

### Blackwattle Alpaca Farm Business Profile

Blackwattle Alpaca Farm is a family-owned and operated business, founded and managed by Angela and Matthew Smith. Based in Murrumbateman, NSW, their farm is an easy 30-minute drive from Canberra, Australia's Capital City.

Surrounded by wineries with stunning views of the Brindabella Ranges, Blackwattle Alpaca Farm offers a unique farm experience where guests can meet alpacas and llamas up close. With their personal tour guide, guests will be introduced to some of the happy herd.

During a visit to the farm, guests learn about these animals' delightful and quirky personalities. It's a wonderful opportunity to learn lots of interesting facts whilst interacting with these amazing animals.

We asked Angela a few questions about her experience with NSW First programs.

### How have the NSW First workshops facilitated by Destination Southern NSW helped your business?

The workshops helped us to focus on the core strengths of our business and provided insights into the broader tourism industry within our region and further afield. Additionally, the workshops allowed us to engage with other tourism providers who, through their storytelling, provided us with valuable information on the types of services that guests need and are seeking.

### How has the Destination NSW New Product Workshop helped you develop your business and what types of trade partners are you planning to work with?

The New Product Workshop has opened doors that we did not know existed. The new connections made during the workshop have created larger tour bookings and additional online selling opportunities. We are focused on building business relationships with online booking platforms that we met during the workshop, such as Pelago and Klook, before revisiting our connections to Inbound Tour Operators (ITOs).



Blackwattle Alpaca Farm – Gift Shop

### How did you develop into an Export-Ready tourism business?

Originally, we were focusing on building our business within the domestic market, growing slowly and organically as we developed our products and services. As our business matured, and with the support and guidance of Destination NSW, we quickly realised the appeal of meeting our alpacas and llamas within the broader international markets. With mentoring through Destination NSW and Destination Southern NSW, we reviewed our products and services, including the pricing structure of our tours, to allow us to be able to offer wholesale rates for the international markets. This review also included looking at 'what are we' and 'what are our guests looking for,' which helped us to further refine our products and services.

### Top tips for businesses looking to become Export-Ready

- Do your research – understand your target markets and what they are looking for. Tourism data and insight reports are key here! Ask lots of questions and seek support from Destination NSW.
- Be 'IT focused' - have a booking system in place that enables live bookings through other providers (e.g., Red Balloon), and ensure your website and social accounts are working and are up to date. Employ the services of someone who can provide this assistance and support if this is not your strong point.
- Understand your pricing structure and be aware of the discounts that need to be offered to the ITO and OTA markets.



Blackwattle Alpaca Farm – Image Credit: Destination NSW

### What International markets are you planning to target?

The international markets we will be targeting are Singapore, India and more broadly Asia. Based on the current trends of international guests visiting our farm this year, we feel that these locations are interested in our products and are keen to explore our region.

### Will you update any of your products to appeal to new inbound markets?

At the core, our products appeal to a broad range of inbound markets. We are refining some of the offerings to suit larger groups (i.e., coach tours) and to be more accessible to people living with disabilities by offering products and services that suit a range of abilities and needs.



### What's one thing you have learned from your experience with your target markets?

Visitation trends change during the seasons regarding the number of tours booked. We tend to have more visitors during the warmer months than during winter. However, we have not noticed a change regarding the type of tours booked.



Blackwattle Alpaca Farm – Image Credit: Destination NSW

### How has having an online booking platform assisted you in securing bookings?

Developing our online booking system capabilities was one of the best business decisions we have made. Management of bookings at the back end, customer's ease to book, and the connection to other online booking platforms are seamless. I don't think tourism businesses could be successful without an online booking system. It provides valuable insights into the demographics of who is visiting us and where they are coming from, which enables us to target future markets.

**What are some other benefits of having an online booking system?**

People's lives are busy so being able to provide an easy system to book their experience with us, considering their calendar priorities, is invaluable. Domestic and international tourists have very different booking timelines so having a system that is bookable into the future (e.g., over 12-18 months) is very important. From our point of view, a booking system is easy to manage, once set up correctly.

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**What advice do you have about running a successful trade familiarisation (famil)?**

Famils are extremely important in the development of any tourism business. They provide businesses with the opportunity to showcase what they have to offer. Planning, planning, and planning is key! Before the famil, gain an understanding of the people and businesses that are attending, what do they focus on, who are their customers etc. During the famil provide an overview of what you offer and then provide handouts, either printed or on a thumb drive. After the famil, it is important to follow up to see if they have any additional questions regarding the visit, or advice or information about potential customers and any future.

**Want to find out more about the NSW First Program?**

Contact Destination Southern NSW via [info@dsnsw.com.au](mailto:info@dsnsw.com.au) or visit

<https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/tourism/business-development-resources/nsw-first-workshops-program>