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Frequently Asked Questions

What are the Terms and Conditions relating to staying at Sine Cera?

Please see our separate Terms and Conditions document.

How are bookings handled?

Enquiries are treated in the order in which they are received. If you provide numbers of people and nights, we will happily provide a quote. Booking dates are held for 1 week without deposit to allow your group to discuss options. If there is an enquiry for your dates during that week, we will advise you. To secure dates, a 25% non-refundable deposit is required.

How do I pay for my retreat?

Payments are non-refundable and made in 3 steps:

- 25% - to secure the booking
- 25% - 6 weeks prior to booking dates
- 50% - 1 week prior to booking dates.

This three-step process allows you plenty of time to finalise numbers. No further changes to bookings are possible after the final payment is made.

If by the time the second deposit is due you do not have the numbers you require, you can cancel the booking and pay no more.

A security deposit of \$500 or \$1,000 is required (to cover any additional cleaning, breakages, damage or loss) when making the third and final payment.

Payments can be made by bank transfer, EFTPOS, BPay or credit card.

How does repayment of the security deposit work?

As a low-cost facility, we expect guests to leave the property as they found it - particularly the kitchen. Security deposits are repaid within 7 days of departure if there are no issues. This gives us time to identify any additional cleaning, damage or loss of property. Please let us know if a piece of equipment has failed or has been broken so we can replace it. It is very important that children are supervised by adults at all times because most damage is caused by unsupervised children.

Do you have a disaster policy (i.e. a *force majeure* policy) if Sine Cera is not available due to floods or bushfire? What recourse would I have if I had paid the full fee?

Yes. The most likely scenario is flooding – which does happen from time to time. If that happens, we

would try to arrange another set of dates and transfer your deposits to those new dates. If that is not possible, we will refund your payments. We like to stay friends with our guests!

Do guests have to register?

Yes. Retreat organisers complete a Booking Registration Form with details for each guest and a next-of-kin in the case of illness, injury or an emergency. This form is required when making your final payment one week prior to your event.

What are check-in and check-out times?

Check-in: after 2 pm; check-out: before 10 am. These times can be changed on request - if it is possible considering the timing of other bookings.

Do you require a minimum number of people attending in order to book?

We are flexible but around 15 people. So, if you are a small group, we may take other bookings as well. Sine Cera is 100-bed facility so there is plenty of room. If you want sole occupancy, there may be an additional charge.

Will other people be staying at the Retreat at the same time as us?

Possibly. You can have the entire property to yourselves but this may mean an additional charge. Sometimes, of course, it just works out that way. For some retreats, it is not appropriate to have other guests and we understand and respect that. We can chat about your particular needs.

How is accommodation allocated?

Like all accommodation facilities, rooms are allocated by our Manager. Depending on your choice of accommodation (bunk or twin share), we will open up the appropriate number of rooms. Other rooms remain locked to reduce cleaning and electricity costs and thereby maintain our low prices.

What is the process for checking in and checking out?

When you arrive, please sound your horn or ring the Site Manager, Tim, on 02 6636 6176 from the phone in the Fahr House lounge. Staff will show you your accommodation; explain important expectations we have about how the property should be treated and left on departure. You will also have to register on our COVID QR Code that is in the Chalet.

In what condition should I leave Sine Cera on my departure?

This is important. We explain this clearly to ensure our expectations are clear and you can focus on enjoying your stay. We offer our facilities at low cost on the basis that the property is left in the same condition as you found it. This means cleaning the facility before you leave – sweeping floors, ensuring all non-compostable rubbish is removed, cleaning the kitchen to ensure it is free of grease and that stove tops and ovens are cleaned, and that crockery, cutlery and cooking utensils have been washed properly and returned to their locations. The Manager will check the condition of buildings with the retreat organiser prior to departure. He may request more work be done to ensure your security deposit is returned in full. Any damage to property or equipment should be reported to the Manager.

How do I manage my rubbish?

