

RURAL

Sheep, cattle and campers

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NEW IDEA: Tuckeroo Stud has welcomed guests through online platform Youcamp for about 12 months. Contributed

ABOUT 500 head of dorper sheep, a stud cattle operation and a steady stream of paying campers.

Could this be what a modern farming property looks like?

For Scott Antcliff and Amanda Woollam, opening up their Tuckeroo Stud in the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales to paying guests through Youcamp was an easy option to generate off-farm income.

Youcamp, which could be described as being similar to Airbnb, is allowing farmers to welcome paying campers to their land.

Youcamp co-founder James Woodford said the online platform could "future proof" farms, and has called on governments to remove red tape to make it easier for more landholders to get involved.

This week the *Rural Weekly* talked to Mr Antcliff to find out what it's like to allow guests to set up camp on his working dorper sheep and murray grey stud.

The couple bought their farming block, which is home to Tuckeroo Stud, about 15 years ago.

They were attracted to the farm because of the region's high average rainfall.

A subtle bonus, however, was that the block happened to be a picturesque spot.

It's set among every shade of green as it adjoins the World Heritage Limpinwood Nature Reserve and has the always-running Hopping Dick Creek twisting through it.

Mr Antcliff said, overall, it was nice feeling to be able to share his patch of paradise with others. He admitted the revenue from Youcamp wasn't securing him a lucrative retirement income but described the profits as "a bit of extra income that helped".

"We have found it's a little bit seasonal; in the warmer months we are pretty solidly booked," he said.

Youcamp's website for Tuckeroo Stud states privacy is guaranteed: "we only take one booking at a time so the the place is all yours. We are busy farmers so will leave you to it".

He said limiting guests made the concept easier to manage and more effective in the long run.

"The whole idea of our site is solitude," he said.

"That's something you can't get anywhere else, not even National Park campgrounds allow you to be on your own.

"I check them in when they arrive, then they are on their own for the rest of their stay."

So far, Tuckeroo Stud has welcomed young couples, families and grey nomads.

"To be honest all our guests have been perfect - it's a pristine spot and they seem to appreciate it," he said.

Mr Antcliff spoke to all his guests over the phone before confirming the booking.

"There are no facilities here so I straight away ask if they have a camping toilet," he said.

"If they don't, it's likely they are not experienced campers."

Their website also makes it clear "doof parties" are not welcome.

"We haven't really had that with Youcamp though. We have found you are getting the more experienced campers."

While private land camping is legal across all of Australia, some governments made the process of approval excessively onerous according to Youcamp's Mr Woodford.

"We want to see more state and local governments follow the lead of more progressive councils such as Temora and Noosa, which are embracing the opportunities land sharing provides," he said.

"One of our mottos is that landholders should not just be farming sheep and wheat but also people.

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"we are also calling on city-based Australians to help their regional cousins by choosing a farm-based escape rather than heading to Bali."

Mr Antcliff said the administration side of the service was easy to use, and guests paid up front.

And as for picking the perfect spot for campers?

Well, he said that was easy.

"It's the same spot we use on a hot day to go for a swim," he said.

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