



Thanks for choosing to stay at Swansong. The following information will give you a sense of what to expect during your stay.

Low-tech rituals

A level of interaction is required between guests and the dwelling to make the off-grid experience a comfortable one. We think of it as 'sailing' the house. There is an active ritual to operating awnings and blinds at the right time to shade and block the sun's heat, or to let it in. It includes standing on the 60cm wide engawa ledge (80cm from ground level at highest point) to operate the awning cranks, using the step ladder to open clerestory windows to a cross breeze or closing them for the evening to keep in the warmth from the sun in winter.

Oriented to the east to capture the view, the bedroom is often drenched in the morning sun. The sunscreen roller blinds do not block out all light so your circadian rhythms will be activated. We suggest you bring a sleep mask if you like a darkened room for morning sleep-ins.

The indoor zones are separated by a raised timber deck, which serves as an external hallway between the living and bedroom. Like camping, moving between habitable spaces requires venturing out and facing the elements, whatever the weather. Sometimes the decking is wet with rain as there is no undercover walkway.

We need our guests to be on board with low-tech ways of doing essential tasks, reducing energy consumption, and increasing sustainability. We have all you need; however your stay will be without aircon, a dishwasher, a clothes dryer, a microwave oven and other (non-essential) modern conveniences.

Sustainable use of resources

The dwelling is equipped for comfort in all seasons if guests are prepared. In winter bring extra warm clothing and slippers. If you are waiting for the wood heater to warm up from a cold start, there is a hot water bottle and extra blankets at hand. There is a covered stack of split firewood in the garden for the Pyrofire wood-heater. Please read the instructions for use in the house guide to ensure it will burn

efficiently with low emissions while keeping the living pavilion cosy overnight. The infrared radiant heater in the bedroom is pre-set to 18°C, for optimal sleeping comfort.

Our solar power is not backed up by a generator. It is important guests do not bring their own space heater. A single electric heater running through the night can drain the solar battery and shut down the system. The solar power set-up is adequate to run the house as it is equipped, but it is not designed for extra loading

In summer, the cross-ventilation, retractable screen doors, awnings and ceiling fans provide low energy passive cooling.

Rainwater is harvested and stored on-site, and we ask guests to be mindful of their water use. Although the water runs through a micro-filter before it gets to the house, authorities recommend all tank water is boiled for 3 minutes before drinking. If you have any concerns, drinking water can be purchased in St. Helens at the supermarkets.

Bushfire risk

Being surrounded by bush is how we like to live, but we take the threat of bushfire seriously. Enjoy the campfire when you stay but only when the weather conditions are suitable, not when it is hot and/or windy. Keep the fire within the 'pit' and keep it small, contained and supervised. If care is not taken you could set fire to the place. It is your responsibility to be aware of the local fire restrictions, they can change on a daily basis.

Shoes at the door

The gravel on the pathways tends to stick to footwear and is carried up onto the decking and indoors. It fits well with the environment outside but is not compatible with our natural cork flooring. Here, we take a cue from the Japanese and take off shoes while indoors and ask guests to do the same. Leave them on the engawa or in the basket inside the door. It is a good idea to bring a pair of slip-ons for around-the-house convenience.

Suitability

If this all sounds like a hitch maybe Swansong isn't for you - that's fine. Holidays are meant to be relaxing and there are other wonderful properties to stay at in the area that might be a better fit. However, if you are keen to try out off-grid living in a beautiful setting we welcome you to come and experience our version of it.

The house guidebook is at hand to ensure your stay is simple and trouble-free.