

Rock Formations



there. It's a recipe that's been successful for other travel websites like Airbnb or Couchsurfing.

In the Territory, Youcamp has also had interest from a number of Indigenous-owned properties.

"We've had a lot of Aboriginal properties, so we're trying to open up a new kind of tourism," said Mr Woodford.

"The more traditional kind of camping experience but in places that have, up until now, been closed to the public."

As for the main areas of Darwin and Alice Springs, Mr Woodford explained that they're hoping to help solve the abundance of people parking in campervans.

"That's where we're looking at places either on the outskirts of Darwin or within 100km of Darwin where, instead of having two or three hundred vans packed into a couple of hectares, you might get 10,000 acres and you're the only person on the property.

"That's what we're looking for.

"The only reason campervans and Winnebagoes are parking beside Darwin Harbour and in carparks is because they don't want to be packed into van parks or feel like they're being ripped off."

But it's not just the larger properties getting involved in Youcamp - in fact, a soon-to-be-listed option is a driveway in the coastal NSW town of Kiama.

"They've obviously got a property close to the beach, they've got a nice backyard. So they've said 'if you've got a fully contained campervan, you can just stay in my driveway'," Mr Woodford said.

The range of properties around Australia is also helping one of their other aims, known as the Highway One Project - a category on their website in which people can search for a safe, simple place to pull up near the highway.

"Governments just don't have the resources to put in place adequate rest areas...and yet all along these highways are these spectacular properties."

He said they wanted to organise a network of places right around Australia.

"It's surely a whole lot better than everybody packing illegally into rest areas," he added.

Safety, and other fears, can cause worry for those inviting people onto their property, but Mr Woodford says the reality is that people are usually good.

It's a sentiment that Mr Walker, of Lorella Springs, agrees with, though he said it can be concerning.

"We do have our own station bylaws that we try to control - like how many fish people catch, or catch and release.

"It's sort of like a private national park...we do get a lot of people coming through and we try to make them feel like they're free to do what they want, within a few guidelines.

"It is a little bit hard when it is really busy, trying to keep everybody happy...but for the most part people just want to come and experience Lorella.

"It's probably one of the last pieces of real wilderness in Australia."

Mr Walker said he would encourage people to explore places like Lorella when travelling and websites like Youcamp help make that possible.

"I've spent the past five weeks travelling around Australia by vehicle, and Lorella is still the most remote place I've seen.

"Lorella itself is very quickly changing also and I think it won't be too many years before you won't be able to find somewhere like that - to get that remote."



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Travellers: for more information, and costs, see www.youcamp.com

Interested properties: Youcamp is free for landholders wanting just a few visitors per year, for sites with a conservation land title covenant and for everyone to trial for three months. If a property is receiving a lot of bookings through Youcamp, they may move up to a paid service.