

A UNIQUE AWARD



The team at Woodhouse Adventure Park, including Simon Frederick, left, Sally Yusa, Em Cordell, Kate Wilmsmore, Nicole Wood, Oliver Morgan and Keeley Menz, is celebrating winning gold in the Australian Tourism Awards for unique accommodation.

SCOTT MURPHY

After years of State-level dominance, Woodhouse Adventure Park has claimed the top spot for unique accommodation at the Australian Tourism Awards.

The Scouts SA owned and operated park, located on a 54ha property at Piccadilly, has won gold at the Tourism Industry Council SA (TICSA) awards five years in a row in the unique accommodation category.

But despite State-level success, the venue had never won the national award.

That was until March 6, when it won gold for Australia's best unique accommodation and silver for adventure tourism.

General manager Em Cordell said the achievement was a testament to years of hard work.

"I think when we first started the journey ... the site was potentially on the brink of closure," she said.

"And so we are very proud of

everything that we have achieved over these past few years.

"Knowing that it is just the beginning and that we're actually on the precipice of seeing our next boom."

Ms Cordell said the park experienced a rise in popularity in the wake of Covid-19 as people sought to explore the outdoors following lock-downs.

"Obviously people couldn't travel and everybody wanted to be out in the fresh air - we've got plenty of that here," she said.

"We were able to introduce a whole heap of people at that point so that's when our tourism market really started to boom."

Other offerings, such as its education experiences, have also been booked "back-to-back" in recent years.

"We're doing more survival-based tent camps with the school camps so that we'll be able to introduce more people onto the site," Ms Cordell said.

Families can come in on weekends and camp overnight on the expansive green fields, she said.

Ms Cordell said a key focus of

Woodhouse Adventure Park in recent years was ensuring it had something for everyone - including "soft entry" opportunities for people not seeking thrills.

She said this inclusivity was something the judges likely appreciated about the park.

"We're a soft entry into camping for the family market, we're a soft entry into adventure for school groups," she said.

"We're not necessarily doing the high ropes or the more adventurous activities, it's more just offering a nice, achievable challenge for groups to come in and have a fun time out in nature.

"They can push themselves slightly beyond their limit, but we're not trying to do anything too scary here.

"So that soft entry into wellbeing is what we aim to do as well."

Woodhouse Adventure Park is a commercial arm of Scouts SA, with profits funnelled back through the not-for-profit organisation.