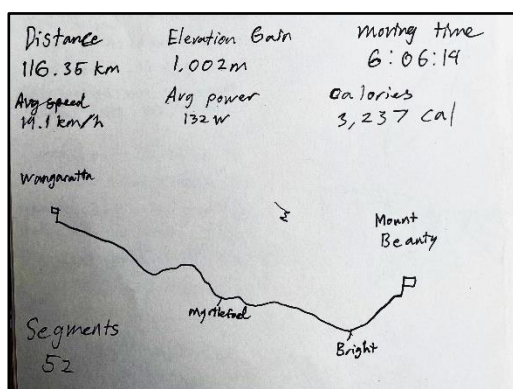
One day, a chicken walks into a library. She goes to the counter and says, "bok bok", so the librarian gives her two books. The next day the chicken comes back, "bok bok" she says, and the librarian gives her another two books. This goes on for a whole week, so naturally the librarian becomes curious. One day, the librarian follows the chicken out of the library and down to a pond, where the chicken is throwing the books into the water one at a time saying, "bok..bok...bok". From the pond comes the sound of a frog, who is throwing the books back saying, "reddit...reddit...reddit".



A LONG RIDE

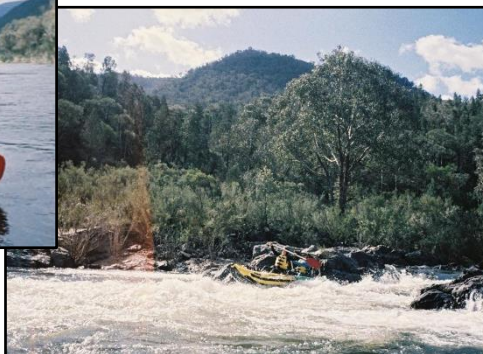
In October, Alec Armstrong, a Mittagundi Young Person and outdoor enthusiast, rode his bike from Wangaratta to Mittagundi. This is no small task and involved much planning and determination on his part. We have had the pleasure of meeting Alec this year, having him on multiple programs, and hearing about all his adventures. Here are some pages from his biking journal to report on his big ride!

"Who wouldn't be stoked to have a day off school to ride to Mittagundi. I enjoyed the ride and getting to see the scenery of Mount Buffalo and getting to imagine hanging out with the Mittagundi leaders the next day... I was a bit nervous how I was going to cope with the uphill, but I found a rhythm and chipped along."



STAFF RAFTING TRIP!

In October, the whole staff team had the pleasure of doing a 3-day raft trip down the Snowy River with Arby. We had a fantastic time, setting up camp each night on the sandy banks of the river, cooking delicious meals and sleeping under a big tarp. The scenery was stunning and appreciated by everyone as most of us had never spent time in that beautiful part of the world. We practised our rafting skills, and enjoyed many campfire treats made by Arby such as damper, caramel dumplings and scones! We are so grateful to have been able to spend this quality time together as a team, and a very big thanks to Arby for organising this trip for us and being such wonderful company to spend a memorable week with.



COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT

As always, the Mittagundi council have been busy behind the scenes. The new makeup of the council is fantastic. We are still looking for more council members, if anyone is interested in getting involved please reach out. The council are very thankful and pleased with the amazing job Dani, Michael and the staff are doing. Spring courses have been running and many young people are experiencing the beauty of a Mittagundi experience thanks to their hard work. Thanks team, you're all amazing.

Recently the council made the difficult but necessary decision to increase the course cost for a young person to attend Mittagundi. These new prices come into effect next year. In making this decision, the council are very aware of one of the key purposes of Mittagundi which is no young person will miss out on coming due to financial hardship. With this in mind, there is the possibility that we will need more sponsorships.

We have introduced four levels of sponsorship in an effort to ensure Mittagundi is accessible to every young person who wants to come and also to encourage more people to sponsor. The council also realise that it is very difficult for people to donate money, but if you feel able it would be fantastic to receive many sponsorship places for young people to attend. If you can, please head to the Mittagundi website to make a sponsorship donation or call the Mittagundi office on 03 5159 7223 to discuss your donation.

Sponsorship is a fantastic and meaningful way to give to Mittagundi and to a young person who may otherwise miss out. I don't know how many sponsorships Mittagundi has given out over the years, it is a lot, but I do know how valuable and how appreciated they are by the young people that get them and their families.

