



**THE DRAWING ROOMS  
OF BERRY**  
LUXURY RETREAT

## **SUSTAINABILITY PLAN**

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## **Our commitment to sustainability**

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In hosting guests at our beautiful estate, we are committed to sustainable operations, environmental responsibility and contributing to conservation, community and climate change action. We understand that being sustainable means acting for the good of **our planet** (environment and climate) and **our people** (community).

From recycling initiatives and solar panels powering our lodges, to designing our garden with sustainable principles, we are constantly striving to reduce our impact on this land. We encourage our guests to connect with Aboriginal culture locally by providing information both beforehand and during their stay on tours and experiences. We also operate a formal 'Support Local' policy which documents our efforts to support our community by sourcing food and wine locally, providing regular employment for local businesses, and consistently supporting our local schools and community organisations.

### **For our planet**

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#### ***Energy and recycling***

We encourage guests to assist in our energy efficiency efforts by turning off lights, air-con and fireplace before you leave the property. We also ask for their assistance with our recycling efforts by separating recycling from waste using the dual bin provided. After you leave, your coffee grounds will be taken to our compost bay – eventually, these will help nurture the soil and continue to maintain our beautiful garden. We also separate cans and bottles, which then go to one of our local high schools (Bomaderry High) which sells them on via the NSW Return & Earn scheme to raise money for the school.

#### ***Electricity and water***

We are delighted to say that all 4 of our lodges are supplied by electricity generated from solar panels located on the property.

In terms of water usage, we use all grey and brown water in our garden – this is first treated with our Aerated Water Treatment Systems, with the clean water then dispersed via surface sprinklers and sub-surface drippers. You will see signs in the garden to let you know where these are.

#### ***Landscape design***

Our garden has been designed to include native landscaping which offers year-round colour and diverse habitat for the native birds and wildlife which also call The Drawing Rooms home. The garden here was initially established before our time, with existing trees and shrubs in place – but since we took over in 2018, Michael (who runs garden design studio [Paperbark Landscape Design](#)) has designed lots of additions to improve the landscape, boosting sustainability and introducing more native and naturalistic plantings to encourage wildlife. We were delighted that he won a Gold Medal for the garden at the 2023 LDI National Landscape Design Awards.

#### ***Native wildlife***

We encourage guests to enjoy seeing the plentiful native wildlife which makes The Drawing Rooms its home. We encourage respectful enjoyment of our native wildlife in the following ways:

1. As part of our Kids Welcome Pack, you'll find colouring sheets celebrating native wildlife, and a wildlife observation sheet to encourage you to record what you see. We pass any highlights onto our local wildlife groups and share with our neighbours along Wattamolla Rd.

2. We ask guests that when driving on the property they keep to a low speed to avoid scaring or injuring wildlife. The same applies to our local roads where unfortunately there is a high rate of injury to wildlife due to speeding, especially at night. We encourage guests who spot injured wildlife on the road, to call our local wildlife volunteers, **Wildlife Rescue South Coast** (0418 427 214).

#### Action points:

Goal	In detail	Timing
Develop our marketing to celebrate our commitment to and passion for sustainability	<p>Tourism businesses are in a key position to talk about the important issues facing the environment, including climate change. We will aim to share our passion for sustainable practices and encourage our guests to become part of the solution. This will also give our guests more awareness of the responsible and sustainable behaviours of our business prior to their stay.</p> <p>We will also include more information on our website regarding cultural responsibility, community collaborations and waste management practices.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025</p>
Apply for, and afterwards include in marketing material, Sustainable Tourism accreditation	This program is run via the NSW Tourism Association and requires a full-scale assessment of sustainable business practices.	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
Assess our carbon footprint and consider participation in a verified carbon offsetting scheme		By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2026

#### For our people

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Our local community in Berry and surrounds is very special, and the concept of supporting our community is very important to us as a family, and as a family-run business. The Drawing Rooms therefore has a strong preference for supporting our local community whenever possible, with our general ethos being as follows:

##### ***Supporting local***

**To support local business as a strong first preference, unless the product or service cannot be found within the local community. In this case, we will endeavour to procure the product or service within the Shoalhaven or Illawarra regions more broadly. If this is not possible, we will source across Australia more broadly. Only rarely would we find it necessary to source products or services from outside Australia.**

N.B. By 'the local community' we mean Berry and surrounds (including Gerringong and Nowra). Our first preference is to source hyper locally within Berry itself, then if necessary to search within Gerringong or Nowra as our next closest communities.

We 'support local' in the following ways:

1. Local food and wine form part of the guest experience
2. Providing employment and income for members of the local community in terms of a) regular roles and b) special projects
3. Supporting local community organisations and schools.

### ***A welcome for all***

In a broader sense, we want to support our community by ensuring we welcome all people equally. We have developed an Accessibility Guide which sets out clear information about the property and facilities available, so that guests with any accessibility requirements can make an informed decision.

We are wholeheartedly committed to ensuring all our guests - from different backgrounds, cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, abilities and perspectives - feel safe, respected and welcome. And, we're delighted to have undertaken [Travel Proud](#) training and certification to improve our knowledge of what's important to LGBTQ+ guests.

#### **Action points:**

Goal	In detail	Timing
Be clearer about our inclusive welcome and continue undertaking training programs to educate ourselves on diversity and inclusion matters	Include a clear inclusive welcome statement in our lodge compendiums and on our website  Include gender pronouns on staff email signatures  Include an option for guests to give us their preferred pronouns at the time of booking, along with space to make any requests for elements which may make them feel more comfortable during their stay	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2025  Training ongoing

### ***Local food and wine***

Local food and wine form a crucial part of the guest experience, as follows:

- **Wine** - As part of every booking, guests are provided with a complementary bottle of local wine. Since 2018, when we took over the business, we have developed a relationship with local winery, Silos Estate, and source all bottles of wine from there.
- **Food** - We offer breakfast and picnic hampers for guests to add onto their bookings if they wish to, which are filled with locally sourced produce, including [Kangaroo Valley Pastured Eggs](#); bread and pastries from our local bakery ([Milkwood Berry](#)); milk, fruit and yoghurt from our local [Berry IGA](#); and sausages and bacon from our local butcher, [Mountainside Meats Berry](#).

