



Currajong Retreat Business Profile

Currajong Retreat offers luxury tented accommodation on a regenerative Angora goat farm in the NSW Far South Coast hinterland, 45 minutes inland of the coastal town of Merimbula.

Exclusive safari tents provide privacy and proximity to nature while ensuring modern hotel comfort. Guests can indulge in unique features like outdoor baths and relish the all-inclusive experience with breakfast (brunch), dinner, and a selection of drinks provided daily.

Guests can explore the 100-acre farm and river frontage at their leisure or join complementary farm tours led by resident farmers. Relaxation awaits as the team handles all the details for an unforgettable retreat.



Lara Forsdick
Currajong Retreat

We asked Lara 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 NSW First workshops helped us to understand and refine our product for inbound tourism. Having operated for two years with only a domestic market, due to COVID travel restrictions, we had successfully refined our product to suit those travelling within Australia.

We didn't make the leap into international markets until our third year in business when we attended the NSW First workshop. In these workshops we were able to gain a better understanding of the differences between domestic and international markets, what inbound tourists were looking for, how they booked their travel, and how to present our product to Inbound Tour Operators.



Image Credit - David Rogers Photography

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 Destination NSW New Product Workshop supported us in pitching our product to trade partners, setting us up for ongoing relationships with Inbound Tour Operators.

After the workshop, we reached out to relevant Outbound Tour Operators (OTAs) within our targeted markets and received numerous requests to feature our product as part of their offerings.

It will be great to see bookings come through from these new channels, and we look forward to building on our relationships with these OTAs.

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

After opening our business at the start of the COVID pandemic, we built a large domestic market within NSW and slowly opened to the rest of Australia as travel restrictions eased. This allowed us to focus on the needs of the domestic market and strengthen our product offering through customer feedback.

Two years later, the international borders opened quite quickly, and we were unprepared for the sudden influx of overseas visitors.

With a solid understanding of our product offerings, the NSW First program was key to becoming Export-Ready. The program helped us develop additional skills in market research and provided an understanding of the relationship between trade partners and the consumer. It also taught us how to build an effective trade kit, which enabled us to pitch our product at the New Product Workshop. As a result of our pitch, we have connected with Inbound Tour Operators and look forward to welcoming guests through these channels in the future.



Image Credit - David Rogers Photography

Export-Ready Top Tips

- *Refine your product within the domestic market first* - New businesses have a start-up period. Use this time to tweak and improve your product within the domestic market. Once you reach the international market, your product will have evolved, and you will have a better idea of what works and what is sustainable. This is important when offering a product to international buyers 18 months – 2 years in advance.
- *Create an informative and brand-focused trade kit* - Keeping your trade kit short and succinct is important to ensure your message can be portrayed quickly and effectively. A well-presented, branded toolkit creates a professional and cohesive feel for your product. Always include captivating photos, with people in them wherever possible!
- *It's a marathon, not a sprint!* Be prepared for the journey, there is a lot to the process. With long lead times you may not see bookings until well into the future, so be patient.



What International markets are you planning to target?

Initially, we will be targeting the USA, UK, and New Zealand. These markets share an interest in nature-based tourism and have a larger segment of couples and luxury accommodation stays. The USA and UK markets travel between July and September filling our off-peak domestic season.

The NZ and UK markets have a high rate of return visitors and VFR (visiting family and relatives). Return visitors provide a great ongoing customer base. After experiencing success with our return domestic market, we would like to build return visitation within the international market. We will continue to expand our target market as we further develop our business.



Image Credit - David Rogers Photography

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customer base



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

We believe that our existing product will appeal to the inbound market, as it leverages people's desire to travel sustainably and reconnect with nature.

We offer additional inclusions to tailor our product to the inbound market. These add-ons include native wildlife experiences, primary producer 'meet the farmer' tours, and 'meet and greets' around an outdoor fire pit. All our experiences are focused on accentuating the Australian country experience.

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

Our main target market is couples looking for a country getaway to unplug, recharge and enjoy quality time immersed in nature. We have learnt that our target market will travel whatever distance is required to seek out this nature and wellness-based experience.



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

We consider an online booking system essential for our business.

It has allowed us to manage our financials, analyse our business commercials and have a better overall understanding of our business profitability.

With a view to future occupancy, we are better able to plan logistics related to catering, housekeeping, maintenance, and future marketing activities.



Image Credit - David Rogers Photography

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

Our online booking system allows us to have greater control over bookings and allows guests to book directly on our website. This means reduced commissions and more control over the information and options we provide guests.

Having a booking system hosted on our website reduces guest enquiries and bookings made via phone or email, providing us with more time to manage other business needs.

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

When it comes to hosting a successful trade famil, our aim is to ensure that our guests truly immerse themselves in the essence of Currajong Retreat, no matter the time they spend on site.

We suggest the following:

Minimum two-night stay - We recommend a minimum two-night stay to truly showcase the essence of Currajong Retreat. Our product is not something that can be fully appreciated within an hour or two. This is especially true when hosting complementary famils, which we view as an investment in our business.

Use your time wisely - Time is always limited during trade famils, especially inbound famils. Busy itineraries can mean guests may stay for two nights but might only spend a small fraction of that time on site. Therefore, we showcase our unique selling points that highlight the essence of Currajong Retreat during our guest's downtime, such as during meals and after hours. Using time wisely to weave our product and experiences into a famil schedule is key to our success.

Currajong Retreat



Want to find out more about the NSW First Program?

Contact Destination Southern NSW via info@dsnsw.com.au or visit

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