I hope you have a great Christmas and Summer (its dumping down rain as I write this – not very summer like) and that many of you can make it to the festival at the end of January.



2025 DIRECTORSHIP

Mittagundi is looking for expressions of interest for the next directorship which will start in 2025.

Michael and Dani (our current Directors) are happily committing to their two years here at Mittagundi and one of their visions is setting the groundwork for the next Directors. This leads us to putting out this expression of interest so we can work on securing the next directorship to hand over to in 2025.

Please contact Mike Heff via chair@mittagundi.org.au with your expression of interest.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Listed below are the remaining programs for 2023 and January 2024, please refer to the website for more information. **Spaces may become available on programs currently listed as 'Sold Out', please keep checking the website to stay informed.**

- Mixed 10-Day Program – 3rd-12th January 2024
- Mixed 10-Day Program – 16-25th January 2024

HOW TO BOOK

- 1) Check the website to stay informed when spaces become available, and when further 2024 program dates are released.
- 2) Book and pay online.
- 3) Or email info@mittagundi.org.au if no spaces available.
- 4) You will receive a phone call 1-2 weeks prior to your program to answer any questions.

To contact us regarding an upcoming program, please call the Mittagundi Office on 03 5159 7223 and leave a voicemail with your name and number. This landline is monitored part-time and often not in business hours. Please leave a voicemail so we can get back to you ASAP. Or better yet email info@mittagundi.org.au.

THANK YOUs!

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...

- Garden Party volunteers – Adam, Kalum, Fiadh, Rick, Caitlin
- Phil and Dawn for donating many seedlings
- Arby for 3 days of raft training on the Mitta. Also, for a beautiful and enjoyable staff rafting trip on the Snowy River
- David Gibbs for the donation of Global knife sets and copy of Something Small.
- Amos and Frankie, for volunteering on 10-Day #503
- Zane for volunteering for Marcellin College program.
- Paul for rafting with us on the Marcellin College program.
- Will, for spending a month of his time here volunteering on multiple programs.
- Paul from Youth Albury Wodonga for the visit.
- Gordy for his help around the property and loaning tools.
- Annie for organising and washing a linen donation.
- Alex for volunteering on the Templestowe program.

- Nung for volunteering on the Templestowe and Girls 10-Day programs, and for helping to take care of our garden.
- Enterprise demonstrators – Brian Beasley, Byron Roberts, Matt Boyle and Fiadh Dale.
- Enterprise volunteers – Sophie G, Sophie B, Sally, Lillian, Casper, Laura, Ivy, Alby
- The parents of staff who have visited and volunteered – Campbell, Anna, Bronwyn, Tanya and Mat.
- Rod Patton for the donation of bricks.
- Phil, Liz and Gary for a full weekend of felling trees.
- Donation of skis.
- Rick Lindsay for volunteering and helping us clear Track 107.
- Bill, Pauline and Rose for volunteering and company on the farm.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Follow us on social media, we're on Facebook and Instagram, @mittagundi.

Volunteer at Mittagundi in 2023 and 2024!

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. 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.

10-Day Programs and Follow Ups

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 for 2024

Our Winter courses are 5 and 9 days long and involve 3–4-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.

To enquire, apply or learn more, please visit our website: www.mittagundi.org.au or contact us on 03 5159 7223. As this is a landline, please leave a voicemail with your name and number so we know you've called and so we can get back to you ASAP.

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 7223. As this is a landline, please leave a voicemail with your name and number so we know you've called and so we can get back to you ASAP.

Sponsorships

Sponsoring a Young Person is a great way to contribute to Mittagundi and to positively impact the lives of Young People who may not otherwise be able to attend a Mittagundi program. If you would like to make a financial contribution towards a part or full sponsorship, please visit the Mittagundi website at www.mittagundi.org.au.

- RESOURCES WE'D LOVE -

- Gaiters x20 pairs!
- Sunglasses
- Coloured paint
- Scrap steel for the forge
- Stock whip
- Sports equipment eg balls, frisbees, wickets
- Gortex pants
- Hiking boots (large sizes)
- Cross Country skis and boots (bar bindings)
- Wetsuits (full length)
- Large dry bags
- Thermals (especially large+ sizes)
- Large gazebo
- Snow sleeping bags
- Water bladders 5-10L
- Wheelie bins
- Barrels (for rafts)

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 or contact us via emailing info@mittagundi.org.au