

RE: Development Application for Smith Road Property to Conduct Hipcamp/Tourist Accommodation

Further to our meeting in August regarding the use of the camping stay website, 'Hipcamp', at 521 Smith Road Katrine, we would like to submit a Development Application Form to yourself and the Shire of Northam for assessment.

As you were made aware, we registered on the 'Hipcamp' website using four areas where people can casually make a campsite booking with a tent, campervan or a caravan. Our property is 113 acres and overlooks a Water Reserve/Nature Park with rolling hills. So far, we have been surprised at the interest, and this is mainly centred on the views of the property, and the seclusion and privacy that the individual sites offer.

What has been impressive is that it has brought people to Northam, and the campers often go in to town and shop, go to restaurants/cafés or indulge in things like Ballooning, Festivals or the Avon Descent.

The accommodation is being conducted on our property and the campers do not bother surrounding properties, and are given strict guidelines around this and respecting neighbours. The campers are more interested in walking and (within regulation) sitting around a campfire to take in the views and the lovely surroundings. We have found the campers to be very responsible, family oriented people, who don't want to have security issues that can happen in an overcrowded caravan park. They come self-contained and require little intervention. When they leave there is no impact left and all rubbish is cleaned up. These people often have young children who end up meeting our children and then they come and look at the animals. It is also relevant to say that we have all Police Clearances and Working with Children and Ochre Cards in place.

We now wish to formalise our application, and further to the follow-up email from Jacky Jurmann, would like to place our application for the property to have designated campsites within the "tourist accommodation" category.

The front paddock would have 1 campsite, the middle paddock would have 3 campsites with one overflow site, and we would like the far west paddock to have one overflow. A total of 6 sites maximum, with two being overflow. Normal occupancy is currently four sites – that being one in the front and three in the middle paddock only. Access is via farm tracks and no clearing or landscaping is required. The nearest campsite is more than 50m from a neighbours fence with the rest in the middle of our property.

Generally, people like to camp from Friday afternoon until Sunday morning. In rare cases such as school holidays, these times can be extended to weekdays.

We attach a map showing the sites that are preferred.

We are very careful with campers to ensure that they are respectful to neighbours and their privacy. We also ensure we operate within Shire campfire restrictions, and make sure safety rules are covered. We attach a safety induction for your reference.

As the summer months close in, we have a designated fire tender available to ensure any potential fires can be contained and the campers are safe.

We enjoy the farmstay nature of the accommodation as it enables some of the campers to feed horses, look at the alpacas and also look at the cows we have. They seem to love it. It is low impact and required only us to welcome the guests. There is little intervention and noise is kept to a minimum because people like the serenity and surroundings. They mostly have solar panel setups so there is no noise from generators. At night people bed down early or star gaze. We have had several professional photographers come to photograph the stars and surroundings.

As part of the application, we would like to have campers bring their dogs, as we find that this has been an attraction. It can be difficult to accommodate pets in a caravan park, whereas there is space to do this here. Some of these pets are support animals – one recent camper had epileptic children that had such requirements. We've also found that dog championships and trials run in the Shire have attracted campers that need secluded accommodation. People are instructed to keep their animals secure so they don't run away given Ranger regulations.

We hope that we can work with you to have a positive outcome for our tourist accommodation and farmstay. We feel that it fits within the Shire planning to add other function and uses to the rural landscape, while still carrying out the fundamental utility of the farmland.

We hope that with the correct approvals that we could put a sign at the front gate to advertise "Hilltop Views" properly.

As one last happy note on this, I attach a link to a website called "Fire to Fork" by Harry - <https://firetofork.net/?nowprocket=1> . Harry was a Hipcamper a couple of weeks ago and filmed one of his episodes at our property. It is the You Tube link: [Proper meat pies ANYWHERE - Jaffle / Pie Iron pies - YouTube](#)