



SURF COAST
HOLIDAY RENTALS



Summer Holiday Rental Guide

What your Surf Coast home could earn this summer—and what success looks like.

A note from Surf Coast Holiday Rentals

Summer is upon us—or at least it feels that way for those of us working in short-stay—and once again the Surf Coast will swell (no pun) with holidaymakers.

Each year, especially through the peak, a surge in demand for holiday rentals is met in large part by homes vacated by locals taking a holiday of their own. In doing so, those holidays can be paid for—at least in part—by the homes left behind. A win-win unfolds across our shire: visitors get a taste of our little slice of paradise while locals are paid for sharing it.

Can you be part of the win-win too?

This guidebook helps you understand what your home could earn, the preparation involved and what helps a summer go well.

Here, we address the common questions owners bring us—the kind we know how to answer after 18 years managing holiday rentals, maximising returns and looking after the homes of hundreds of owners from Torquay—our home base—to Bellbrae and beyond.

Enjoy the read.

The team

Surf Coast Holiday Rentals

P.S. You will recognise our bias, of course. You can do this yourself, fight the good fight on Airbnb—and do well, by the way—or choose us to do the heavy lifting, so you can set off into the sunset and return to your home as you left it and your bank balance better than you left it. ;)

Talk to us

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The same questions, answered for your home and your dates.

A small window of big opportunity

It will come as no surprise that Boxing Day to Australia Day is the Surf Coast's strongest earning period. Those 32 nights produce nearly three quarters of summer booking revenue.

The opportunity is not confined to those dates. The lead-in to Christmas has grown in popularity, and February continues to bring bookings—particularly around weekends and good weather.



In this guide, **Peak Summer** means the 32 nights from Boxing Day to Australia Day.

Availability is the first ingredient

The more crossover your home's availability has with Peak Summer the better, obviously. But the days and weeks before and after, also offer opportunity. Speak to us about your specific plans and we can help you assess things.

Peak summer earning 'bands' give you a ballpark

The revenue bands give you a framework for accommodation revenue potential, before expenses. The numbers are forecasted based on real reservation data and market analytics.

Budget/value	Comfortable and straightforward, competing strongly on value.
Mid-range	Presents, with a good combination of location, space and amenities.
Premium	Standout presentation, position or features supporting a higher nightly rate.

ESTIMATED ACCOMMODATION REVENUE • 32 NIGHTS

BEDROOMS FOR GUESTS	BUDGET/VALUE	MID-RANGE	PREMIUM
1 bedroom	~\$4,450 ~\$160/night	~\$5,900 ~\$215/night	~\$6,950 ~\$255/night
2 bedrooms	~\$7,400 ~\$270/night	~\$9,350 ~\$340/night	~\$10,500 ~\$385/night
3 bedrooms	~\$10,250 ~\$375/night	~\$12,350 ~\$450/night	~\$15,750 ~\$575/night
4 bedrooms	~\$13,600 ~\$495/night	~\$16,650 ~\$610/night	~\$22,450 ~\$820/night
5 bedrooms	~\$16,150 ~\$590/night	~\$25,200 ~\$920/night	~\$37,700 ~\$1,375/night
6–7 bedrooms	~\$15,900 ~\$580/night	~\$20,350 ~\$745/night	~\$28,550 ~\$1,045/night

The 6–7 bedroom group is drawn from a small number of properties, so its estimates are not directly comparable with the bedroom groups above it. Based on our reservation history across the 2024–25 and 2025–26 summer periods, supported by third-party market analytics and research.

Understanding your home's earning potential

Many homes outperform the market, and of course the above numbers are not guarantees. The best way to truly assess the opportunity is with a property specific forecast, which we prepare as part of a Summer Appraisal, at no obligation. In the page 18 illustration, owners retain 80% of accommodation revenue after costs. Your result will vary.

A guest for almost every home

The surge in demand puts your home in the equation

The Surf Coast's appeal is universal, inviting guests with a broad range of preferences and budget, especially in summer. It's not all about pools and ocean views, even though certain standout features do help.

Winning with quiet competence

Many homes do well without a marquee feature. They are comfortable, well equipped and quite simply the experience matches the price and the promise. This is a winning formula that does not rely on major selling points.

