

Summerland House Farm

CASE STUDY

Property Snapshot

Summerland House Farm is a business of House with No Steps. The farm produces avocados and macadamias is part of the Summerland House enterprise, which has seven business streams including a nursery, shop, dehusking facility, pack shed and café on site as well as a recycling plant in Lismore. The enterprise provides employment for about 140 people, 100 of whom have disabilities. Summerland House is also a local tourism destination

Size: 95 hectares

Location: Alstonville, North Coast

Enterprise: A disability services enterprise including a farm with a 7,000 tree macadamia plantation and 1,800 mature avocado trees, plus 4,500 newly planted trees.

Challenge

Farm management wanted to expand avocado production on a recently purchased block. The aim was to increase local employment for people with disabilities.

In order to establish a new 6,000 tree plantation several remnant paddock trees were identified for removal. Summerland House Farm wanted advice on the options and on identification before proceeding.



During a site visit, a Local Land Services officer identified several rare Rosewood Mistletoe plant growing on several of the paddock trees. *Amyema plicatula* is listed as a state and commonwealth endangered species.

The discovery was significant because the plant was previously known only to exist at two other locations in Australia. It is found on isolated paddock trees and remnants of subtropical rainforest.

The four plants found at Summerland House Farm tripled the current known population of the plants and extended its known range.

Work being undertaken

Local Land Services and farm management worked together to amend the layout of the avocado plantation so it would not harm the newly discovered Rosewood Mistletoe plants.

Amending the orchard plans meant slightly reducing it in size but it is still expected to create 14 new jobs for people with disabilities over the next five years.

Under the Equity part of the Land Management Code, Summerland House Farm submitted a notification for removal of some paddock trees, but not the Rosewood host trees containing the mistletoe.

Those trees will be retained and the development of the avocado plantation around them will be beneficial for the mistletoe plants by providing protection from exposure and damaging winds.

The discovery of the Rosewood Mistletoe and identification of remnant Big Scrub rainforest on the property, prompted Summerland House Farm to investigate further opportunities for biodiversity-based tourism.

"We had some earth works to do and some roads and a lot of avocado trees to put in. We wanted to make sure we did it by the book and were not hurting any of the rainforest.

In changing the plantation plans on the farm, we didn't lose much avocado crop and by saving the Mistletoe, it was a win-win situation."

- Cameron Delaney, Site Services Manager, Summerland House Farm

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Fact file:

- 95 ha mixed disability service enterprise run by House with No Steps
- Orcharding operations comprised of 6,300 avocados trees and 7,000 macadamia trees
- Discovery of several rare Rosewood Mistletoe plants during planning for a new avocado plantation
- Slight amendment of avocado plantation area ensured optimum production alongside conservation of the endangered species
- Notification issued under the Land Management Code to remove several paddock trees, while retaining and protecting Rosewood host trees
- Summerland House Farm is now embarking on a new vegetation regeneration project and investigating tourism opportunities based around remnant rainforest on site

“Local Land Services officer, John Nagle, came out and identified a lot of the native species we had on site and quite a bit of the Big Scrub rainforest remnant we had on the farm.

“It was quite exciting at the time to think we have this rare Mistletoe on some Rosewood trees on our property. To find that was outstanding.”

If you get in contact with Local Land Services they're more than happy to walk across your property. You might find some little gems like we did.”

- Cameron Delaney, Site Services Manager, Summerland House Farm



Fruit of the Rosewood Mistletoe *Amyema plicatula*