- **Coffee** – a Breville barista coffee machine is situated in each lodge, with the machines having been sourced locally in Nowra, and the coffee beans sourced from [Coffee Fix Nowra](#).
- **Tea** – in 2024, we began stocking eco-friendly tea bags in our lodges, sourced from our local fine tea emporium, [The Berry Tea Shop](#). These tea bags are made from corn starch which is biodegradable and compostable, reducing their environmental impact. The tea within is loose leaf tea which is hand-blended and packed in small batches in Berry.

### ***Employment and income for the local community***

As an accommodation business with 4 separate lodges, and 15 acres of garden to maintain, we provide a great deal of employment and income opportunities for the local community, as follows:

#### **Regular roles**

1. **Cleaning/housekeeping team** – we use [Happy House Cleaning](#), a local cleaning company, for all changeovers
2. **Gardening services** – we use [Southern Property Care](#), a gardening maintenance company based locally in Berry for hedge-trimming and garden maintenance jobs on a monthly basis.
3. **Pamper packages and treatments** – in 2018, we created a treatment menu in collaboration with local massage therapist, Alexis ([SkinFit Beauty](#)) – we worked closely with Alexis to develop a high quality menu of treatments and massage packages to enhance our guests' experience.
4. **Floristry** – when guests order our 'bouquet of flowers', or one of our deluxe packages (which include a bouquet of flowers), we source the bouquets from our local Berry florist, [Shady Fig](#).
5. **Electrical maintenance** – we employ local electrician, [FlowPoint](#) (based locally in Gerringong) for all electrical work; for example, cleaning air conditioners, fitting new air conditioners, lighting etc.
6. **Plumbing maintenance** – we employ local plumber, [Klaasen Plumbing](#) (based locally in Coolangatta) for all plumbing jobs.

#### **Special projects**

1. **Lodge renovations** – since 2018, we have gradually renovated and upgraded the lodges as follows – with all work performed by locally owned and operated companies:
  - a. New bathrooms and kitchens
  - b. Exterior repainting
  - c. Internal repainting
  - d. Floorboard sanding and restaining
2. **Property styling and furniture sourcing** – in 2024, we undertook a major styling project to elevate our accommodation offerings into a more contemporary, polished version. To do this, we employed local property styling business, [South Coast Styling](#), to source furniture, artworks, cushions, rugs and other decorative items, and style all 4 lodges.
3. **Photography** – following completion of the styling project in 2024, we then hired local photographer, [Red Berry Photography](#), to capture images of the 4 lodges, guest experiences and the garden across a full day of photography.

### ***Supporting local community organisations***

As a local family, as well as a business, supporting our local community organisations and schools is incredibly important to us.

Set out below is a record of ways in which we have provided such support:

1. **Berry Public School's Movie Night Fundraiser raffle** (16<sup>th</sup> September 2023) – donated a 2-night weekend stay in our lodges for one lucky winner.
2. **Berry Gardens Festival** (12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> October 2023) – we opened our garden to the public across 4 days to raise money for the Berry Gardens Club and local charities. We were able to choose where ticket sales raised from our garden were donated to – we nominated the Shoalhaven Homeless Hub in Nowra, which felt a fitting option given we are an accommodation business. Specifically, our donation was used for purchasing security cameras and personal security devices to increase safety for women in their housing and where there is high risk of domestic and family violence. In this way, we were able to support both our local Berry community (as the Berry Gardens Festival 2023 attracted a record-breaking 1730 visitors across the 4 days), and a local charity doing fantastic work for women experiencing homelessness and domestic violence.
3. **Berry Chamber of Commerce 'Berry Merry Getaway Giveaway'** (drawn 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023) – donated a 1-night mid-week stay for 2 people (valued at \$380) for this social media giveaway.
4. **Berry Community Pre-school Preloved Fashion Sale & Raffle** (15<sup>th</sup> August 2024) – Donated a 2-night midweek stay (valued at \$858) at our lodges. This was the top prize on the bill.
5. **Berry Community Pre-school Art Show 2025** (date tbc – November 2025)
6. **Berry Public School Father's Day Raffle 2025** (date tbc, 2025)

### ***Supporting regional tourism***

We are proud to showcase the diverse range of things to see and do in our local area. We do so in the following ways:

1. Social media channels – we regularly share travel tips and information about local businesses, restaurants to book, and things to do
2. Website – our [Things to Do](#) page contains lots of information about the local area and recommendations for where our guests should shop, eat and play.
3. Compendium – our in-lodge compendiums contain even more information on the local area, history and things to do.
4. Guest discounts – we have negotiated exclusive discounts for our guests at various local businesses, including The Garden, The Berry General Store, Bangalay Dining, The Berry Tea Shop and The Rutledge Bar & Eats. This has been designed with the dual purpose of adding extra value for our guests during their stay, and giving them extra encouragement to support our local businesses.

### **Accreditations**

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In 2025, we are proud to have applied for the Sustainable Tourism accreditation through the NSW Tourism Association.

We also completed the Strive 4 Sustainability Scorecard process through EcoTourism Australia, which gave us feedback on the success of our current efforts, and ideas for improvements. This led to the creation of our Accessibility Guide to help our guests make informed decisions where they may have accessibility requirements. It also led to the development of the action points above which are designed to improve our sustainability practices into the future.