- The home is clean and uncluttered, and obviously presented for guests
- It offers sufficient space inside and outside for the number of guests it accepts
- Furniture is in good condition and offers comfort for the number of guests the home accepts
- A well equipped kitchen, with enough glassware and crockery for the number of guests
- Reliable Wi-Fi, heating and laundry facilities
- Everything works, with clear instructions and guidance
- A decent, clean barbecue
- An outdoor setting to eat at

Things we know guests will value

Beyond the essentials. Air conditioning. A coffee machine. A smart TV. Off-street parking. Laundry (dryer an additional bonus).

Most homes already have what today's guest needs. But a professional opinion can help you identify small gaps, if any.

Quiet achievers

Four homes we manage, and what a guest was most likely looking at.



Off-street parking and a welcoming front lawn set the first impression.



A deck and lounge chair that catches the afternoon sun. For many guests the outside matters as much as the inside.



A table everyone can sit at. Groups look for it, and it is easy to leave out of the photographs.



Outdoor seating with a firepit.

Location, pets and marquee features

A location for everyone

Some guests will sacrifice location for luxury. Others will demand beach frontage. Some want to be near the action, or just the ability to walk to the supermarket; and will choose to be in town. Others still, just appreciate being on the Surf Coast. Location does dictate price, but in summer it does not close doors to the opportunity.

Pet-friendly: more demand than supply

Demand from guests travelling with a dog exceeds supply each year. This is a surefire way of getting bookings, if you're already a dog friendly home.

Marquee features

Pools and ocean views help, but you don't need them. Beach frontage or proximity, a spa, exceptional entertaining options, standout kids' areas, a basketball ring, tennis court...all of these things have obvious impact on pricing and eventual earning potential. But simpler things go a long way too; a hammock, a dart board, table tennis, firepit...all add to guest appeal.



Covered, open on one side, usable at 35 degrees or in the rain. Outdoor space that works in both is worth more than a big deck.

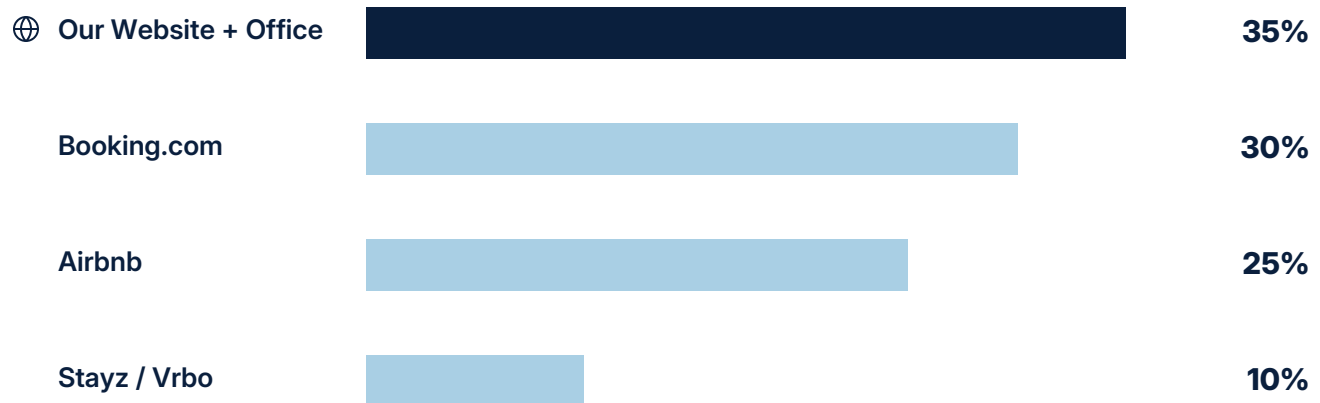
Your guests: from enquiry to departure

Your home is suitable, and it's available. Next you need bookings.

Where you show up

Airbnb is the household name. Many properties do well enough on Airbnb alone, but it no longer dominates. Today's guest is savvy and there's more competition for their attention. A mix of channels gets you in front of a larger guest pool.

SHARE OF BOOKINGS BY CHANNEL - SURF COAST HOLIDAY RENTALS



Our captured audience helps fill your calendar

We have a loyal guest following built up over 18 years. When working with us you not only get full channel exposure, but also our direct exposure.

At any given time there are two to three consultants in our office handling enquiry and confirming reservations.

