

Lagoon Pocket Bed and Breakfast

Lagoon Pocket Bed and Breakfast is a magical destination located in the Mary Valley area just outside Gympie and a short 40 minute drive from Queensland's Sunshine Coast and Noosa. Run by James and Suzannah Arkle this luxurious retreat is the perfect country getaway.

The Arkle's main goal is to provide 'a homely spot for a weary soul'; offering all the comforts of home with added luxuries. The destination is pet-friendly; allowing well-behaved, trained pets within the guests rooms with the proviso that they do not go on the furniture. There are also designated fenced off areas near the meal area so that the animals are able to explore and run around while you enjoy a home cooked meal. With three large rooms that all have a private verandah and garden, this retreat offers privacy and serenity. One of the rooms also has full disability facilities to provide greater accessibility.

Lagoon Pocket B&B is also one of the very few AAAT 4* Accommodation options for business people working in Gympie. The combination of a peaceful location less than 10 minutes drive from town, private entrances, free wireless internet and lots of space to work is ideal for the business traveller.

Lagoon Pocket offers attractions to suit everyone's needs including horse riding, gold fossicking, local wine and cheese tasting, a trip on the restored 'Mary Valley Rattler' steam train, golf, paragliding, dolphin feeding, fishing, bird watching, walks through beautiful state forest parks and trips to the local markets. As well as this, Lagoon Pocket has been making a conscious effort to evaluate and improve their facilities with their most recent initiative being to become more sustainable and work towards eradicating their carbon footprint.

GETTING STARTED

The two initial strategies that James and Suzannah devised were:

- How do we take better care of our customers? And
- How do we take better care of our environment?

These two strategies are what have sparked the destination's efforts in becoming more eco-friendly.

MAJOR INITIATIVES

Some of the initiatives that have been taken by Lagoon Pocket include:

Environmentally Sustainable Practices

- Recent solar power installations
- Better recycling practices

- Improved insulation
- The use of local produce within the kitchen and many items being made and prepared on-site

Pet Friendly Accommodation

- Allowing well-trained pets to stay within the guests rooms for \$10 per night or \$15 for two pets.

The Business Traveller

- Free Wireless Internet Access
- Quiet location = good night's sleep
- Less than 10 minutes drive to Gympie CBD
- Private entrances for easy out of hours access

KEY OUTCOMES

By implementing environmentally sustainable practices and focusing on specific markets such as pet friendly and business travellers, there have been many positive outcomes.

Improvement of environmental policies is not only the right thing to do, but it has meant that Lagoon Pocket Bed & Breakfast saves money and increases profitability by being more energy efficient.

Their focus on specific markets has enabled them to develop a successful business in a region not traditionally known for this type of accommodation.

The success of combining their environmental and guest care strategies has helped them to win "The Best Hosted Accommodation" for the state of Queensland in the 2010 TakeABreak.com.au awards.

MAJOR CHALLENGES

The major challenges have occurred when trying to find a way to measure and benchmark the new environmentally sustainable practices being implemented. James and Suzannah have found that, while large businesses have services available, there are limited resources and techniques for micro-businesses. This challenge has, however, been overcome through the resort being given the opportunity to work with 'Earthcheck'; a service that provides the opportunity to compare the business to thousands of similar businesses globally.

ADVICE TO OPERATORS

Continue to work with 'Earthcheck' to further improve your sustainability practices and gain a better knowledge and understanding. Also work off the feedback provided from your guests and be aware of what other similar businesses in the area may be doing.

NEXT STEPS

The Arkle's are very aware of their affects on both their customers and the environment. With over 12 months worth of data, it is now possible to monitor their performance. Their 2009 data is already showing significant

Improvements on the 2008 baseline and is helping them to identify areas for further action.

The next step is to update their website and advertise some of the sustainability practices they have in place.