

MITTAGUNDI

OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Spring is in the air! We are just starting to see some blossoms on the fruit trees on the farm and the jonquils are flowering around the Director's Hut! We know the seasons are a changin'.

Since our last newsletter we had a really good run for a while. We finished off our Summer and Autumn courses with a double Firbank Grammar program. Followed by a fantastic Enterprise program which had the usual legends coming up to help young people carve, whack, chisel, print, sew, patch and just generally have a great time on the farm!

Unfortunately our busy winter period has been anything but, we had to cancel all of St Philip's College programs (who have been coming to Mittagundi for over 20 years), our winter follow-up, Marcellin College and Very Special Kids. It has left a lot of food in the pantry that's for sure. But all things are meant to be, we finished the winter with a super program. Cathedral College Wangaratta managed to get up in between lockdowns for a double winter program. We had fantastic weather, slopes were shredded on the high plains and the farm got some much needed young people energy! For both us here on the farm and the young people who came up it was a really refreshing experience, and the young folk were so grateful to be given the opportunity given all that is happening in their world right now.

Those of you who have been following along at home will have heard of our Gear Shed renovation rescue and we can proudly say that it's now complete, we got it done just before 40 Firbank Grammar girls came in May, you can find more pictures inside!

Looking forward right now is pretty tricky, as we all know gaining certainty is a daily challenge. Mittagundi is in a pretty good place to weather the current lockdowns, the staff are doing great things on the farm, and we have many purposeful things to occupy ourselves with. We are hoping to get back to our Spring and Summer ten day programs and finish off the year with more great experiences for young people.

Catch you all soon I hope, Hamish & Ludog.



Farewell, Indi & Kai

Indi and Kai have been wonderful members of our Mitta family since the start of the year. We are blessed to have been able to share great big belly laughs, adventures, cries, broccoli, river dips, long walks, out-of-tune songs, farts, boogies, and many hugs with both of them. The gifts they have given us with their input and presence are uncountable and they have been missed dearly since parting ways with Mittagundi.



Thank you both for all of your hard work, and for sharing the first half of the year with us, Indi and Kai! It's easy to see the impacts that you have had on the lives of young people, sharing beautiful messages and offering support and encouragement to everyone. We have had so much fun with each of you and can't wait to see you again soon.



Wishing you all the best in your futures, you'll rock it!

- Laura

Summer programs

Although it feels like a lifetime ago, it is important to reflect on the great times that were had before winter! Our first program was 479 in late Feb. It's crazy to think how far we have come since then.



We have certainly learnt a lot, from running the Mittagundi kitchen to navigating the chaos that is gear issue and de-issue. To finish our summer programs, we had a highly successful Enterprise follow-up, with many wonderful creations made, including stupendous spoons in the joinery, wonderful wares in the forge, and terrific t-shirts in the craft space. All of the things that we have made will be available to purchase at our next event or program.

Yee haw!

- Oliver

Winter reccy

When Winter hit and our Winter Follow-Up program was cancelled by lockdown, the team decided to hit the slopes regardless. We were joined by Ya, who helped us find our ski legs, as well as some legendary vollies and friends - Jen and Nick. On day 1 we packed the vehicles and began the bumpy journey up toward Fitzgerald's Hut, before throwing on our loaded packs and hiking our way up to the snow. Lo and behold, the snow line began just before we reached our destination. Luckily there was enough coverage to be able to learn and play, and post-setting up and a scrumptious lunch of handwiches, we did just that. Sliding through the snow on our stick kicks, we practiced, wandered, and became very close friends with our frosty mate. Many laughs were had as the wobbles, wibbles and splooks ensued. The next day the crew had their sights on Mt Nelse, so we skied through the wind to make it to the well loved hill.



It was so great to be out in the mountains, experiencing a place we all know and love as it transitioned into a new season, sharing stories, meals, silence and smiles with friends. On day 3 we returned home to Mitta, ready with new skills to be able to share with young people! Big thanks to Ya, Jen and Nick who stuck around and shared fun times with us. It was wonderful having you, and we can't wait to see you again soon!

- Laura



Winter programs



The end of August brings with it the end of Winter programs for 2021, of which all but 2 were canceled. Those 2 programs, given that we weren't fatigued from the jam-packed Winter we had expected, turned out to be very welcome and much longed for bursts of energy, motivation and Mittagundi goodness. Although we had Mac's Hut fully stocked for a Winter of double programs, we ended up only visiting for lunches on staff reccies (where we ate brie dipped in berry coulis...yum!) and used Fitzzy's Hut for the programs that we ran with the young whipper snappers on the Open 7-day program and Cathedral College program.