How you show up

Price. Photos. Listing. Sell and set the promise.

Pricing

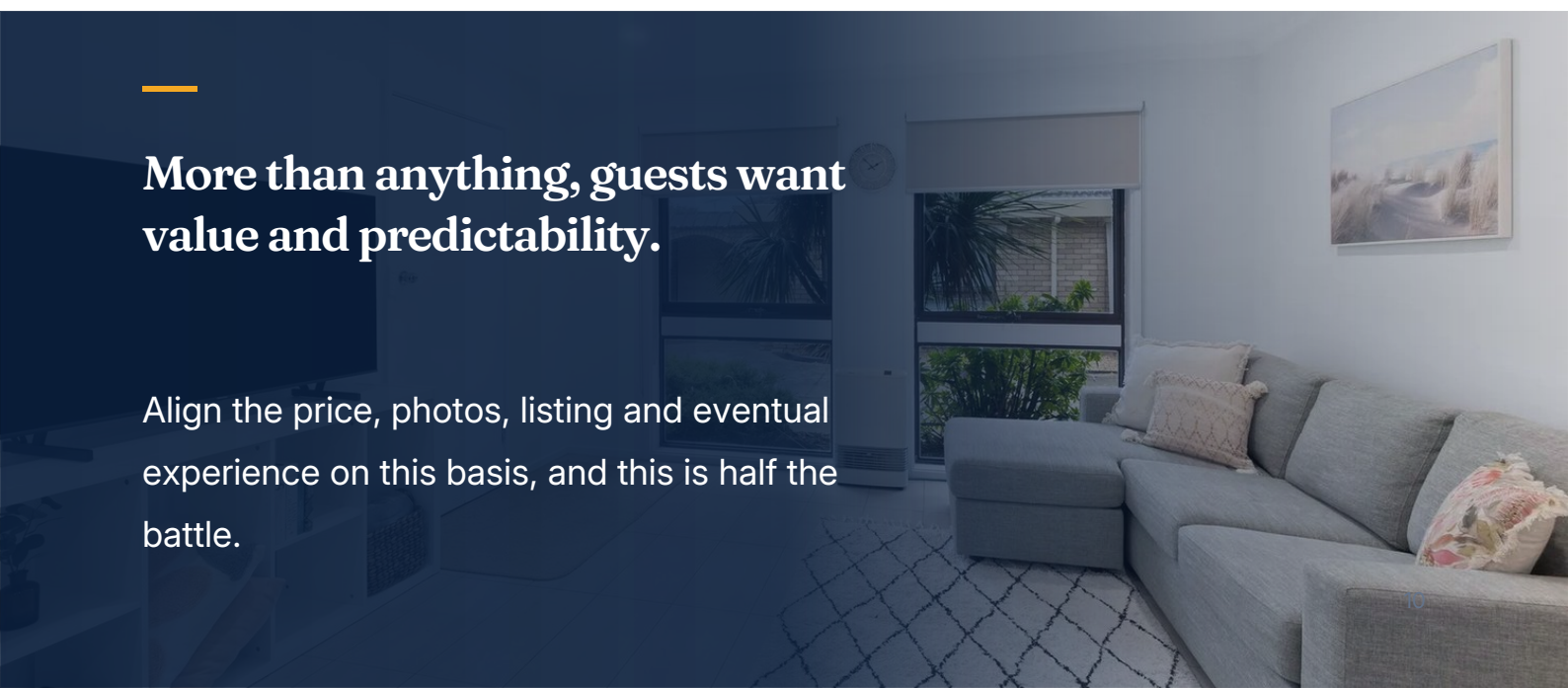
Pricing is both art and science. The price you can and should charge on New Year's Eve is obviously higher, but pricing strategy would require a separate guidebook. The most important takeaway here is the guest's perception of your price. Along with your photos and listing information, it sets the expectation a guest arrives with.

Photography

The first photo is the one that "stops the scroll". From there, your photos should continue to inspire but they also have to orient. Guests want to imagine the practical experience of the house as much as anything. As such, the advice is: a photo for every part of the house a guest will use. And, whilst you can do it on your phone, you probably shouldn't.

The listing

Your listing is much more than a description of the house. It is a description of the guest's full experience before they arrive, when they arrive, during their stay and also departing. It must answer all the questions from bedding, what is provided and what they need to bring, check-in, parking, house rules and so on.



