

About 6 Montagu Street

What a prospective WWOOFer should know

We get a lot of requests to WWOOF with us. Over summer it might be one call a day. In the winter however there are almost none. In the peak season that involves us in a lot of very repetitive conversations with prospective WWOOFers, among other things explaining to them what to expect.

At 6 Montagu Street we are 3 kilometers from the central business district of Hobart. That's a comfortable walk for most, but we have bicycles you can use, and there are two bus lines very nearby and a taxi if and when needed isn't going to break the bank.

It is NOT a farm. It is a reasonable suburban quarter acre (roughly 1000 m²) block on a mild slope occupied by a 1930s weatherboard house, most likely a farmhouse in its day and today surrounded by houses possibly from the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

The house is occupied by:

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| Bernd | An engineer by background working today for a company of about 30 people producing software and hardware predominantly into the fisheries sector (research and commercial) |
| Maka | An economist by background now focused on creative writing and motherhood. |
| Gypsy Anna | Born on June 1 st 2003, a full time little charmer ... |

The house has a large open plan living area with good if not great views of the Derwent Valley. We have three bedrooms, one for us, one for Gypsy Anna and one that is used by guests and WWOOFers (the largest of them). In that room we have housed as many as five WWOOFers at once but it is more comfortable with two and we will generally ask any existing WWOOFers how they feel about sharing the space before accepting and newcomers.

The work we offer is very diverse. We have a garden (often poorly maintained) and fair deal of landscaping and construction work and general domestic maintenance at hand. WWOOFers have in the past done everything from weeding and planting, to harvesting and processing, to earth moving, trench digging, paint stripping and painting, wallpapering, rock wall building, bicycle and car repair, electrical re-wiring, furniture making or repair, child care, cooking, cleaning and more all depending on what needed doing and what skills they had.

We strongly prefer:

- 1) WWOOFers who have WWOOFed before
A lot of WWOOFers who've come through have been first timers. Experienced WWOOFers typically know what they're getting into and pose less risk of disillusionment.
- 2) Longer stays over shorter stays
We've had WWOOFers stay as long as three months. We don't much like stays under a week. It takes time to settle in get to know the family and Gypsy Anna forms bonds and trust relationships. If you want to visit for two weeks you more welcome than someone wanting to visit for 4 days. WWOOFers who've stayed longer have also developed some community ties and found interesting jobs and volunteering experiences (several WWOOFers have done remote area field work for PhD students met through family or friends).
- 3) WWOOFers motivated by cultural participation more than money
This is a hard one to gauge but we look out for it. Some just want to save money, and don't really like sharing their living space, or don't much like work and get done in 4 hours what someone else gets done in 1. Conversely, people who are looking to experience life in an Australian family we've found to be generally pleased with arrangements and well motivated in the participation of the household, enjoying the rich experiences it can provide.
- 4) People with skills or experience
Basically we run out of work unskilled people can do sometimes. There is weeding and cleaning (though I've seen those botched real badly too – pulling up blueberry bushes when weeding and washing the seasoning off our Wok for example). You're more than welcome with no skills though! A pleasant friendly person who is prepared to learn and honest about what they can and can't do is far more welcome than a grumpy professional hard up for cash looking for a place to pass some time – we get both extremes.

We expect from WWOOFers:

- 4 hours a work on average per day and dinner time support setting the table and washing the dishes. You can take days off and make up time. You can take a week off and work a week of 8 hour days. We're not fussed and we're won't police it!

The motivating factor should be honesty and contribution. Bernd works 8 hours days to pay for the house and food we share. Maka works even more between part time university and full time motherhood. All we ask for is that if we're housing and feeding people they pull their weight.

Ironically that can be as much about image as work. If you work 2 hours and get a lot done you'll be more popular than working 4 like you were wishing time away and little gets done. Time is just the best measure we have of honesty and contribution I guess. But because of this variability we have no interest in monitoring or policing. All that's needed is that you and we (particularly Maka who is around the house a lot) have the comfortable impression that you're contributing to the household. Like it or not it costs a fair bit to feed a summer long stream of WWOOFers good organic food and it's nice to think they're valuable members of the household.

- We like you to be up around 7:30 in the morning so you can discuss work with Bernd over breakfast. It's not a hard and fast rule and you can sleep in from time to time, but the effort is appreciated.
- We expect you to commit yourself to a an arrival date and ideally a minimum length of stay (which you may extend) so that Maka can shop appropriately for food (we shop Saturday mornings for organic food and she gets very frustrated when we have too much food because WWOOFers who said they show don't or who said they be here all week aren't). This is one of the expectations of being a part of a household that feeds you.
- You are expected to leave your notes in our WWOOF book.

What we offer WWOOFers:

Aside from the experience of living in a small and crazy not so wildly typical Australian inner suburban household, you might find a few other benefits at 6 Montagu Street.

- Maka is an ex-professional cook and makes exquisite dinners, praise of which our guest book is full. You will probably not eat better at restaurants.
- We're on broadband internet and you can use that freely. We'll only ask that you use it respectfully as well, taking note than many people find it quite rude and insular if they are sharing a space with someone glued to a monitor for hours. That means keep email checks moderate when people are around (and focus on sociability) and when you have time and space to yourself then surf till you drop.
- We take WWOOFers on trips sometimes. Either up the mountain for walks, or elsewhere for bushwalks or even on holiday up the east coast. If you're staying with us you're part of the family and treated as such, and we'll even use you as an excuse to organize something now and then. On the other that doesn't always happen, it fits into the scheme of things and around our other commitments.
- We have a good deal of camping and walking gear and WWOOFers can and have loaned it for trips away and back. That includes tents and mattresses and such.
- We have bicycles on hand that WWOOFers are welcome to use to get around.
- We're very flexible with work hours and the type of work you do and often hand out options for variety.
- We host a local games group which meets at our house at least once a month and plays games and aside from that have an extensive games collection and pass the time playing games very readily. We don't have a television.
- We both speak Esperanto and are happy to engage people on that theme if they express any interest, but rarely mention it otherwise. There is a local group which meets elsewhere to WWOOFers occasionally go.
- Bernd is one of the world's more notable and referenced hitch-hikers with an extensive body of experience and literature on hitching around the planet. If you have any interest in that you're coming to the right place, if you need information or support in and around the art of hitch-hiking as a lifestyle, Bernd's a good man to see.
- Maka is a creative writer and working on poetry and literature and if this interests you Maka can engage you in conversation for hours.
- We are moderately active in Green politics and if the green ethos and politics are of interest you may find both stimulating conversation in Maka or Bernd and/or exposure to others through the house with passions in that direction.
- Gypsy Anna just loves new playmates!

That's it. Now you know about 6 Montagu Street.

If this sounds like what you want, you're very welcome with us. It is always a beautiful experience when wonderful people come and share and contribute to our lifestyles.