The young people on our 2 and only Winter programs were nothing short of productive, powerful and clever folk, so productive actually that we've almost run out of jobs to do on the farm! Both groups headed up to Fitzzy's Hut with blue skies and fantastic snow. The level of appreciation for this opportunity amongst the lockdowns was not lost on the group either, with so much gratitude for the opportunity that Mittagundi provides!

- Billie

FARM UPDATES

Our volunteers

The volunteers who devote their time to work with us, give us such a boost, and always bring a refreshing and rewarding dynamic. Thank you Jessie, for your willingness to be a part of this place and sharing in progressive discussions. Thank you Daphne, for so comfortably fitting in with us, and bringing your whip cracking expertise. Thank you Tom, Sean and Peter for coming up to help build our Gear Shed. Thank you Dave, for your charismatic and bright singing and shovelling. Thank you Hannah, Nick and Rowdy for your experienced heads and warm hearts, you've taught us so much! Thank you Megan for your calm and controlled demeanour. Thank you Marti and Lily, for the delicious baked goods and horrendous puns. Thank you to you all for not only helping during the program but also for continuously supporting the farm during the lockdown. Without volunteers, Mittagundi would be quite a different place - the community is what creates the magic of Mittagundi and allows it to continue to grow.

- Dane

Gear shed wrap up

Well after a reasonably slow start in 2020 our little (maybe not so little anymore) gear shed was finished off with bang in May. It all started in early 2020 when we bit the bullet and started to pull the old building apart to have a good look at what needed doing. Did we just pull it all down and start again or was the old building worth keeping!? We decided to just shore up the old building, which was quite a task to be honest. It started with lifting the building up and dealing with some rotten posts and then replacing all the stumps with concrete stumps - so much fun crawling around in the dirt under the floor!

Once we sorted that and added some bracing to the walls we started digging holes and getting trees ready to build the additional verandah and covered packing space. All the bush poles came off the Mittagundi property and Gordy provided some milled logs from his place for the main floor structure, including big bearers and joists. Gordy also helped us mill the batons for the roof structure. There are some beautiful Peppermint logs in the roof structure that were pretty challenging to get up but thanks to Jack Skermer's ingenuity we had them up in no time!

The main purpose of this project was to give the building a new life, increase the space for gear and create a covered packing space for groups in winter. So we also re-modelled the inside, with all our gear laid out ready to be handed out during packing. My favourite addition is the wall of ski boots!

There are many thankyou's for a project like this and I think it's pretty special to be able to mention them all, so here goes. Staff team of 2020, Zac, Sarah, Stacey, Josh, Jaxon and Rowdy who did heaps of the early hard work, digging footings, and crawling under the old building! 2021 staff team, Indi, Billie, Kai, Laura, Dane and Ollie who put up big bush poles, laid the flooring, put the roof on (basically all the glory work!). Thanks to contractors Matt Gallagher (lighting system) and Jack Skermer (building expert) the place wouldn't be so great without your work. Thanks to Ian Stapleton for picking up the roofing which was donated to Mittagundi from Rob Bauer over in the Ovens Valley. Thanks to Gordy for all the timber and expert tractor skills, our neighbours for building the stairs, Wally Hueneke (my dad), my brother in laws Seppay and Alex for helping put floor joists in over Christmas, Kai's parents Belinda and Will, and Tom, Sean and Peter from Beechworth way who helped to lay flooring. Mittagundi couldn't have produced such a fantastic building without such attention to detail and energy, so thankyou all!

- Hamish



ANIMALS

Horses

Winnie and Arby are enjoying a well earned break. Arby has triumphed through programs and is now a consistent member on hikes, and has grown as a pack horse tremendously since the last edition of the newsletter, getting even closer to being a 10/10 good boy. Winnie is also doing fantastically, settling in to Mittagundi life and becoming comfortable in his surroundings enough to warrant some REM sleep. Work with the horses has slowed recently as the weather has made the round yard difficult to work in. In other horse news, the horses have enjoyed some free-range time, hanging out around the cabins and putting their faces in our windows. Let the horse times roll on.