More than anything, guests want value and predictability.

Align the price, photos, listing and eventual experience on this basis, and this is half the battle.

When summer guests book

Some plan well ahead. Many decide closer to arrival. Both matter.



book at least 30 days ahead

40%

How long guests stay

Booking patterns have evolved. Changes in how and when people work, together with the cost of living, mean a family that once booked a week or two might now spread its holiday budget across two or three weekends—often waiting for a good forecast.

2 nights

Around 30% of bookings

Short breaks are a substantial part of the mix and can fill gaps between longer stays.

4 nights

The median Peak Summer stay

Four nights sits in the middle: half of stays are shorter and half are longer.

7+ nights

20% of bookings · 43% of revenue

Longer stays are fewer, but carry far more weight—and tend to be secured earlier.

The value of listing as early as possible

Longer stays are usually decided much earlier—and early bookings can secure some of the strongest nightly prices. A successful summer calendar starts filling early. Do not rely on high occupancy trends and last minute price surging.

How is my home protected?

Guest damage is uncommon and usually minor. Four safeguards should be in place for every stay:

IDENTIFICATION

The booking guest's identity is verified.

HOUSE RULES + BOND

Clear house rules are accepted and a bond is held against the booking.

24/7 LOCAL RESPONSE

Someone who can act if a problem is reported during the stay.

INSPECT + RECOVER

The home is checked after departure. Any damage is documented, the owner is told, repairs are arranged and recovery is pursued through the bond, platform protection or insurance.

Holiday-rental insurance is explained in The money.

Can I choose who stays?

Technically, yes. Some platforms and property managers offer **Request to Book**. Instead of being confirmed immediately, each booking request is reviewed and approved or declined. The owner then has discretion, but the decision must still comply with the law and the platform's rules.

Our recommendation: We do not recommend Request to Book during Peak Summer. Guests may be considering several homes, and even a short delay can lose the booking—particularly while you are away.

Check-in. Check-out. Rinse, Repeat.

If you have read this far and follow our advice, there's a good chance you'll have bookings. The promise has been made, now it comes down to keeping it; from the time of enquiry until departure.

BEFORE CHECK-IN	Everything they need to arrive: the address, directions, parking, access instructions and a number to call.
CHECK-IN	Access works exactly as described, from the time you agreed.
DURING THE STAY	One point of contact, and an answer fast enough that a small problem stays small.
CHECK-OUT	Short, reasonable instructions. A long list of chores is a poor way to end a holiday.
CHANGEOVER	Clean, linen, restock, bins and the barbecue — sometimes inside a few hours. Summer success relies on same-day changeover.

IF WE DO IT FOR YOU

Plenty of owners manage this themselves—and do it very well. But if you are going away, this is the part where you are most likely to need us.

SCHR coordinates pre-arrival information, check-in, guest communication, check-out, cleaning, linen, changeovers and maintenance. Before you leave, we agree what we can handle without interrupting you and what you would like referred back.

Getting ready for guests

Guests know they are staying in somebody's home. They do not expect it to be emptied or stripped of character. They simply need room to unpack, cook and relax without having to negotiate the owner's belongings.

Most homes already have most of what guests need. Owners across the Surf Coast make this work every summer. You can too.

Two stages

Ready for photography

Arrange professional photography as soon as every area available to guests is tidy and presentable. Every bedroom, bathroom, living area and outdoor space included in the stay should be photographed. The deep clean, guest linen and supplies can still be organised afterwards.

Ready for check-in

Before the first arrival, secure personal belongings, make room for guests, arrange the deep clean and have the linen, supplies and household details ready.

This allows the home to be listed while the remaining preparation continues.

Making room for guests

We recommend depersonalising the home as far as practical. Remove family photographs, personal displays and anything valuable, private or irreplaceable. Valuables and sentimental items are best stored securely.

Does that mean stripping the home of its character? No. Furniture, artwork, books and the details that make it warm and welcoming can stay. The aim is to make room for guests without making the property feel bare.

Storage options

The main storage options each involve a trade-off.



Locked cupboards or wardrobe sections

Preserve every bedroom and the garage for guests, but provide less storage.



The garage or shed

Can hold far more without reducing sleeping capacity, but cannot then be offered for guest parking or storage.



