

About 6 Montagu Street for the HelpX visitor

We get a lot of requests to stay with us. Over summer it might be as much as request every few days. In the winter however there are almost none. In the peak season that involves us in a lot of very repetitive conversations with prospective helpers, among other things explaining to them what to expect.

At 6 Montagu Street we are 3½ 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 to town is maybe \$10.

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 '50s-'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). |
| Gypsy Anna | Born on June 1 st 2003, a full time little charmer ... |

There are some regular visitors to expected here, including:

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| A men's group | which meets every Thursday evening and occupies the living space for a confidential meeting between 7:30 and 10:30. During this period visitors are excluded from the living space. The bathroom is still readily accessible but the kitchen is not and we appreciate your understanding. |
| HoGS | The Hobart Games society, was founded here in 2004 and met here regularly until it moved to a public hall in 2011. Games nights may be hosted here from time to time still but nothing like as regular as they used to be. |
| Friends | We love people here and like to make them welcome. We never get enough friends dropping by, but that said, there's still often someone visiting whether it's the neighbourhood kids, friends of Gypsy Anna's or Bernd's or even of guests. |

The house has a large open plan living area with good if not great views of the Derwent Valley. We have three bedrooms and a studio, one for Bernd, one for Gypsy Anna and one that is spare (the largest of them) and a studio and cubby house in the garden where guests can stay as well. We have housed as many as five or six helpers at once but it is more comfortable with two and we will generally ask any existing helpers how they feel about sharing the space before accepting any newcomers and only if I have the time to manage the chores for so many. The work is never lacking but it takes time to coordinate and manage it.

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. Helpers 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, construction and more all depending on what needed doing and what skills they had.

We strongly prefer:

- 1) Helpers who have helped before
A lot of helpers who've come through have been first timers. Experienced helpers typically know what they're getting into and pose less risk of disillusionment and surprise.
- 2) Longer stays over shorter stays
We've had helpers stay as long as three months. We don't usually 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 are typically more welcome than someone wanting to visit for 4 days. Helpers who've stayed longer have also developed some community ties and found interesting jobs and volunteering experiences (some helpers for example, have done remote area field work for PhD students met through family or friends).
- 3) Helpers 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 household 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 cookware 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 helpers:

- About 4 hours of 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 won't police it!

The motivating factor should be honesty and contribution. Bernd works to pay for the house and food we share. All we ask for is that if we're housing and feeding people they pull their weight, contribute their share.

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 the time away and get little 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 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 helpers good food and cover the power bills 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 at least on the first 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 to touch base in the mornings.
- We expect you to commit yourself to an arrival date and ideally a length of stay (which you may extend) so that we can shop appropriately for food. 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 guest book.
- We would like you to vacate the living space of the house between the hours of 7:30 and 10:30 on Thursday evenings, to permit a local men's group to meet in confidentiality.

What we offer helpers:

- Good food, sometimes. Guests regularly praise the food they receive here (read the guest book).
- We're on broadband internet and you can use that freely. We'll only ask that you use it respectfully as well, taking note that 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 helpers 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 hand that doesn't always happen, nor even especially often, and it must fit into the scheme of things and around our other commitments.
- We have a good deal of camping and walking gear and helpers can and have loaned it for trips away and back. That includes tents and mattresses and such.
- We have bicycles on hand that helpers 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 support the local games group which and have an extensive games collection and pass the time playing games very readily. We don't have a television.
- Bernd speaks Esperanto and is happy to engage people on that theme if they express any interest, but rarely mentions it otherwise. There is a local group which meets elsewhere to which helpers 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 our 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.
- We are moderately active in Green politics and if the green ethos and politics are of interest you may find both stimulating conversation and/or exposure to others 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.