- Oliver



Cows

The resilient crew of Tessie, Geordie, Mossy and Jakob are in the thick of Winter, being fed the finest lucerne in the valley. Gilly is pregnant and due in December, and Monica has just calved young Rowdy, who is rather shy but quickly warming up to his human companions and enjoying the company of the herd. I should mention that it wasn't planned for Gilly to embark on the journey of motherhood, however it is apparent that her urges were far too strong. Being the independently-minded bovine she is, made her own way to Batty's bull. We are still uncertain as to how she managed to get herself over the river and a few kilometres down the road. I guess it just goes to show that you can achieve anything if you put your mind to it. Our freezers are now full of Noor, who was taken to the butchers after quite a long and sorrowful departure from Mittagundi. The appeal of bringing a mobile butcher to Mittagundi is a comforting thought for all included in the process of meat harvesting.

- Dane



From left to right, Jacob (daughter of Moni-cow), Moni-cow and Rowdy (latest son of Moni-cow).

Pigs

It brings me so much excitement to have welcomed our 3 new pig friends to the Mitta farm! The three little piglets (who aren't so little now) arrived at their home in late June, and have been hanging out together with a view of Mt Wills ever since. Every morning and afternoon I get to experience the joy of hearing their grunts as I say "HEY PIGS!" and give them a tasty selection of veggie scraps and pellets. They're most definitely getting noticeably bigger every day, and warming up to their two-legged caregivers. So far they seem to enjoy eating, being sung to, playing tug of war with cardboard, sniffing the dirt, sprinting in random directions and making a spoon train.



I'm happy to be a part of the life of these pigs, and look forward to sharing more sunny afternoons lying on a picnic rug in their company.

- Laura

Ludog

Ludog has been no less mysterious than her usual self; disappearing and reappearing without a sound, sensing when and where she is needed most, and always knowing when someone is coming or going from the property long before it is obvious. A favourite reoccurring moment that I've shared with Lu is her coming to my door in the mornings to get me out of bed, as if this place runs on her agenda. I've always been suspicious of how much of a 'dog' compared to 'mythical being' Lu is. Sometimes when I look into her eyes it is as though she is noticing and observing more than you'd expect of a dog, seeing more than we see... but then she'll do an itchy bum shuffle or chase off after a roo (which she can only dream of catching) and the moment where I've glimpsed another dimension of Lu Dog is gone. I've been taking her on my runs recently too, and being with her 1:1 for extended periods, I've noticed that her presence is more than just her little doggo body. It is almost as if when we are out together, I am enveloped under her guard, in an energetic field of protection and mysticism. I'd usually consider myself quite agnostic, however I have no doubt in Lu's metaphysical properties and deity-like characteristics - I'll update in the next issue if I find any evidence.



- Billie

Chickens

With Winter transitioning into Spring, the Chicken Palace is turning into a hive of activity with eggs coming back into our lives in great numbers. I would like to thank Kai for his hard work throughout the yearend allowing such an easy transition of the chicken job area. Without Kai's work throughout the year, the Chicken Palace would not be as productive as it is. With the change of Chicken guard came a butchering of the non-laying chooks (and accidentally one layer 😞) so our flock now numbers 16 happy and laying chickens. My observations of these chooks is that the only thing they prefer to food is pecking shoes and pants, and migrating to the kitchen. Perhaps we will be able to train them into chefs soon.

- Oliver

THANKYOU'S

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...

Rowdy - boot donations
Ross Gibson - donation
Brian Beasley - Enterprise
Jack Gilbert - Enterprise
Max Tucker - Enterprise
Belinda Schafer - Enterprise
Byron Roberts - Enterprise
Wendy Boddison - donations
*Wes Heckenberg - tractor wizard & pumpkin/
citrus gifts*

Ian Stapleton - having us stay
Grampians Estate - care packages
Timbertop GGS - gear donations
One Planet - great support & donations
Tom, Peter & Sean - Gear shed help
Johnstone Family Trust - donation
Weatherill Foundation - building cost donations
Rob Bauer - Gear shed roofing iron donation



If you would like to help Mittagundi, here is how you can...

Check out our list of essential resource needs below. Or 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

- gardening gloves
- splitter handles
- candles
- screen printing inks

Shop and support Mittagundi

Our new Fundraising Partner Ritchies IGA, have launched their new Ritchies Card, incorporating the Community Benefit Program .

For our Mittagundi community who shop at Ritchies, you can now select Mittagundi as your chosen charity for the Community Benefits program when you shop. Every month, our organisation will receive 0.5%* of our members' spend in Ritchies Stores – these donations will go a long way to supporting Mittagundi.

The program now has an App for both IOS and Android smart devices - search for Ritchies in the Apple App Store or Google Play. For members who don't have a smart phone, or would like a physical card, this option is also available and can be linked to the App.

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

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

250 BRINDLEY A/C 630000

Please debit by: Visa/Mastercard Name on Card: _____

Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____ CVV Number: _____

Signature: _____

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