One locked bedroom

Simple and secure, but reduces the advertised bedroom count, guest capacity and earning potential.



Off-site storage

Leaves the entire property available to guests, but adds packing and storage costs.

Decide what will remain private before photography, so the listing shows only the areas included in the stay.

A room-by-room check

These are practical examples, not an inventory of everything a holiday rental must contain.

Kitchen and dining	Leave room for a holiday shop. Check that the cookware, crockery, cutlery, glassware and dining table suit the number of guests advertised.
Bedrooms	Leave reasonable room for clothes and luggage. Mattress and pillow protectors are highly advised, and would be required if working with us.
Bathrooms	Clear space for personal toiletries. If working with us, we supply all linen including bath towels as well as bathroom amenity (soap, shampoo, etc)
Living areas	Put fragile personal items away. Test the Wi-Fi, heating, cooling, television and remotes.
Laundry	Make the washing machine and drying facilities accessible and straightforward to use.
Outdoors	Tidy the area, clean and test the barbecue, set out the furniture and check the gates and latches.

Before the first check-in

A professional deep clean establishes the standard for the stays that follow. It should reach beyond the usual household clean, including inside appliances and cupboards, under furniture, bathroom grout, window tracks, outdoor furniture and the barbecue.

Then look for the things you have learned to live with. A loose doorknob may no longer register with you. A guest has not learned the special twist needed to turn on a tap, the lift required to latch the side gate, or which remote works if it is tapped against the table first.

Fix what can be fixed with a little maintenance. Explain any harmless quirk that remains with a short note where the guest will need it.

Need the full list? A Summer Appraisal can include a preparation checklist tailored to your home.

What it may cost to begin

For most homes, upfront preparation is limited to:

- a professional deep clean; and
- professional photography, typically costing **\$200–\$400**.

If you list with SCHR, the photography cost is deducted from rental income, so there is **no upfront payment**.

Secure storage, minor maintenance or recommended additions depend on the property.

One booking. Three different numbers.

One booking produces three different totals: the total guest payment, accommodation revenue used in your earnings forecast, and owner net revenue after expenses. The distinction matters because each figure includes something different.

Importantly: Cleaning, linen and guest services are charged separately to the guest.

01

Total guest payment



02

Accommodation revenue



03

What you take home



Bar length shows the relative size of each number. Illustrative.

What might I take home?

ONE ILLUSTRATION - IF WORKING WITH US DURING SUMMER

From

\$15,000

Accommodation revenue
before owner costs

Owner Net Revenue

\$12,000 80% margin

Expenses

\$3,000

20% margin

The approximately **\$3,000 difference** may include:

- Set-up costs
- Maintenance
- This calculation presumes our management fee of 15% (+ GST)

This is a broad illustration, not a fixed margin. The result will vary according to the home and how the stays are managed.

Our fee, plainly

SCHR's management fee is **15% plus GST—16.5% of accommodation revenue**. It is not charged on cleaning, linen or separate platform charges paid by guests.

A lower fee does not automatically produce a higher return. Distribution, pricing and calendar management can change accommodation revenue. Compare what remains, not the percentage alone.

Three things worth knowing

Tax deductions

Much of the expense involved in earning rental income may be deductible. Costs relating only to guest stays may be deductible in full; shared household costs generally need to be divided between private and rental use.

Keep records, declare the rental income and ask your accountant what applies.

Holiday-rental insurance

Speak to your current home insurer before accepting bookings. Your existing policy may be extended, or separate holiday-rental insurance may be needed.

Specialist cover may be available for the rental period only, sometimes on a per-night basis. Ask us if you would like a referral.

Principal homes and the short-stay levy

The Victorian short-stay levy does not apply when guests stay in the genuine principal place of residence of the owner or renter.

A separate dwelling on the same land may be treated differently.

A clear answer for your home

An appraisal applies the advice in this guidebook specifically to your home so you can make an informed decision.

Your appraisal will include:

- 01** the dates you could make available, and an accommodation revenue forecast;
- 02** the likely costs, and an estimate of what may remain;
- 03** practical recommendations and a preparation list for your property; and
- 04** a plan for pricing, bookings and each stay.

Sometimes the answer is no. The available dates may be too short, or the likely return may not justify the cost of getting ready. It is better to know that before spending anything.

Ask us what your home could earn, what it would take to prepare and whether it is worth doing.

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