



Back to earth

Back 2 Earth is a health retreat for humans and an animal sanctuary for our furry friends. We chat to co-founder Jenny Hammond to find out her story.

How did Back 2 Earth first begin?

Back 2 Earth began with a dream to live a life based on kindness and compassion, to heal our health and to have as little footprint on the environment as possible.

My husband Marc and I bought the property in 2013 and spent eight months renovating and establishing it as Back 2 Earth. It has been running as a farm sanctuary, bed and breakfast and health retreat since December 2014 and we're very proud of what we've created.

What was your connection to Berry?

We chose Berry on the south coast of New South Wales as we loved the area. It's full of natural beauty and is close to mountains, rivers and beaches. I have a psychology practice based in Sydney and my children live there, so it was very important for us to be close. As Berry is only a short drive from Sydney and close to the train station, it ticked all the boxes.

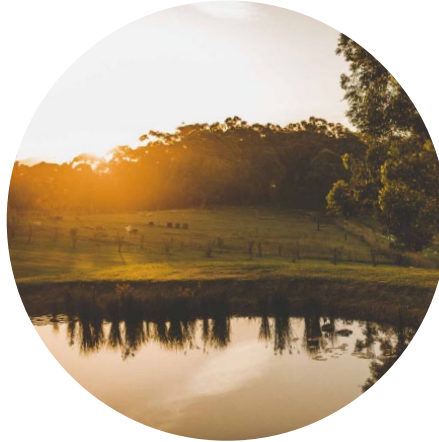
Please share a little about your animal sanctuary at Back 2 Earth.

We have the Noah's ark of livestock: dogs, mini horses, goats, alpacas, sheep, ducks, rabbits, chickens and geese all live here at Back 2 Earth. Not all our animals are rescued farm animals; however, each one has their own unique and often sad story as to how they came to live with us.

What we love the most is that Back 2 Earth provides people with the opportunity to meet these beautiful, intelligent, kind animals and make a personal connection with them. Every one of our furry or feathered friends has their own personality, likes and dislikes, and social structure, and they love it when guests pat, groom and feed them.

What does a typical stay look like at Back 2 Earth?

Each stay is unique and tailored to suit our guests. Some people want accommodation, privacy and space to relax. Others want to get involved with the farm life, meet the animals, experience raw vegan cuisine, enjoy a float or a massage or partake in a raw food or intuitive massage workshop run by Marc.



Marc is our resident chef and he creates everything on the premises. Some of our food is picked fresh out of the garden and everything is organic. What we don't grow ourselves we buy from the organic markets.

Most people choose to rest and relax during the day but there are also wonderful walks, hikes, bike rides, yoga classes, bird-watching walks, adventure trials and many different beaches to explore.

What are some of the workshops you offer?

Marc and I have combined our skills to create a unique package to detox and rejuvenate our guests' minds, bodies and relationships. This week-long program provides guests with a new sense of relaxation and wellness, balance and vitality.

As everyone's needs, levels of experience, expertise and dietary requirements differ, Marc offers a tailor-made raw-food workshop. He will guide guests through a raw-food workshop in a fun, experiential and educational manner. Guests get to choose what they would like to learn and then get to eat everything that they make.

Marc also teaches intuitive massage workshops for couples, which helps couples connect through touch.

What are your top five tips for living a more conscious life?

1. Surround yourself with people who are like-minded.

2. Each day, find something to be grateful for.

3. Choose a time each day to really "just be" with you. Maybe in the bath, before you get out of bed, at a yoga class or on a walk. Just be without distractions and enjoy being present in the moment with yourself.

4. Eat more plant-based food.

It's better for your health, the planet and the animals.

5. Each week, try to live more sustainably. Choose to add one thing into your schedule and take one thing out. A great example would be to take plastic bags out of your life and start using newspaper. Or set up a compost bin. Or start growing your own vegies.

Tell us more about your organic farm?

We farm organically, which means we do not use chemical fertilisers or pesticides. We rely on more natural forms of farming, such as biological pest control and crop rotation. We are still learning but it's exciting to be part of a world that supports biodiversity, richer soil, healthier food and the vitality of insects and bees.

How do you care for and give back to the environment?

Our basic principles are sustainability, environmental awareness and self-sufficiency. We have a no-waste policy: what can go to the animals, worm farm or compost and then back into our fruit and vegie gardens. We also employ some companion gardening strategies and compost the animal manure.

What's next for Back 2 Earth?

We would like to continue doing what we love and helping people make a change to a more plant-based lifestyle. We'd like to continue to offer a place for people to reconnect with animals and provide much-needed education around food, nutrition and health, along with encouraging people to have less of an environmental impact. On top of all that, we're also dreaming of having Back 2 Earth registered as a not-for-profit organisation. 🍷

To learn more, visit back2earth.net.au.