This is important. Effective waste disposal is essential to ensure the health and safety of guests and to

ensure our unique environment is protected. There is no rubbish removal service in our area so, as with many wilderness retreats, we ask you to take your non-compostable rubbish with you. Guests are responsible for removing all meats, paper, plastics, bottles, nappies and sanitary napkins from the

site. Each guest is supplied with a rubbish bag to assist in this process. Please follow carefully the instructions of staff about sorting your kitchen rubbish into the appropriate bins. Organic (vegetable) waste can be composted on site.

Who do I see for help during my stay?

Communication works best on site if there is a single person, usually the retreat organiser, who can liaise with staff if issues arise. It is therefore important for the retreat organiser to be the first person to arrive so staff can brief them, and so that when guests arrive, they can explain which rooms have been allocated. The retreat organiser can contact our Manager via the telephone in Fahr House. Please follow his guidance while on site so both guests and facilities are kept safe. Our general approach is to leave guests to enjoy the site undisturbed by staff.

Can I move furniture?

Please seek approval from our Manager. There are limits to this. Moving furniture risks damage to property and injury to guests. All furniture must be returned to its original position before departure.

Is linen available?

Yes. Please contact us about your needs. Linen is charged out at \$10 per person per week.

Are there air conditioners and heaters?

Yes. There are two air conditioners in the Chalet Meeting Room and one in the Fahr House lounge. There are small, portable fan heaters (for cooling and heating) in each bedroom. There are slow combustion fire places in Fahr House lounge and the Dining Hall.

Can you organise caterers?

Yes. We can provide contact details for caterers familiar with Sine Cera. Some do vegan and vegetarian meals. Please make arrangements directly with the caterer to ensure your menu preferences and budgets are fully understood. You also pay them directly.

What kitchen facilities do you have?

We have a large commercial kitchen. We can send you a document (with photographs) that outlines its equipment. **It is important for the health and safety of guests that the kitchen is kept clean and tidy at all times.** Our Manager will orientate you to the kitchen facilities when you arrive.

Where are the nearest shops?

Kyogle has a supermarket – a 40 min drive south – so please ensure you bring all the food you need.

Do you have walking tracks on the property?

Yes. There is a demanding Ridge Walk to the top of the ridge on the southern side of the property. There are ropes installed in some sections of this walk. There is an extension of this walk that takes you to Mount Matthee where there are spectacular views of Sine Cera and the entire region and a Loop Walk that is less demanding. There are also shorter and easier walks along the creek. We have maps on site that show the tracks.

What other activities are available at Sine Cera?

Table tennis and billiards are available in the activities section of the Dining Hall. Due to loss and damage in the past, this equipment requires a cash deposit paid on site that will be refunded when the equipment is returned undamaged. **Most damage to the building and equipment is caused by children. Please ensure children are supervised and notify the Manager of any damage.** There are also swimming holes in the creek on the property. Bird-watching is also popular. The Border Ranges National Park and its many fascinating walks and lookouts is only 20 minutes away by car.

Are trail bikes allowed at Sine Cera?

No. This rule is in place to protect our environment, and for the peaceful enjoyment of other guests and our neighbours.

What other activities are available in the area?

Border Ranges National Park – many walking trails through ancient forests, spectacular lookouts. See: <https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/border-ranges-national-park>

Rabbit Proof Fence Walking Trail – follows the ancient Aboriginal walking trail from Mt Gipps at the Qld NSW Border to Mt Lindsay.

Border Loop Railway - the historically significant railway spiral and tunnels.

Wilson's Robotic Dairy - 15 minutes north of Kyogle along Summerland Way - 02 6636 4254 or 0428 364254 Email: wilsonsroboticdairy@gmail.com

Horseshoe Park Pony Rides - Lot 3 Wainwrights Rd, Kyogle.

Rosealyn House – restored historic home (1900 – Federation style) in Kyogle.

Daley's Fruit Tree Nursery - 36 Daleys Ln, Kyogle.

Please check the internet for the latest details on the above.

Can I have a camp fire at Sine Cera?

Yes, we have a couple of fire pits on the property. You can collect wood from the property or bring your own. These pits can only be used when government fire warnings allow. Please consult our Manager before lighting a fire. In summer, there is usually a complete fire ban so fires are prohibited.

