

# Farm Stay case study

## MATHER FARM, WA

### Location

2.5 hours east of Perth, Western Australia

### Land tenure and primary business type

Privately owned, freehold land zoned agricultural.  
A hobby farm currently with sheep and cut native flowers. We're also surrounded by wheat fields on two sides.

### Competitive advantage

We are pet friendly, which is rare for a farm stay.  
We also offer a digital self guided tour for guests driving from Perth that explains the history of the region through our sister business, Dark Stray.

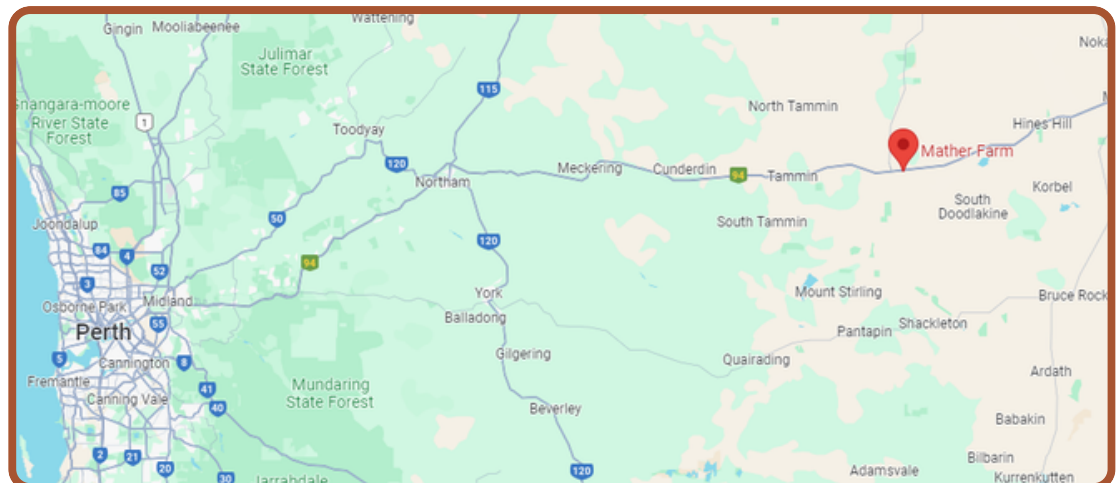
### Tourism Offerings

Core business:

- Short term rental accommodation (unhosted/exclusive use)

Supporting activities:

- Self-guided driving tour Perth to Kellerberrin only
- Event space and/or coordination
- Guided tours showcasing the region's ecology and history through our partner, Wheatbelt Native Gardens



## Business Journey

Damien and Erin are an entrepreneurial couple that run a number of different businesses within the technology, tourism and education sectors.

Our portfolio lifestyle can be hectic at times, and we fell in love with the Wheatbelt's wide open spaces. In February 2022 we decided to buy a hobby farm, and now split our time between Perth and the Wheatbelt, travelling with our two small dogs and one very large cat.

After over 18 months of careful restoration and stockpiling of linen and vintage furniture, Mather Farm officially opened in October 2023.

During this time we also started Wheatbelt Wanderlust Services to provide our own property management services as we couldn't find anyone else to do it for us in the region

## Future Plans

- Grow cut flowers at a larger scale, collaborating with local partners like Wheatbelt Native Gardens to showcase rare and endangered endemic plant species.
- Add additional accommodation options

## Importance of Tourism

Having an additional revenue stream has the potential to improve our cashflow. We operate several businesses, so our farm stay offering provides us with revenue that is counter-cyclical to our other ventures.

We use revenue generated by tourism to fund our 'Mather Farm' side projects. It means we can reinvest into the property in a way that we wouldn't have done otherwise, such as experimenting with native cut-flowers and providing the venue free for community groups



## Benefits

- Community engagement – the Kellerberrin and broader Central Wheatbelt community has been absolutely amazing at volunteering their time and knowledge to help us get the property guest ready.
- Capital growth – without having the focus on tourism, we wouldn't have had the drive that we've had to improve the main farmhouse and extend the surrounding gardens. This has added substantially to the resale value of the property.

## Advice to others

- Talk to your accountant and insurance broker early: make sure that you've got the right business structure and insurance to support your plans.
- Plan and market by season: think about what you might offer to encourage solid occupancy throughout the year.
- Design your services around what skills and people are available in your area.
- Get to know the industry: the tourism industry can be a little confusing at first because there's so many different groups. Fellow operators in other regions are also a great source of advice.
- Your knowledge is valuable: guests have a passion for learning more about Australia's agricultural industry, and what it's like to live and work in the regions.
- Build your brand story: we started building our brand story before we'd even moved into the place. This has helped us shape a number of decisions about what to do (and what not to do) as we were focused on who we are and who our target visitor is.

