



# TOURISM

by Bill Nehmy



*Fiona Crackett who runs Aldgate Creek Cottage Bed and Breakfast*

This month I am pleased to introduce Fiona Crackett who, with her husband Terry, runs Aldgate Creek Cottage Bed & Breakfast.

**BN:** Welcome Fiona! It would be great if you could firstly provide us with some background about yourself that has led to running a Bed & Breakfast in the Adelaide Hills?

**FC:** Thanks Bill. Both Terry and I were born in the Upper Hunter Valley some years ago (won't say how many of course) and actually went through school together. We were both born into farming families, however after we left University and got married our work paths took us away from the land.

We were very lucky to get to live in a number of places in NSW as we followed our careers, including the beautiful Snowy Mountains, before finding our true home in Aldgate with a young family in 1996.

Not long after that I took up a role as business manager at a local primary school which I have loved that much that I have not as yet left! I have a genuine love of gardening, and until we bought Aldgate Creek Cottage last year, most of my weekends were spent on a few acres of garden we had not far from the township.

**BN:** Having a full time job as business manager at a local primary school and running a B&B must make managing your time quite challenging. Can you please elaborate on how you make this work smoothly?

**FC:** Think it really comes down to having a do it now approach, supported by an integrated booking system for the cottage, and an absolute attention to detail. Of course, I have learnt that a focus on clear communication at all times is important, as is having a household that shares the load, and I keep a list wherever I go.

**BN:** If you have visiting guests, friends or relatives that you want to ensure have a memorable Adelaide Hills day, what do you recommend they see and do?

**FC:** With so many things to see and do in the region, the first thing we always focus on is getting visitors to stay another day or two as one memorable day is simply not enough!! We actually had relatives visit for an intended few days only last month and they loved the place and had that much to explore that much they stayed for almost two weeks.

Of course most of our visitors like to spend a bit of time walking the Hills

awesome trail network, but at the same time we encourage them to visit some of the many interesting villages that are but a short walk or drive away. You really cannot go past my nearby villages of Aldgate, Stirling, Crafrers and Bridgewater where there is an abundance of great local food and specialty stores available to browse.

A few of my favourites that are less than a minute's walk from the Cottage gate include Fred's Eatery, One Elk Homewares, Yuki in the Hills, Aldgate Café, Aldgate Bakery, the Village Butcher and of course the Aldgate Pump Hotel just across the road.

As we approach spring I would also recommend checking out some of the many open gardens available when the camellias, azaleas, rhododendrons and magnolias come into bloom. Stangate House in Aldgate is particularly well presented and a must see if you get a chance.

**BN:** Please share any other key interests/activities that you have that might surprise us!?

**FC:** Despite the time challenges of a full time role and a cottage to run, I am a passionate supporter of the Crows and never miss attending a home game. Obviously a difficult season thus far, but it isn't over yet...!

**BN:** What advice would you give a young person in respect to finding the right career and to have an enriching life?

**FC:** Whilst I think this is advice often given, I would say that focusing on finding something you love doing is the key. For me this has been about working within a local community in a role that genuinely connects me to it.

Of course to now have a bed and breakfast in the heart of Aldgate, that helps me share this community with visitors from near and far, is an absolute bonus, as is the ever changing garden we are lucky to have!

Thanks Fiona for giving us the opportunity to get to know a bit more about you. Aldgate Creek Cottage B&B has been in very high demand since you re-opened it early this year. Your success is a testament to the commitment that you and Terry have put into ensuring that every guest has a special Adelaide Hills experience that leaves them wanting to come again.

However I did not pick you as a Crows supporter when you consider your methodical, customer focussed and transparent approach!