

Wildnest



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Location: Capertee Valley, Lithgow

Owners: Claire and Pete Baines

Farm produce: Cattle

Size of farm: 40 hectares (100 acres)

Website: wildnest.au

Why we decided to diversify into agritourism

When COVID locked down the world, Pete lost his work, so we moved from our city home to live permanently on our farm. We started to identify how we could leverage the farm for new streams of income.

We had bought a rural property nearby that we intended to use for a function centre with accommodation, but its development approval was taking a long time. We had bought luxury safari tents for that property, but thought we'd trial them on the farm.

"The glamping has turned out to be very profitable."

Though we still work full time off-farm today, the farm is our future.

Agritourism offering



Accommodation

Glamping: 2 luxury safari tents



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Planning approval

Although planning requirements have been simplified since we went through the process, at that time we had to get development approval for the tents, which are fully plumbed with kitchens and bathrooms.

It wasn't clear at that time what development definition the tents fell under, as the tents are fixed (they can't be taken down – though they will need to be replaced every ten years due to wear and tear), so they don't fall into the development category called 'primitive camping'. In the end, we secured approval to build the decks that the tents are on, and for the septic.

[Learn about the current approval pathway for glamping.](#)



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Advice for farmers looking to diversify into agritourism

GET FINANCIAL ADVICE

We have a long term financial plan that outlines how we will pay off the investment into the tents. We meet with a financial advisor and an accountant quarterly to check we are on track and to plan for 12 months ahead.

LOOK AROUND FOR INSURANCE OPTIONS

Our farm's public liability insurance covers our visitors, but we couldn't find building insurance for the tents. We could find building insurance for a tiny home short term accommodation that we have on our other property, but we only found one company in Australia that insures tiny homes (MGA Insurance Group).

HOW TO SET PRICES

We played around with the pricing. **One insight that might be helpful for other farmers exploring accommodation options is that we've found our luxury safari tents are able to command nearly double the nightly rate compared to our tiny home.**

MARKETING

We used a marketing consultant to develop our brand and an 18-month marketing plan, and that was worth the investment.

COLLABORATION

We have built relationships with other nearby accommodations. We all have a different offering at different price points, but we all need the same services, such as cleaners, and add-ons for our guest experience, such as massages and a chef service. Finding cleaners has been hard in our remote valley, so collaboration can really help us all.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

We learned that properties with four or more cabins are required to include at least one that is accessible for people with disability. Beyond compliance, we see this as an opportunity to create inclusive experiences for all guests. While accessible features may require additional investment, it's important to consider both the social impact and long-term value of welcoming a wider range of guests.