What should I bring to Sine Cera?

Bring any games, push bikes or sporting equipment you would like to use that will not pose a risk to other guests. Bring walking shoes, hats, sunglasses, water bottles and backpacks for walks. Bring books, dvds, games for wet weather situations. Bring marshmallows for campfires. Bring binoculars for bird-watching and star gazing. Bring insect repellent in case any bugs bother you.

Is smoking allowed?

No. Smoking is prohibited in all buildings and within a range of 50 m from any building. Cigarette smoke creates a lingering smell in furnishings if it blows into buildings. Cigarettes must not be disposed of in the grounds of Sine Cera due to the risk of fire.

Does Sine Cera have a policy about the consumption of alcohol or drugs?

We permit sensible alcohol consumption so as not to endanger any person or damage property. Illegal drugs are prohibited. For weddings and parties, a security deposit of \$1,000 is required to protect against any loss or damage.

Is there a curfew on celebratory activities such as weddings?

The legally-enforceable curfew on loud music is midnight so please turn music down to reasonable levels after that time. Excessive noise may involve complaints from residents in the valley, and besides, on-site staff need their beauty sleep!

What safety risks are there for guests, including children?

We do our best to reduce risks by keeping the buildings and grounds well maintained. However, any natural environment has inherent dangers. Sine Cera is in a remote location where a lack of expert medical aid and limits to communications may mean delays in assistance in the event of injury. **Children should be supervised by adults at all times.** Sine Cera guests acknowledge and agree that it would be unreasonable for Sine Cera to be in any way responsible for any injury unless Sine Cera is wilfully negligent. Guests thereby waive, to the full extent permitted by law, all their legal rights of action against and fully release Dharma Care Inc. (the charity that owns Sine Cera), its office bearers, directors, employees or agents for loss, damages, injury or death howsoever arising out of or in relation to the participation by guests in activities undertaken at Sine Cera.

Are there dangerous pests at Sine Cera?

In spring and summer there are snakes, some of which are dangerous. Always take care when walking in the bush. There are grass ticks and leaches (particularly in wet weather) so insect repellent in the case of the former, and a small bottle of salt for the latter, is a good idea. At various times of the year, there are some flies, mosquitoes and midges but they are not a major problem for most guests.

What happens in the case of a health emergency at Sine Cera?

The nearest ambulance service is in Kyogle 40 minutes away. Basic first aid materials are held on site in a cupboard in the Dining Hall. We ask all retreat organisers to complete a Booking Registration Form listing all participants and contact details of a family member if an emergency arises.

Are First Aid materials available at Sine Cera?

Yes, we have a well-stocked first aid kit in the Dining Room. It is always a good idea, however, for guests to have their own small kit they can carry with them if they plan on doing any bushwalking. A first aid kit in the Dining Room is not much use if you get injured a few miles away on a bushwalk.

What is Sine Cera's phone number if someone needs to contact me urgently?

Landline: (02) 6636 6176. This phone is not always attended but you can leave a message.

Is there mobile phone coverage?

It is intermittent at best and depends on your provider. A walk up one of the hills may connect you, but it is best not to rely on having connectivity.

Is the internet available?

We have WiFi internet available on request in the Chalet Meeting room. Please discuss your needs with us, as we can increase download capacity and speed if required. Download capacity is limited and if exceeded will run very slowly. Note that the booking organiser is responsible for appropriate use of downloads and may make the password available at their own discretion.

Are dogs and other pets allowed?

No. Sine Cera is home to many endangered species and guests enjoy the sight of wildlife close to buildings at Sine Cera. The staff have dogs but they are trained not to bother wildlife.

What happens in the case of a building fire or a bushfire at Sine Cera?

All guests should familiarise themselves with the fire emergency procedures posted in each of the accommodation blocks. In the case of a fire emergency, guests should follow the instructions of staff. Under advice from the Rural Fire Service, we maintain the grounds to reduce the risk of fire.

Where can I get more information?

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